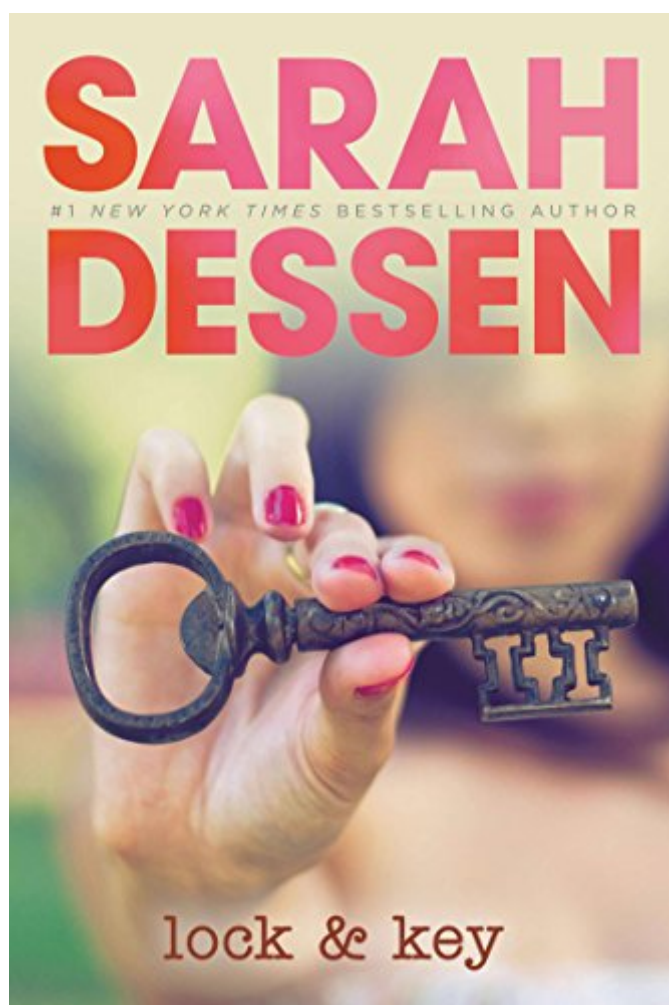


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## Lock And Key



## Synopsis

“A New York Times bestseller. Unlock your heart and the rest will follow.” Ruby is used to taking care of herself. But now that she’s living with her sister, she’s got her own room, she’s going to a good school, and her future looks bright. Plus there’s the adorable boy next door. Can Ruby learn to open her heart and let him in? • All the Dessen trademarks here • “Publishers Weekly, starred review” Also by Sarah Dessen: *Along for the Ride*, *Dreamland*, *Just Listen*, *Keeping the Moon*, *The Moon and More*, *Someone Like You*, *That Summer*, *This Lullaby*, *The Truth About Forever*, *What Happened to Goodbye*

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## Customer Reviews

Ask twenty people to define "family," and you’ll get twenty different definitions. Ruby’s definition of family is about to change, and she’s not quite sure what that means. For years, Ruby and her mother moved from apartment to apartment. They lived in random places and cramped spaces above other people’s garages. Finally, they find a little yellow house to rent. Ruby’s mother, preferring to drown her sorrows in alcohol than deal with them head-on, made her daughter give her excuses to visitors,

landlords, and bosses. The older Ruby got, the more her mother depended on her - and on substances. Ruby became used to her mom disappearing for a few days now and then. When a week turned into two, then three, then a month, Ruby knew her mom wasn't coming back. She went to work and school and lived alone for months before her landlords realized what was going on. With Ruby seven months away from her eighteenth birthday, child services stepped in. She is sent to live with her older sister, who hasn't seen her in ten years. Cora left for college and, according to their mother, never looked back. Now Cora has a successful career, a husband who is equally successful, and a gorgeous home, with a spunky little dog to boot. How can Ruby fit into this household, let alone into a new school that's posh and private? She's so sure that this could never be her home, her life, that she prepares to run away that very first night and go back to the little yellow house. Fate has other plans for her, and so does Nate, the boy next door. Though Ruby consents to stay put for the time being, she keeps the key to the little yellow house on a chain around her neck.

It's been a quite a long time that I found myself sitting up until three in the morning, wanting desperately to finish a story. But that is exactly where I found myself the other night with LOCK AND KEY in my hands. I was so engrossed in Ruby and her story that I had to find out how it ended. Ruby Cooper has always looked out for Number One. When Ruby was eight, her sister Cora left for university and never looked back. It was always Ruby and her mother, moving from one place to another. Her mother's excuse was to avoid creditors and landlords. Ruby slowly comes to find out that this is the version her mother wanted her to hear. Early on in her senior year of high school, Ruby's mom does a runner. Leaving Ruby all alone in the rented yellow house, Ruby does what she can to survive. She will be eighteen in less than a year, and if she can hide the fact that she's alone until then, the authorities won't be able to touch her. But when the dryer fails at her rented house and the landlords notice a clothes line strung throughout the kitchen, Ruby's life is forever changed. Custody of Ruby is given over to her older sister, Cora. Cora and her husband, Jamie, live in a wealthy community and live a life totally foreign to everything Ruby has ever known. Not trusting Cora and Jamie's intentions, Ruby plots an escape her first night in her new home. Making a break over the fence in the back yard, her escape is foiled by one rambunctious dog, Roscoe. Roscoe's barking brings a curious "Hello?" from the other side of the fence. Here she meets her next door neighbor, Nate. Nate's outlook on life is upbeat and infectious. But Ruby does everything she can to keep him at bay, as well.

To be totally honest- I wasn't very impressed by this book at all. Which is sucky because I love S.D. and all her other books. However, Lock and Key didn't do anything for me. It felt distant and disconnected. The reasons: Ruby was boring and bland. I personally (which is my right) found her to be one dimensional which was not my expectation at all considering S.D.'s past characters who I loved. She had little humor and just didn't have the Dessen magic I expected. Though I'm sure a lot of people can relate to Ruby. She wasn't that complex as some reviews are raving in my opinion. I thought she was stubborn and immature and the fall back of having a mom that was abusive and ducked out on her was a weak excuse for her behavior. If you want to read a book about an interesting victim of abuse, I wouldn't necessarily suggest this book because Ruby was too transparent. The Lock&Key motif was too redundant. It's just not a strong enough theme in my opinion to have been played on so much. The story moved too quickly and predictably. Not to say there is anything wrong with predictability, but in this case the actual story was not interesting enough for me to want to hang on and see the ending through. (I did though.) The friendships between Ruby and the other Jackson student didn't seem genuine or really as friendly as the story tried to say it was. Jamie was annoyingly perfect to me. I mean there's nothing wrong with a family man, and I think some of the things he did for Ruby and Cora were really sweet and unique. It's just it felt corny, and forced. Perhaps it was because it was through Ruby's eyes but I felt Cora and Jamie's relationship could have been touched on more deeply and genuinely instead of the distant way Ruby showed it.

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