



The Goodbye Year

Kaira Rouda

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Melanie, a perfectionist mom who views the approaching end of parenting as a type of death, can't believe she has only one more year to live vicariously through her slacker senior son, Dane. Gorgeous mom Sarah has just begun to realize that her only daughter, Ashley, has been serving as a stand-in for her traveling husband, and the thought of her daughter leaving for college is cracking the carefully cultivated façade of her life. Will and his wife are fine—as long as he follows the instructions on the family calendar and is sure to keep secret his whole other life with Lauren, the woman he turns to for fun (and who also happens to have a daughter in the senior class).

Told from the points of view of both the parents and the kids, *The Goodbye Year* explores high school peer pressure, what it's like for young people to face the unknown of life after high school, and how a transition that should be the beginning of a couple's second act together—empty nesting—might possibly be the end.

The Goodbye Year Details

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From Reader Review The Goodbye Year for online ebook

Cindy Roesel says

Crystal Beach, California is the fictional location for author, Kaira Rouda's, novel THE GOODBYE YEAR (SparkPress). Crystal Beach, much like Laguna Beach where Kaira resides is a glamorous, upper-middle class, gated-community located near the beach in southern California. If you happen to watch BRAVO'S, The Real Housewives of Orange County, it's very similar to where Vicki Gunvalson and the cast of characters have lived for the past ten seasons. I've watched TRHOC since the beginning and I'm looking forward to the upcoming eleventh season. While reading THE GOODBYE YEAR, I felt as if I'd been beamed into a script reading. TRHOC live large, have plastic surgery, work out, shop, drink, dine out at fancy restaurants and oh, deal with their spouses, boyfriends and kids, when necessary.

In THE GOODBYE YEAR, its senior year and the moms and dads of Crystal Beach are looking ahead to when their kids fly the nest and head off to college. For Melanie, she has only one more year to live vicariously through her senior son, Dane. Gorgeous mom Sarah, who has had nearly everything nipped and tucked, realizes the departure of her daughter, Ashley, will leave her alone and crack the façade of Sarah's life, because hubby is always on the road. Will and his wife, Carol are tied to their family calendar; can't imagine the two of them spending time alone together, unless it's a school function. Now Will has to consider how he's going to handle an affair he's having with another woman, whose daughter is in the senior class.

Kaira provides a list of characters and a table of contents at the beginning of the novel, but even with that, I found myself getting lost and confused. There are a lot of characters in this novel and perhaps I just needed to pay more attention. Parents of kids beginning their senior year of high-school might connect to this book. The chapters are told from the alternating points of view of the parents and kids. I suggest an editor takes a peek before anymore printings.

Jenny says

Rouda at the height of her literary powers! A marvel!

Jennifer says

Kaira Rouda never disappoints me. I've read some of her previous books and she continues to get better and better each time I open one of her books! Kudos, Kaira!

The Goodbye Year is filled with many characters, the parents and children of a beach community. Once you understand who belongs with who and what is happening, is just about the time everything begins to fall apart for certain characters.

I was able to laugh out loud at the humorous parts of The Goodbye Year. I also was commiserating with some of the parents as I will be going through my own "goodbye year" next year. I definitely could see myself in some of their shoes.

Highly recommend? Yes! You won't be disappointed.

I received a print copy of this book from BookSparks for my honest review.

Ronya says

Horrible. F. Why did I even finish it??? My first zero star review.

Monica Murphy says

Fast paced read that threw a few curveballs at me.

Marlene says

I've always found the word goodbye to be an oxymoron. Seldom is a goodbye an actual good thing. In *The Goodbye Year*, Kaira Rouda chronicles the lives of five families. She explores the relationship between husband and wife, parent and child and between friends. The struggles we face when our children are about to leave home, when someone we love has been unfaithful and when substance abuse takes over one's life. The situations in this book are so relatable and things that happen to people on a daily basis, it makes you realize that no one is immune to personal angst. Behind closed doors, we all deal with our own goodbyes.

For me, personally, I was afraid of my "goodbye year." My boys' high school graduations were fast approaching and the thought of being an empty nester was terrifying. Not wanting to be without children in the house when I was only in my late 30s, we made the decision to adopt a baby girl. That bought me 18 more years before I had to worry about it again!

Written with such emotion and honesty, *The Goodbye Year* is destined to be a bestseller!

Diane says

Many of my friends (myself included) have hit the crossroads of life called "empty nest". Our children have grown up and gone away to college to leave us all wondering how we deal with the fact that we are no longer needed in the same way.

Kaira Rouda addresses this situation through her novel *The Goodbye Year*. In it we meet a group of families who live in a well-to-do beach town in Southern California. There are several couples who are on the cusp of empty nest, including power couple plastic surgeon Jud and his perfectly put together (partially through plastic surgery) wife Sarah, who have the perfect daughter Ashley.

Ashley is a great girl, a hard-working student, beautiful, president of everything. She is dating a football player, but becomes friendly with Collin, the son of two recent Ohio transplants. His mom Melanie works hard to make sure every post on her Facebook page represents the kind of family she wants everyone to believe she has.

Collin is musically gifted but not academically motivated like his older brother Seth, which drives Melanie crazy. She can't understand why he doesn't try harder in school. It caused much friction between them.

Will works as a building inspector for the town, and his wife is the uber-organized principal of the middle school. She has her entire family's lives on a color-coordinated schedule, with nothing left to chance or circumstance. Will is tired of being scheduled to death and is having an affair with the mother of one of the students in his daughter's class.

