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Wise beyond her years, six-year-old Elena Desserich never stopped teaching those around her to appreciate the miracle of everyday living, even as she battled a rare form of brain cancer.

Notes Left Behind tells a story of humility and inspiration. Through personal and candid journal entries they wrote as a remembrance for Elena's younger sister, Brooke and Keith Desserich share their emotional journey as a family, along with the private notes Elena hid around the house for them to discover after she was gone. Heartbreaking, moving, and inspiring, Elena's notes show us how, even during the darkest moments of life, it is possible to find hope and encouragement through selfless love.

Notes Left Behind Details

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Kristine says

Make sure to have some tissues. The book is all about the illness and passing of a little girl and the notes she left all over her home for her family to find after she was gone. As a parent, your heartbreaks to read this. At the same time, the thought that the little girl put into her family's grief and how to alleviate it, was what lifted the book from just sad to uplifting for me.

Sharon says

This book is extremely sad but well written and makes you really take time to appreciate and spend time with the ones you love. Everyone should read this book. Be cautious though it is the first and only book I have ever cried while reading.

Dwór ksi??ek i s?ów says

"Wiadomo?? z nieba" to smutna i wzruszaj?ca ksi??ka przep?niona ciep?em i mi?o?ci?. Pe?no w niej wiary w lepsze jutro: "Nadzieja jest wieczn? obietnic?". Pokazuje jak choroba mo?e wp?yn?? na ?ycie rodziny i jak zmieniaj? si? wtedy jej priorytety.

To dziennik pisany przez rodziców ma?ej dziewczynki chorej na glejaka pnia mózgu. Brook i Keith Desserich rozpocz?li prowadzenie pami?nika, gdy dowiedzieli si? ?e ich córce zosta?o 135 dni ?ycia. Opisuj? walk? Eleny z chorob? i codzienne zmagania rodziny, dla m?odszej córki Grace - zbyt ma?ej by pami?ta?a i rozumia?a chorob? swojej siostry. Z czasem dziennik zosta? upubliczniony w internecie i zyska? poparcie ludzi z ca?ego ?wiata. Nast?pnie zosta? wydany w postaci ksi??ki by trafi? do jak najwi?kszej liczby osób.

Elena pomimo choroby to pe?na ?ycia, m?dra i radosna ma?a dziewczynka, kochaj?ca kolor ró?owy i falbanki. W obliczu choroby nie poddaje si? i walczy do ostatniej chwili. Troszczy si? o rodzin? pomimo utraty glosu, parali?u, braku zdolno?ci po?ykania. Rak pozbawia j? dzieci?cej niewinno?ci przez co, staje si? emocjonalnie dojrza?a. Jest ca?y czas ?wiadoma zbli?aj?cego si? ko?ca, a mimo to uczy jak ?y? i pokazuje co jest w ?yciu najwa?niejsze.

"Nauka Eleny nie odnosi si? do ?mierci i raka, dotyczy nadziei i ?ycia. Pokaza?a nam jak ?y?, kocha? i jak si? ?mia?."u

Rodzice Eleny opisuj? to co prze?yli w czasie walki z chorob?. Na bie??co informuj? czytelnika o leczeniu, przebiegu i walce z rakiem, a tak?e mówi? o u?miechu Eleny i rado?ci gdy jej stan na chwil? si? poprawia. Mówi? o nadziei, która daje im si?? w tym trudnym czasie. Wiedz? ?e nie s? w stanie zatrzyma? czasu, wi?c cieszy si? ka?d? wspóln? chwil?. Staraj? si? wywo?a? u?miech na twarzy córeczki po przez spe?nianie jej marze?: lody czekoladowe, ró?owe buty i kapelusz kowbojski, ró?owa sukienka. Chc? by by?a szcz??liwa, bo gdy ona jest szcz??liwa to i ich serca s? pe?ne rado?ci.

„Wiadomo?? z nieba?? niesie przes?anie by, zastanowi? si?: co jest w ?yciu najwa?niejsze. Zmienia spojrzenie na czas, który nam ucieka, a który mogliby?my po?wi?ci? bliskim. Mówi o mi?o?ci i wsparciu najbliższych, które pomaga w walce z chorob?. Powinni?my ceni? najdrobniejsze momenty ?ycia sp?dzanie z rodzin?.

