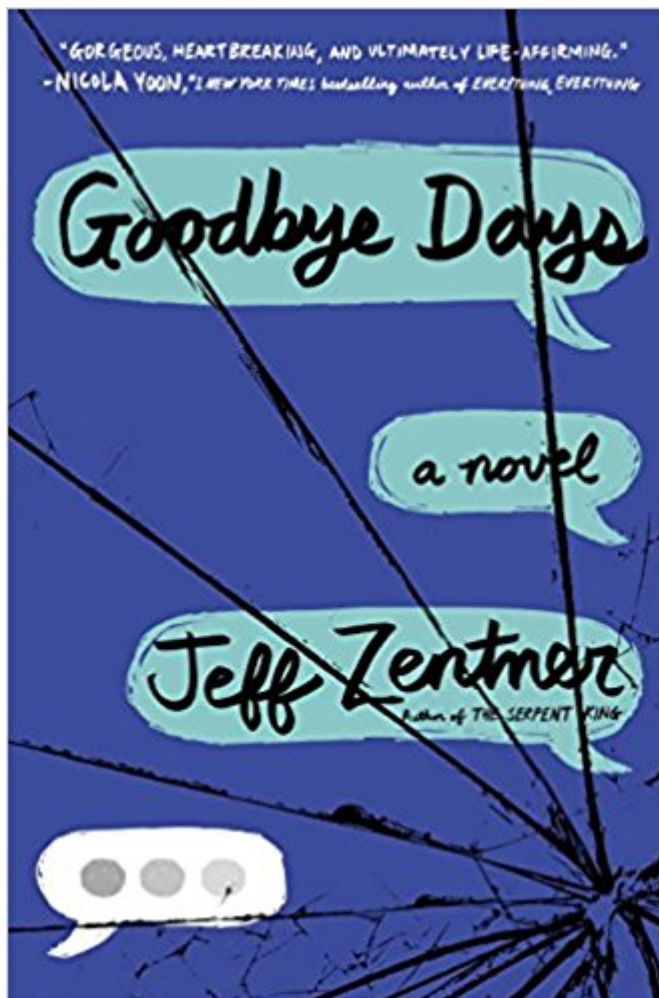




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Goodbye Days



Synopsis

“Gorgeous, heartbreaking, and ultimately life-affirming.” —Nicola Yoon, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Everything, Everything*. Perfect for fans of *Thirteen Reasons Why*, *Looking for Alaska*, and Zentner’s own *The Serpent King*, one of the most highly acclaimed YA novels of 2016, *Goodbye Days* asks what you would do if you could spend one last day with someone you lost. Where are you guys? Text me back. That’s the last message Carver Briggs will ever send his three best friends, Mars, Eli, and Blake. He never thought that it would lead to their death. Now Carver can’t stop blaming himself for the accident and even worse, a powerful judge is pressuring the district attorney to open up a criminal investigation. Luckily, Carver has some unexpected allies: Eli’s girlfriend, the only person to stand by him at school; Dr. Mendez, his new therapist; and Blake’s grandmother, who asks Carver to spend a “goodbye day” together to share their memories and say a proper farewell. Soon the other families are asking for their own goodbye day with Carver but he’s unsure of their motives. Will they all be able to make peace with their losses, or will these goodbye days bring Carver one step closer to a complete breakdown or even worse prison? Jeff Zentner, you perfectly fill the John-Green-sized hole in our heart.” —Justine Magazine “Evocative, heartbreaking, and beautifully written.” —Buzzfeed “Masterful.” —TeenVogue.com “Hold on to your heart: this book will wreck you, fix you, and most definitely change you.” —Becky Albertalli, Morris Award-winning author of *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*

Book Information

Hardcover: 416 pages

Publisher: Crown Books for Young Readers (March 7, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0553524062

ISBN-13: 978-0553524062

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 1.3 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 107 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #27,828 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #59 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Emotions & Feelings #66 in Books > Teens >

Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Death & Dying #128 in Books > Teens >

