



## Paradise Road

*C.J. Duggan*

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The Road to Paradise is never easy

After a year on the coast, Lexie Atkinson can't settle back into country life. She's missing the glitzy, gritty nightlife of the big city and the group of misfit friends she'd loved to hate. She knows to move forward she has to go back – back to face the guy who stole her heart.

But when Lexie arrives in Paradise City to work out if her future includes bad-boy surfer, Luke Ballantine, he is nowhere to be found.

With no home, no money and no Luke, Lexie gets a job slinging drinks at the wild Wipe Out Bar. Soon her heartache is eased when broody bar owner, Dean Saville, starts taking an interest and stirs more than just her drinks. But nothing is ever as it seems in Paradise City and when Luke barrels back into town, Lexie has a choice to make. But who will end up with the broken heart: Luke, Dean ... or Lexie?

## Paradise Road Details

Date : Published November 22nd 2015 by Hachette Australia (first published August 28th 2015)

ISBN :

Author : C.J. Duggan

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Genre : New Adult, Romance, Contemporary, Young Adult



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## From Reader Review Paradise Road for online ebook

**Kay (⌚ ? ⌚ ✨) BooksandMe says**

**4.5★**

Surprisingly, this one turned out very good for me.

First, you must read the first book, Paradise City before diving into this because: (1) to better understand Lexie and all her interactions and connections with the characters in here; and (2) to better enjoy this book.

The author, as I expected, have written this in a way that was captivating and mind you, that is very true. I started this and I can't really push myself to stop. I've tried but really, what am I supposed to do?

I think I still have some issues with Lexie but I'm happy to say that even if she's somewhat immature, and that she still made some stupid and impulsive decisions, there was growth in her character. The character development and build up was something I was glad to see. I was still pissed off with how Lexie was saying she needs to act like this and the next second forgetting about that promise she made to herself, but who doesn't? She at least was able to shoulder responsibility. I guess most notable of all was her humility. That was one thing I admire the most. To accept that you've been a bitch, or that you were irrational and most of all, to accept your mistakes and take responsibility for it.

The road to Paradise was indeed a rough one and the struggle of a teenager to make it to the real world from a sheltered life? That was something admirable. I like how I've seen the realities of life in the pages of this book.

And really, I like how where the events were leading up to. Just everything Dean did. The asshole stuff he did and all the little things he did were actually very sweet in a way, in an asshole kind of way if there is that.

Anyway, I think what I love the most was how this was not mushy and there was no corny bullshit. I think I like most was the randomness of some events, that in the boardwalk most of all. Just yeah, I'm actually surprised this turned out so good.

**Books in the series and must be read in order:**

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*For more about me and my crazy ramblings and post, reviews and other stuff:*

### **Julie says**

Waiting....it is a painstaking task to most. For Lexie Atkinson, life has been a roller coaster ride lately. After leaving small town life behind to live with her cousin in Paradise, Lexie finds herself once again faced with the prospect of leaving the exciting adventure to return home. This is the last thing that she wants. Leaving behind her friends, school, and Ballentine behind was harder than she could ever imagine. Then a ray of hope lit up a path...pointing Lexie towards Paradise once again.

There are conditions for Lexie's return to Paradise. She must find a job and a place to live before school starts. Easy....right? Not really. With rental prices out the roof and availability near the coast almost impossible, Lexie soon discovers her plans to stay in Paradise might fizzle before she ever gets going. Then she finds a job AND a place to live from the most unexpected person around.....Dean!

How will Lexie's year shape up in Paradise? Will she rekindle her romance with Ballentine? Is Paradise really and truly the place where Lexie can live out her dreams?

Paradise Road is the second book in the Paradise series from CJ Duggan. In the first book, we learned that Lexie led a sheltered life in her hometown and found herself landing in the middle of new experiences when she came to Paradise. Her romance with Ballentine was definitely worth rooting for, but left readers hanging at the end of the first book.

Now - fans can reconnect with the spontaneous spitfire that will leave you laughing at her antics. The romance between Ballentine and Lexie will leave you wondering no more!! I couldn't have been happier with the way CJ decided to lead Lexie's path!! Trust me - Lexie will lead you on a roller coaster ride that sparks with electricity!!