„Nigdy nie patrz na dzie?, my?l?c, ?e jest to z?y dzie?, poniewa? ten dzie? mo?e by? lepszy od jutrzejszego, wi?c dzi?kuj Bogu za to, ?e w ogóle go masz?.”

Julie Cohen says

How do you say goodbye to a child? The journal of this family walks us through the intimate experience of losing a child. The sudden onset of Elena's particular cancer and the fact that it was considered "incurable" from first diagnosis startles and upsets us, the readers. The Desserichs writing is so compelling that we want to know how each day will be completed. Elena's determination and her "notes left behind" remind all of us of the power of communication. The Desserichs journal also reminds us of the power of family, community and love.

We learn of the many bumps and obstacles that pop up along this difficult road. We learn that for families like the Desserichs, "good" must come from this "bad". The consequence of this outlook is this family's determination to wipe out cancer. They turn their grief into hope by establishing the Cure Starts Now organization.

The book is open and honest, thoughtful and thought provoking, heart wrenching and hopeful. It is a moving tribute to the life of a little girl and her remarkable family.

Beth says

Inspirational

I have said to friends and in petitions to Congress that children's cancer research needs more than 4% of funds earmarked for cancer research. Children are the future and it stands to reason that finding a cure for cancers that affect them is a must. Hearing of the death of a child has to be one of the worst things ever but losing that child is absolutely the most devastating occurrence in a parent's lifetime. Please donate to Children's Cancer Research. Please contact your congressmen to demand more funds for childhood cancer research. Our future depends on it. Think of Elena and other children who faced death with unbelievable courage after enduring treatments that are unimaginable and help the fight for the cure in any way possible. Pray your child never faces a fight for his or her young life like little beautiful Elena fought and lost. My heart hurts for the entire Desserich family. God bless them.

Laura says

Elena was a beautiful and sweet 6 year old with a brain tumor. She loved to write notes with hearts drawn on them. They often said, "I love Mom Dad Gracie." Elena's mom and dad wrote in a journal all through her diagnosis, treatment, and progression. They lovingly and unselfishly share their innermost thoughts, fears,

desires, and emotions recorded in this journal, and they titled it "Notes Left Behind." I enjoyed getting to know Elena while reading this book, and I definitely admire the courage she had and the lessons she taught during her cancer battle. My kids have been getting extra hugs, kisses, and attention this week as I've been reading and thinking about Elena!

Ellen Isabella says

Elena, malaikat yang dikirimkan Tuhan untuk keluarga Desserich. Meskipun hidupnya hanya sampai 6 tahun, tapi dia mengajarkan dan meninggalkan pesan dan kesan yang sangat mendalam pada berjuta-juta orang. Saya sangat terkesan dengan betapa pintarnya Elena menarik perhatian dan rasa sayang dari semua orang. Anaknya kalem dan berpemikiran sangat dewasa. Orangtuanya pasti sangat bangga memiliki anak seperti Elena dan adiknya, Gracie. Keduanya sangat menggemaskan. Setelah membaca buku ini saya jadi pengen punya 2 anak perempuan. Hehe.. Elena yang pendiam, dewasa, penyayang dan Gracie yang ceria, lucu, mandiri. Duh, ga bisa dilukiskan dengan kata-kata deh kebahagiaan orangtuanya.

Meskipun sangat menderita dengan kanker yang dideritanya, Elena tetap berjuang dan tidak pernah mengeluh. Setiap harinya Elena senang menulis dan menggambar pesan buat orangtua dan adiknya di mana isinya menyatakan bahwa Elena sangat menyayangi mereka semua. Setelah Elena pergi pun, orangtuanya masih sering menemukan puluhan catatan yang ditulis oleh Elena. Elena menyelipkannya di mana-mana, di tempat yang tersembunyi seperti di laci, di tas kerja ayahnya dan di berbagai tempat lainnya. And those notes she left behind, will surely be remembered forever...

Margaret says

I picked up this book because I too lost a child to cancer. I thought the book would be more about the family coming across the notes she left for them before she died, but it was actually a day to day journal they kept during the time she was sick. It brought back a lot of memories for me of the 2 1/2 years my son was being treated for cancer before he died.