Rouda takes us through the senior year of high school, alternating narration from the adults and their children. I liked the differing perspectives we get from this, not only what the parents are dealing with, but also the pressures of being a high school senior with everyone coming at you about your future. It is much different than when I was in school.

The one thing I took away from this is that you never know what the person next to you is dealing with. Someone may look so together on the outside, but on the inside they may be just as conflicted or lonely or scared as the next person. Maybe it will make someone reading this feel not so alone with their own issues.

The Goodbye Year can be a little Desperate Housewives-like, with the scandals and affairs and secret lives, but it also makes you think as well as entertain you. And if empty nest is sneaking up on you, reading this may make you feel like you can handle whatever comes your way.

vvb says

It took awhile to get into this story with its big cast of characters - most of which were unlikable. But the secrets revealed from both parents and their teens were a draw.

There are plenty of characters in this story who provide different aspects of the craziness that occurs during the period of college preparation and application in the upper middle class world.

Having gone through some of that craziness last year, I could relate to some parts. Whew! It is a workout and the tension and stress is captured in the book.

Got me thinking about the empty nest syndrome.

Jacob says

Read my full review and others at Eyes and Books!

www.eyesandbooks.com

[www.twitter.com/eyesandbooks](https://twitter.com/eyesandbooks)

A gripping, phenomenal story about parents having to face reality as their children enter their senior year that is masterfully paced and beautifully portrayed.

Cindy Burnett says

A child's last year of high school is so hard for the child and the parent, and it is interesting reading about how all of these people handle it. Many of them are dwelling with additional issues, and it makes for a busy year for them all!

Jen says

There are so many ways to say goodbye. Are you ever ready for any of them? Follow the families of Crystal Beach, CA as they deal with heartache, Empty Nest Syndrome (it's real), graduation, adultery, and more. Kaira does a fantastic job of not only showing the mind of women approaching middle age and all the thoughts that go along with it, but also the troubled mind of a teenager, the unbelievably selfish mind of a narcissistic man (who you actually feel bad for for a split second at the end) and a cheater. She wonderfully weaves through their stories without ever losing momentum. They will make friends, lose lovers, find themselves and go to trial. I finished this book in less than 24 hours, I just could not put it down. And neither will you.

Sheree Kun says

Wow! Just WOW! This is an amazing book that is told through many perspectives. Had I not won this book, I would not have bought it as I'm going through my "goodbye year" with my son and thought it would make me cry. As I won the book, through Tall Poppies, I felt obligated to read it. I'm so very glad that I did! This is an incredible story as witnessed from different perspectives. It made me lighten up a little bit on my son. With that said, you don't need to have a senior in high school to enjoy this book. There is a lot of adult drama, kind of like Big Little Lies, to keep you turning the page and staying up late.

Melissa says

My oldest child is going into fifth grade, so I still have a while before he goes to college. However, I could still find some ways to relate to the parents in *The Goodbye Year*. I could appreciate them wanting their kids to do well in school so they could get into a good college and also wondering what was in store now that their kids didn't need them as much. I wouldn't say my kids don't need me, but they're definitely on that road to independence as they continue to grow and learn new life skills. However, soon-to-be empty nesters and parents whose children are about to go to college will definitely be able to relate more than I even did.

I really liked the teenagers in this story. They were dealing with stress, peer pressure, preparing for the next step in their lives, and the way their parents were acting now that it was their last year at home. I could definitely relate to them, as I had been down that road. Even though it feels like ages ago, it was interesting to live that time out again vicariously. Having said that, I think Kaira Rouda should try her hand at writing a

young adult novel.

There were a lot of surprises in store while reading this novel. Some things came out of left field and I did not expect them at all. I like being surprised and especially enjoy a good shocker. Kaira definitely delivered on that front.

My main concern was that there were too many characters. I had to go back to the front of the book a lot to double check which character was from which family. After a while, I was able to keep up. However, this also caused the climax to feel rushed, as there were so many stories going on from so many different voices. I was expecting Melanie to be the core of the story, but after a while it felt like the attention was more on Sarah or Will. It's kind of like those movies where there are a bunch of stories going on at the same time, such as *Men, Women, and Children*. It has a similar feel to that movie, as well. (Mostly in terms of all the family dynamics and drama, told from different perspectives.)

Overall, the story had great entertainment value and was an addictive read.

Dream movie cast:

Will: Paul Rudd

Sarah: Jennifer Aniston

Jud: Jim Caviezel

Ashley: Olivia Holt

Melanie: Teri Hatcher

Dane: Miles Heizer

Marni: Ariel Winter

Lauren: Melissa George

Keith: Peter Hermann

Athena says

Fantastic! I Read this book so fast because the author makes it so easy for you to understand the characters and their thinking. It alternates between the children and the parents view. You will not believe how each of these families lives take shape after this senior year. You can relate to one or more of these families and their children. This second act for these families has a lot of twists and turns. Not a dull moment!!!

Fiona R says

This was a disappointing read after *Best Day Ever*. The *Goodbye Year*'s cast was an eclectic one with a lot of potential, but the plot just didn't stand up. Sure, there was action, but I found myself rolling my eyes at its far fetched nature. Kaira Rouda definitely knows how to create characters, which is why I stuck it out to the end. I'm not deterred from trying more of her novels, but this one is best forgotten.