Seriously - I love everything that CJ Duggan writes!!

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### **Yolanda Sfetsos says**

Last week I read and really enjoyed PARADISE CITY. Actually, I loved it. So as soon as I received the second book, I got stuck into it. I couldn't wait to find out how Lexie's story would end.

Lexie Atkinson has gone back to Red Hill and is heartbroken after Luke Ballantine pretty much dumped her without giving her a chance to explain what the note he read and misunderstood really meant. And what makes matters worse is that her aunty and uncle are moving away from Paradise City, so she won't be going back to finish her last year of high school there. Except, she's almost eighteen and thanks to her zany uncle's idea, she proposes a crazy plan to her parents.

They give her a couple of weeks to find a place to live and get a job to support herself in Paradise City. If she does that, she'll be able to stay there and finish school on her own. However, as soon as she arrives things turn sour. Luke has left Paradise City, her cousin has become friends with Lexie's nemesis, and the only place that comes remotely close to offering her a job is the Wipe Out Bar. The dive owned by Luke's half-brother, Dean Saville. The same guy who looks good but is so frustrating they spend most of the time bickering.

Still, she gives it a go and winds up getting herself into one bad situation after another. How's she supposed to concentrate on school if she can't even get her life straight outside of it? If she can stay out of trouble for just a minute, maybe she'll work it out...

You know what? I didn't enjoy this installment as much as the first.

When I started reading, I once again found myself charmed by Lexie's voice and was instantly hooked into her story. But when she moves to Paradise City and starts on an awkward road back to recapture what she loved about the place so much, I started to realise that the story wasn't working for me. There was something missing. The awesomeness of the first book was gone, replaced with something else. All of a sudden I started to find Lexie's klutzy actions and inability to stay out of trouble, silly, selfish and immature. Whereas she soldiered on through all the ups and downs before, now she was totally unravelling and becoming whiny. I didn't like the person she was becoming.

Not to mention that her friend Laura practically disappeared and instead somehow became as unappealing as Amanda & Co were in Book 1. But worst of all was that I didn't buy the romance. No matter how hard I tried to get into it, I just couldn't. Mainly it was because I didn't like Dean. I didn't like him in the first book, and I certainly didn't like him in this one. He's smug and arrogant, a total jerk she doesn't even get along with. Yet (somehow) finds herself attracted to. Nope. Couldn't believe that. I have no problem with relationships that start from two people not liking each other and then one day realising it was because they're so into each other, but this was not an example of that. At all.

And Luke? Well, after a whole book of dreaming about him and building him up to be the perfect guy... he became background dressing. A way to push her towards his brother. What about school? It became something that was hardly mentioned. Almost forgotten in her quest to take over a bar she doesn't even own. :/

It was a shame, but this one just didn't work for me.

*Paradise Road* is an entertaining, well-written book that will keep you interested in Lexie's troublemaking adventures. If you enjoyed the first one as much as I did, it's worth giving this one a go. What happens here might work for you, but it might not. I can't help but feel like this shouldn't have been a duology, and rather, a stand-alone with a HEA. But that's just me.

Oh, and one more thing: the cover didn't work for me either. I liked the previous covers a lot more.

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### **Oana D. H. says**

#### **"Sometimes people just need a bit of though love"**

When i first heard about this series i was happy,that's because i love the way C.J Duggan writes,but after Paradise City i wanted to read more and more..Honestly,who wouldn't?

I was a little shocked because of the way the first book ended,so when i saw that Negalley approved my request i started reading the book ASAP.

And i'm really glad.

**"Tomorrow i would take the first step towards changing my life forever."**

I admit that there were times when i laughed out loud because of the way Lexie acted, but sometimes, i wanted to shake some sens in her. Returning to Paradise made her do crazy things, but i never thought that everything will change in that way.

Lexie Atkinson's wish to return back to Paradise wasn't something easy to fullfill, but somehow she promised to do the unthinkable: find a job and live on her own.