Kristyn says

I picked this book up when I was at Border's one day... the cover caught my eyes, and then the synopsis pulled me in. I'm becoming a Child Life Specialist, a professional who will work with children in the hospital and help them, as well as their families, cope with their injury or illness using play. Therefore, I thought this book would give me a perspective of the parents, and how they feel as their child is diagnosed with something as big as cancer. And yet, Elena's story has taught me so much more. She has opened my eyes to how short life really is, and to spend each moment surrounding yourself with those you love. I marked down a couple of quotes that really took hold of me while I was reading. I'd like to share a few -

"Do we ask our children, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" or should we ask them, What do you want to accomplish when you grow up?" And what is the total value of all the time we spend on diversions and distractions rather than the true purpose of living? Can one person change the world? Can one person cure cancer?" [Page 90]

"Still, what is faith? Is it faith that we will make the right decisions or faith that it is in God's hands?" [Page

136]

"Instead of talking about their lasts, we have to start talking about their firsts... It's a much better way to think about life, if you can do it. It only requires hope." [Page 144]

"Never look at a day and think it is a bad day, because this may be better than tomorrow, so just thank God that you have the day at all." [Page 177]

Story of Earl the Squirrel - [Page 181]

I absolutely fell in love with the part of the book when Elena asks her daddy to dance with her at her cousins wedding. I actually cried - it was so beautiful, and made me sad to think that her dad wouldn't be able to dance with her at her own wedding.. but then I thought, well they're dancing in that moment and that's all that should matter. Enjoy the moments you have with your children, whether they are small or big. Take pictures, and really listen to your kids. They won't be young forever, and you never know what tomorrow holds. So put away that business contract of yours, turn off your cell phone, and just be with your children. There were many other pages that impacted me, but I'd like to leave you asking yourself with what pages affected you the most, when you are finished reading the book.

Joyce says

It's really impossible to not be touched by this story, considering what it is about. But does that mean it is excellent literature? Not necessarily.

I entered to win this book knowing it would be either beautifully written or a little flat. I am not surprised to say it was the latter. While I was first reading this book, I found the writing style a little irritating. Compared to the books I usually read, it was too obviously cheesy and witty (that is, so witty that it's not actually witty). As I moved forward through the book, however, the Desserichs' feelings showed more and more. They became more vulnerable, and I felt that their writing, while still not filled with beautiful abstract emotions, became easier to relate to and feel.

To enjoy this book, you pretty much have to know what you're in for. You have to know that this is not really a book - it's more a journal or a blog that happened to be mass produced. If you realize that and are a sucker for sad, sad stories, then this is the book for you. For me, I guess not so much.

Petra says

Anyone who has experienced cancer in the family can relate to the fear, confusion, hope, despair that the Desserich family experienced. This is a lovely tribute to their daughter and a journal of their journey through the medical world of cancer.

This is the story of one brave girl and one courageous family.

Hope lives on. I hope that one day, we can say that all cancers are treatable and curable.

Nelly says

It's way too overwhelming to put my feelings in words. Really can't and don't want to put myself in the shoes

of those parents. it's heart aching ; painful.

esbrianna says

I knew this story after I took my examinations when I was in grade 5. I got a perfect score for the nth time and my teacher decided to give me her favorite book. I will be forever thankful to her because I met Elena.

It is really a story of inspiration, encouragement, hope, and love... no doubt. I won't ever forget the Desserich family. Our dearest Elena, I love you too. Thank you so much for encouraging me to still fight my disease and problems.

Dawn says

This book was a sad story about a family who discovered their six year old daughter had a rare brain cancer. The book was a journal written by her mom and dad and their difficult journey back and forth between when the tumor was progressing and Elena's motor skills would be affected and when the tumor was in remission. When she was in remission she would be back to almost normal. Not surprisingly, her parents went back and forth believing she could overcome this cancer. It is a touching and sad story and makes you realize how lucky you are if your children are healthy. Makes you realize that you cannot take good health for granted; or time with your family.

Kelly says

Sweet, heartfelt, funny, heartbreaking. Felt the journal format unduly suppressed the impact the book could have had, if it had written as a story, not an endless a series of diary entries.

There were golden nuggets of wisdom buried in the blur of individual days. Would benefit from restructuring into content areas; e.g., the organization of books like, "God Never Blinks" or "Anyway: The Paradoxical Commandments," to teach parents what to expect and how to cope with their kids' cancer.