Customer Reviews

“Tender, honest, moving, and lyrical. Zentner is the real thing.” — Benjamin Alire Sáenz, winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction and Printz Honor winner
An Indie Next List Selection
“Zentner does an excellent job in creating empathetic characters, especially his protagonist Carver, a budding writer whose first-person account of his plight is artful evidence of his talent.” — Booklist, Starred
“Racial tensions, spoiled reputations, and broken homes all play roles in an often raw meditation on grief and the futility of entertaining what-ifs when faced with awful, irreversible events.” — Publishers Weekly, Starred
“[E]xquisite and tragic.” — Shelf Awareness, Starred
“[A] novel full of wisdom.” — Kirkus
“[The] kind of intelligent, intense, and life-affirming tale that will resonate with teens seeking depth and honesty.” — SLJ
“An organic, frequently raw narrative.” — Horn Book
“Tissues not optional.” — The Bulletin
Praise for Jeff Zentner
The Serpent King
A William C. Morris Award Winner
A New York Times Notable Book
A Best Book of the Year
A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year
A Publishers Weekly Best Book of the Year
A BuzzFeed Best YA Book of the Year
An Indie Next List Top Ten Selection
A Paste Magazine and popcrush.com Most Anticipated YA Book of the Year
A Publishers Weekly Spring 2016 Flying Start
“Move over, John Green; Zentner is coming for you.” — The New York Public Library
“Will fill the infinite space that was left in your chest after you finished The Perks of Being a Wallflower.” — BookRiot.com
“A story about friendship, family and forgiveness, it’s as funny and witty as it is utterly heartbreaking.” — PasteMagazine.com
“A brutally honest portrayal of teen life . . . [and] a love letter to the South from a man who really understands it.” — Mashable.com
“Zentner’s great achievement is particularly impressive for a first novel — is to make us believe three such different people could be friends. He also manages to blend a dank, oppressive, Flannery O’Connor-esque sense of place with humor and optimism . . . I adored all three of these characters and the way they talked to and loved one another.” — New York Times Book Review

Jeff Zentner is the acclaimed author of *The Serpent King*. In addition to writing, he is also a singer-songwriter and guitarist who has recorded with Iggy Pop, Nick Cave, and Debbie Harry.

Goodbye Days is his love letter to the city of Nashville and the talented people who populate it. He lives in Nashville with his wife and son. You can follow him on Facebook, on Instagram, and on Twitter at @jeffzentner.

I fully admit that 99.9% of the time I am a romance reader. There is something about YA fiction written from the male perspective that resonates in my soul. Last year, I picked up *The Serpent King* by Jeff Zentner after some buzz around Instagram. I was completely immersed in that world and knew that Jeff would become one of my favorite authors. When I was gifted the ARC of *Goodbye Days*, I didn't realize that this book would change me the way my GOAT *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* has. I'm going to be completely honest, I had no idea what *Goodbye Days* was about. I just knew I had to read it because Jeff wrote it. Carver Briggs is attending the funerals of his three best friends. He wasn't involved in their accident but feels wholly responsible. *Goodbye Days* takes place after the months of the accident. Jeff writes grief like I've never read before. You can't help but ache for Carver, Nana Betsy and Jesmyn. Their loss is so severe that it was hard to read but I could not stop. It's really hard to write anything without giving the book away, but man, I was hooked. I allowed myself five days to read *Goodbye Days* and I'm glad I did. I was able to savor this haunting, poetic and heartfelt book the way it should be read. You don't just read this book, you feel it. As a thirty-something mother, maybe it's my emotions that got me invested in *Goodbye Days*. The emotional connection I felt with Carver was staggering. I cried with him, laughed with him, cringed with him. *Goodbye Days* is a book I wish was written when I was in high school in the late 90's early 2000's. I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who wishes to get away from the mundane overdone tropes of romance for something real and special. That's what *Goodbye Days* is....special.

The Serpent King was one of my favorite books of 2016 and now Jeff Zentner is back again with *Goodbye Days*. I've been putting off reading this book because I knew from the summary that this would be a heavy, emotional read. I would definitely recommend reading this book with at least a box of tissues within arms reach. I managed to become entirely immersed in the story and Carver's life, and this book is just raw emotion. It handles grief, loss, family, and religion in a way that I've rarely read in YA books. *Goodbye Days* is told from only one point-of-view - Carver Briggs, the boy who sent a text that may or may not have caused the death of his three best friends. The Sauce Crew. A group of four boys (Carver Briggs, Blake Lloyd, Eli Bauer, and Mars Edwards) who have been inseparable ever since they met. The story seamlessly weaves their history into Carver's present day. Their stories are beautiful and normal, young and invincible. This book shows grief can