This time i admit that she wasn't exactly my favorite, but she had her moments when i refused to give up on her. Her attitude was reckless and impulsive.. She wasn't the same Lexie i knew about. But... The best part: she proved -sometimes- that she could do anything.

The reason i loved this book? Well, i give you one name : Dean.

**"Waiting for Dean was like battening down the hatches for an impending hurricane. You knew it was coming but there was no real way of knowing how destructive the path might be."**

Honestly, between Ballentine and Dean, this time.. and well, forever from now on, Dean is my favorite. I now understand a lot about him and i'm beginning to think that he and Lexie are perfect together. And that... in the first book i was too blind to see him.

Honestly, i was excited to read this book- and i enjoyed reading it from the beginning until the end. It made me appreciate Cj more for writing such an amazing story.

You could say that it was a bit of rollercoaster, mainly because everything that happened between Dean and Lexie.

Sometimes, i honestly admit this, i tried to understand what was Dean's problem, but i got my answer and i'm pretty much sure that even after all he is still my favorite.

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Returning in Paradise might not be exactly how Lexie expected, but the result? It was pretty much the best thing that could happen to Lexie.

### **Anatea Oroz says**

I can't really say it was a bad book. Every book C.J. writes has to be an ok book, but my problem with this one is that it did not go at all the way I hoped it would. Paradise City ended with such a cliffhanger and of course in this one we expect answers, we expect stuff, but nothing is answered. It's almost like a completely new book, like screw you Ballantine, we don't need you anymore even though you're here. I didn't like it. I expected more, I wanted more. It's like this book went the easy route, so it's getting the easy rating - 2 stars is enough.

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### **Angel says**

**This review may contain spoilers if you have not read the first book.**

I can honestly say that I have enjoyed the heck out of my trip back to Paradise City, with its white sand shores, crystal clear waters, bonfires on the beach and an incredibly hot tattooed bad boy. The second book in C.J. Duggan's *Paradise* series picks up with Lexie back in Red Hill and heartbroken, but yet dying to return to Paradise City.

After Ballantine's no show, Lexie mopes around for a while... until her uncle comes up with a brilliant idea, a way for her to go back to Paradise City. Back to Ballantine. However, things are not as she expected them to be upon her return. Her cousin is friends with Lucy, the one girl Lexie hates the most, her only friend rarely has time for her anymore, and the boy she was looking for is not the one she found.

I felt everything Lexie was feeling in this book. C.J. Duggan has an uncanny talent for placing me right in the story. It happens with every book she pens, that I have read. At the end of *Paradise City*, I was hoping for more Dean Saville. And, boy, did I get more. Although I would be lying if I said my heart didn't start racing with the rumor of Ballantine coming back to town. They are like the Salvatore brothers on *The Vampire Diaries*, so hard to choose between the two. As is the case with the Salvatore brothers, I like the older one just a teeny bit more and I am elated to have more of him in this story.

If you're a fan of Abbi Glines, you should give this Australian New Adult romance a try. I loved it! Highly recommended to everyone!

*ARC provided through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review*

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### **Hannah says**

Be still my beating heart. Dean Saville.

Reading funks suck, but they exist. And when I fall into one (which is approximately 3 out of 4 weeks in a month), there's certain authors I love to turn to. They're my comfort food - the pizza and the chocolate of the literary world.

I've never been very good with contemporaries - I'm more of a speculative fiction type of girl - but there's something about the way that CJ writes that pulls me into the worlds she creates. There's that familiarity of the Aussie lifestyle that she can capture, whether it's the 90s or today. If the Paradise duology were a song, it'd be Thirsty Merc's In The Summer Time ([link](#)).

Paradise Road takes us back to where it all began and ended, picking up on a high note that lasts the whole book. While a quicker read than the first, Paradise Road is a ride that I never wanted to end - specifically because, well, I always preferred Dean Saville, and it was his time to shine.

Lexie had more of a chance to grow in Road - gone (for the most part) was the girl of City who was whiney and intolerable. At the start of Road, Lexie is dealing with the fallout of what happened in City - with Ballantine gone and not talking to her, and then her parents dropping the bomb that she may not be able to go back to Paradise. Instead of spending too long moping about it - she decides to prove everyone wrong and

land a job and a place to stay.