come in many forms. Blake, Eli, and Mars' families grieve in different ways. Blake's grandmother wishes to celebrate the life of brilliant, comedic grandson; Eli's parents want nothing to do with Carver; Mars' father is a judge and wants to see someone blamed for the death of his son. And all the while, Carver blames himself. Carver, luckily, isn't left to handle his grief and anguish alone. I love that this story has a support system for Carver. He has his older sister, Georgia, and Eli's girlfriend, Jesmyn, who try to support him, even when, in Jesmyn's case, she's grieving too. When Carver starts experiencing panic attacks, I like that this story shows Carver getting professional help and seeing a therapist and I enjoyed reading his sessions with Dr. Mendez. These sessions are healing to read in a way I didn't expect. Dr. Mendez's suggestion to have Carver tell stories during their sessions seems kind of odd at first, but I loved seeing how all this fell into place at the end of the book. There's something grounding about this book. The grief feels real. It's relatable for anyone who has ever experienced loss. I love that Zentner doesn't shy away from talking about religion in his books and in *Goodbye Days*, he shows what God means to the three grieving families and shows something different from all their perspectives. Does believing in God and heaven and hell make the death of a beloved one any easier? This book never makes it seem like believing is ever superior to not believing. Religion is woven into this story without ever shoving it in your face, because it seems to be a part of the characters. Whether or not the characters believe in Christianity, in the end, the dead are still gone. The last chapter absolutely just broke my heart, but in an uplifting sort of way. This book is heart-wrenching, and yet it manages to slowly piece together a shattered heart as you go through this story with Carver. I loved reading *Goodbye Days*. This writing is beautiful, and the story just hits you in the feels. I would highly recommend this book for all ages, not just YA readers. ***Thanks to Random House for providing me an ARC through NetGalley***

I've heard that people who lose a limb have a "phantom limb," which itches and senses pain as though their body parts forgotten that it's gone. I have a trinity of phantoms: 6 ugly crying stars Ugh, I don't know if I was hormonal (as a girl so it happens), an easy cryer (might be) or if this book was extremely emotional (undoubtedly) but I cried buckets while reading *Goodbye Days*. I was on the train and big fat tears kept falling on my cheeks, along my neck. I was sniffing all the time (how gracious I know). I tried every trick I know: looking at the ceiling to try avoiding the tears; blowing my nose at the slightest inkling of water; chanting "this is not true, this is fiction, Carver/Blade does NOT exist"; telling myself to "breathe in, breath

out, blow slowly. NOTHING WORKED. By the end of the book I had puffy red eyes and a congested nose. As I read till the wee hours to finish the story I was sporting slits for eyes the morning after and yawning all the time at work. Jeff Zentner with his Goodbye Days opened my chest, tore my heart out and scattered the remaining pieces all around the floor. Blade/Carver had lost his three best friends, the Sauce Crew in a car accident and he HURT all the time. Worse he was texting the driver just before the accident happened and he feels guilty. He is drowning in guilt. Not only survivor guilt but "maybe murderer of your best friends" guilt. The "beat me up", "despise me because I'm undeserving of forgiveness" guilt. All along when I witnessed people conspiring against Blade, be it Adair Eli's twin sister, Eli's dad or Mars's father Judge Edward I really wanted to shout: open your eyes guys! Maybe he sent that text but the driver was a fool. He could choose not to answer while driving. He could have been careful and wise! It's not Blade's fault it's Mars' fault! How could they not see it? I was beyond rightfully indignant. I was MAD at these people. Now I guess it's easier to blame someone alive than a dead guy. With Blade they had an outlet. They could throw all their anger and grief to his head. They could hurt him as much as they were hurting. They could. And Blade was crumbling under the sorrow, the guilt, the grief. He had panic attacks. He wanted to disappear. This story addresses the topic of grief. All the ways people use to cope with grief. The sorrow, the anger, the acceptance and then the forgiveness. The goodbye days were beautiful sometimes, dreadful other times or a harsh catharsis. Blade was a generous and vulnerable character. He was gutted by what happened and wore his heart on his sleeve. Jesmyn helped him cope with the grief and she was a lovely character as well but Blade has a rare uniqueness in his frailty and honesty. I loved Blade. Fiercely. Protectively. Utterly and unconditionally. I loved Nana Betsy her strength and generosity. I loved Georgia she was a kickass big sister. I loved reading about Sauce Crew and their pranks. I was baffled when I read what happened to Blake and realize he still had not a bad word about anyone. I loved Jeff Zentner's writing, so realistic, sensitive and vivid. It hit every cranny and nook in my soul. It made me bleed out. I loved everything. I can't fault a thing in this book. Because it made me feel. It made me hurt and smile sometimes. It made me fear the worse. It made me forget my world and live in Blade's heavy world for some hours. That's what I expect from books: to make me travel and experience other's lives. To make me ponder and think on hard topics. Jeff Zentner turned my world upside down and I need to recover. Oh and

replenish my stock of tissues.And invest in waterproof mascara.And sleep some more.And

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