Ironically, it's The Wipeout Bar that becomes Lexie's new home and the focal setting for the book. And as we know from City, The Wipeout Bar is owned by no other than everyone's favourite brooding boy, Dean Saville. I loved the side of Dean we get to see in Paradise Road. He becomes the centre of the story, and is a real testament to the growth of Lexie. He helps her mature into a young lady, while at the same time pushing past his own prejudices. There were a few times things were glossed over - like the reason he and Ballantine have never gotten along, but really, at the end of the day, I was just happy to have Dean. Gorgeous, perfectly flawed and tender hearted (but shh don't tell him that!)

So basically, if you want something sweet with a touch of sexy, something that you can whip through easily on a day, then read this series. In all honesty, you can't get better than a CJ Duggan novel, because you know it's going to have that perfect blend of Australian humour and romance that will leave wanting only more.

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### **Naomi says**

Original Review @ Naomi's Reading Palace

#### 4.5 STARS

I read the first book, Paradise City, back in March and I've been keen to continue Lexie's story. She didn't leave Paradise City a happy girl and spent most of her Summer miserable and was eager to get back there to sort things out. It was hard in the beginning, she felt invisible and had to find her own way in Paradise City, or she'd have to return home.

Lexie is a character that I love to read about! She is such a quirky girl, who says exactly what she thinks and often acts before thinking through the consequences. I was often laughing at the stunts she pulled, but there were times my heart ached for her because she wanted her friends, or just to simply fit in.

I liked seeing more of Dean in this book too. He comes across cold and uncaring, but he goes out of his way to help Lexie right when she needs it. There were times that Lexie could see him let his guard down, before he would slide his cold demeanour back in place.

I think that C.J. Duggan did a great job at delivering Lexie's story and I enjoyed this book more than the first one. It wasn't just focused on Lexie at school but about how Lexie needed to find her own path in life. She needed to step up and find her own place to live and to get a job. She learned so much about herself and was a stronger more confident girl by the end. I would like to see more of Dean and get his story so I can understand him better... I can only hope!

Complimentary copy provided by the Publisher, via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Jodie says**

See more reviews at Words Read & Written

Gosh... I LOVED Paradise City. It was a 5 star read for me. It was fresh, light, sweet, cute, I fell in love with characters, and was sucked into the passion of the story.

In comparison, Paradise Road felt lacklustre, which sucks because there is nothing worse than a sequel that fails to live up to its predecessor, and I really wanted to love this.

My main drama was that nothing really happened. I got halfway into the novel and it felt like CJ Duggan was struggling to fill the pages. There were so many scenes shoved into the narrative which felt completely unnecessary. I found myself thinking c'mon, c'mon as though urging the plot to hurry up and make an appearance.

Even more frustrating than that was Lexie... I loved Lexie in Paradise Road, but in Paradise City I really disliked her. She was needlessly dramatic, self-absorbed, and selfish. I understand that the author was trying to portray her finding herself, but to me, she just seemed like a silly, spoilt child.

I don't know... I guess this sort of lacked the magic of the first one.

My Verdict – 2 stars

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### **Raven\_Blake (dreamy addictions) says**

Same Review Also Posted In My Blog: Dreamy Addictions

Paradise road is a sequel to the paradise city and also the conclusion to the series. I liked Paradise city but I loved Paradise road and I enjoyed it more than it's previous installment. It was nice sequel and i'm quite satisfied with how it was finally concluded. With how the first book has ended, I eagerly waited to know what's going to happen next. In Paradise Road, we get to know more about Dean Saville which is something I was looking forward to since I've finished its prequel.

Heart broken Lexie is back in paradise city to rekindle her relationship with her boyfriend and solve the misunderstanding between them but he is nowhere to be found and she's quite upset with his absence. To add more misery to her situation, her aunt is relocating which makes her homeless. With no money, she is in desperate need of job so that she could find a place to rent and if she didn't find a job in time then she has no choice but to leave paradise city. To prove her parents that she could be independent, she sets her pride aside and manages to get a job in wipe out bar which is actually her last resort because it's owned by none other than Dean Saville whom she tried to avoid meeting. Whenever Dean and Lexie meet, there are fireworks everywhere and with time they start to get to know each other well and forms an attraction which they can't avoid but with the return of Luke Ballantine, Lexie needs to make up her mind and choose the one her heart really wants.

Lexie is more mature and independent than her previous self in Paradise city. After getting her heart broken, she finally decides to move on and find herself. I really liked her character in the plot and I'm glad that she finally came to her senses and stopped chasing after a guy who didn't give her a chance to explain. Dean Saville is a total hottie and my favorite character in the plot. I just loved his snide remarks, arrogance and

smugness which makes him more appealing. He always has a hard exterior but inside he is a softie and really cares about Lexie. I enjoyed how he always likes to tease Lexie and not to forget the banters between them. The chemistry between Lexie and Dean is very intense and scorching hot and I quite enjoyed their relationship. From the start, I was rooting for Dean because the chemistry between him and Lexie is much better than Luke and Lexie because the relationship between Luke and Lexie seemed like it was only a physical attraction. The supporting characters are also good and well connected but I didn't care much about them because my focus was always on Dean and Lexie.

I really liked the plot and how it was executed but it seemed kinda rushed at the end nonetheless it was great. The pacing was also good, it was neither slow nor fast. I must say Miss Duggan has a great writing style and it was another best thing about this book.

Overall, I think it's a perfect conclusion to the story and I really liked it. It is my first series by C.J. Duggan and I really need to check out her other works too. Do I recommend it? Yes, It was a great contemporary romance and definitely worth reading.

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### **Leah says**

#### **THIS BOOK BLEW MY SOCKS OFF**

Back in April I read this really amazing book. Paradise City. I met Lexie, and Ballantine, and wrote a pretty freaking awesome fangirl-y review. I REALLY DID. It literally blew my socks off, and did I believe the sequel could do the same? DID I HECK. BUT IT WAS BETTER. IT WAS ONLY BLOODY BETTER. I can honestly say that Paradise City and Paradise Road are two of the best freaking books I've ever read in my life. UTTERLY amazing and I bow down to the altar of CJ Duggan's writing because she SLAYS ME.

#### **I READ THIS IN ONE SITTING!!!!**

ONE BLOODY SITTING. I am writing this at 1.08am because I am that hyped up about how good this bloody book was. I mean BONKERS good. AMAZING good. BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR GOOD. CAPS LOCK GOOD!!!!!! I am honestly amazed, after reading Paradise City, I never would have thought the sequel would go where it went and I'm literally the happiest person alive right now (which is true, because every body else is ASLEEP). I loved Lexie in Paradise City, but I loved her EVEN MORE in Paradise Road. I LOVED that she was doing her own thing, getting herself a job and a place, and growing up. I loved the decisions she made regarding her love life (OH YOU'RE IN FOR SUCH A SURPRISE). I loved that she didn't just collapse under the weight of her Ballantine grief (I'M LOOKING AT YOU, BELLA!!!!). It was just mind-bogglingly good. I raced through this book, barely believing my eyes at just how amazing it was. Have I mentioned this book was AMAZING yet?

#### **#TEAMDEAN #TEAMDEAN #TEAMDEAN**

Back in Paradise City, I loved Ballantine. I LOVED HIM. But there was very, very much a spark between Lexie and Dean, Ballantine's sexy, dangerous, tattooed (!!!) half-brother. There was just something about him that made me feel all warm and fuzzy inside, even if he was a bit dangerous with a stare you really want looking at you. You really do. He just had that spark, and he and Lexie have this amazing banter, Lexie is one of the only people who actually puts Dean in his place and the sparks FLY. THEY FLY. I saw it in Paradise City, but here in Paradise Road it's off the bleeding charts. It's INSANE. It's heady, special,

magical, and you know you're witnessing something great. I said in my Paradise City review I wanted my own Ballantine. Screw that, I want my own Dean, please.

#### READ THESE BOOKS!!!

I honestly can't get over how much I loved this book. It was INSANE. It made me excited to come and fangirl all over it at 1am with my review. It made me so excited to read again, after some drab books. I so, so wish there were more exciting New Adult books like this, more exciting Chick Lit books like this, with spark and wit and humour and a brooding bar owner or surfer. It just grabbed me and wouldn't let me go and made me a very, very happy clam. As if all the capslock and exclamation marks didn't tell you, eh? This was a seriously good duology. AMAZING. Mind-blowing, I want-more amazing. Sigh. I can't believe it's over. I want to just hide in my room for a week, because how do I pick up my next book after THIS? Talk about #bookhangover.

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#### **Kelly (Diva Booknerd) says**

Lexie Atkinson is back in her sleepy home town of Red Hill for the summer, grieving for the relationship what could have been. With the bright lights of Paradise City in her sights, Lexie plans to return to the city. I adored Paradise City. A small town, home schooled Lexie Atkinson was a breath of fresh air as she navigated her new life in the city. In Paradise Road, unfortunately Lexie now is under the illusion that with her aunt and uncle unable to offer her accommodation, she'll be able to find work, complete her education and become independent. The one condition that will allow her to stay.

Conveniently, the Wipe Out Bar is looking for employees and with a small room available for lodgings, Lexie is now reluctantly employed by Dean Saville. Lexie is determined and begins to assert her dominance, believing she has the authority to transform the bar into a family friendly atmosphere. Her vision was innovative but ultimately, she is a young woman who knows nothing about small business management and infringed on her employment boundaries. While Lexie is coming to terms with her relationship falling apart, Luke is consistently in her thoughts even while beginning to pursue Dean as a romantic interest.

I found the romance between Lexie and Dean improbable unfortunately due to Lexie's demeanor, interchanging one brother for another. The pleasant, country charm is replaced by a determined and arrogant young woman, naive and frustrating. Although wonderfully written, Lexie was incredibly unpleasant and hindered my enjoyment of the duology finale.

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#### **Nancy The book junkie says**

Rating: 4.5/5

Review coming soon!

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#### **Terri says**

Review also found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2012/07/review-paradise-city.html>

I waited a long time for this story. I read the first book Paradise City before it was released back in April and had to wait until December for the conclusion. See review of Paradise City here . The first story captured me so therefore I waited not so patiently to see how everything would play out.

I would not recommend this as a stand alone novel. It clearly picks up where the first one ended and without reading the first one the meaning would really be lost. I would also recommend reading them back to back as for me, the distance between the two made me forget parts of the first story.

I am really struggling to write my thoughts on this story without giving away any spoilers from either of the books. I can say as I have said before with Duggan's work is that she has a way of capturing attraction/longing/chemistry that although I do not have the words to describe. always seems to capture me. While I preferred the way she captured it in the first story better, I was still sucked in.

Although this story delivered exactly what I thought it would, it also omitted or played down some aspects that I thought would be there. The love triangle as advertised on the synopsis didn't end up being how I thought or expected it to be. That's ok, I still enjoyed the story and ultimately the outcome.

Duggan is one of my guilty pleasures. I have read the majority of her stories (that I am aware of) and they always deliver exactly what I want. A romance that has the right amount of angst while not being to old or too young for any particular demographic. Hopefully she will continue to write and produce stories that I am anxious to read.

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### **Melanie says**

I've been waiting for Paradise Road for a long time, in fact if I remember right I got the first book early through NetGalley, so it really has been a while.

Paradise Road will not disappoint. In fact this couldn't have ended better if I'd wrote it myself - well, it wouldn't have been wrote very well if I wrote it but you get the idea. It had the perfect ending.

We are joined by the gang again but some things have changed. There's also a big issue for Lexi to overcome first in this book too. I will admit I still don't like Amanda (Using bitch still springs to mind) but loved how it was her words that helped Lexi.

Of course there's Luke again and also Dean. Plus you have Lexi's 18th birthday too.

This was well written and CJ has put just the right amount of humour, romance and feeling into this book. I read this in one sitting and am so glad that the series ended like it did. 4 stars!

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