



The Art of Endings

Nia Forrester

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The post-script to 'Secret' . . .

The last time Trey Denison was a “boyfriend” he was seventeen years old, and then a family tragedy forced him to grow up fast and take charge of raising his sister, Tessa. So for the past sixteen years, he had no time, and no inclination for a serious relationship. But that was before Shayla. Trey helped her face demons from her past so that they might have a future. But now he must face his own . . .

Darren Parsons loves his life. He has a rewarding career and just about any woman who sparks his interest. The problem is, the spark – and his interest – in women have both been diminishing over time and he’s beginning to yearn for more. Unfortunately, ‘more’ comes in the form of Paige Freeman, his dead best friend’s former fiancée. And that’s a line Darren has promised himself never to cross . . .

The Art of Endings Details

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From Reader Review The Art of Endings for online ebook

Rahab says

I loved how the whole book was mainly focused on the guys and how they approached their relationships with the women in their lives. Even though we got to see a lot of Paige and her past on the forefront, her back story never overshadowed Darren and Trey's struggles.

I was a bit surprised that Darren and Paige had so much history together. I had gathered that they knew each other for a long period of time and the chemistry between them was very palpable but I didn't expect that they had acted on their feelings for each other before the present. So that was sort of a nice surprise in a way. However, knowing that they had already acted on their feelings for each other on another occasion it was hard to believe Darren's reluctance to be with Paige.

I loved how Trey's character developed and how he slowly changed from a dislikable character to someone I ended up liking a lot. His support for Sheila and his sister at the end chapters redeemed him in my eyes. The interaction between him and his sister was greatly done and I really admired Tessa and how she stood by her choices and decisions. Can't wait to read her story if Nia ever writes it because it would be very interesting to see what she does with that fierce spirit of hers.

The relationship between Darren and his brother was also very well integrated to the story and he was such a different guy from both Darren and Trey and created a very enjoyable break from having to deal with the two bad boys. I loved how you showed that not all guys- especially black guys are bad boys and he showed there's some who thinks more about other things such as their education and other interests besides girls.

The issue with the baby wasn't brought out as much as I expected especially between Shayla and Trey. I haven't read Secret yet so I'm yet to see how the secret is brought out in the book and everyone's reactions to it. However, I wish Trey had included Shayla during the whole process e.g. when he was going to get tested, etc. But making Shayla busy and mostly out of town during this period helped make it believable that he kept this from her. It also shows that he cared too deeply for her and avoided hurting her as involving her through the whole process might not have been easy for her. The sex scenes are very well done. Not too explicit but not too tame either.

Overall, I really enjoyed it. I mostly love how Nia's stories keep the reader guessing as those are the best kind of stories. Looking forward to the next one!

Deloris says

I just finished reading a book by one of my favorite authors about characters that I liked in the first book but did not care for in this one and I think the reason why is because the author was distracted. I could tell when I read the book because I found the characters doing things that were hurtful but not really connecting to their reasons why. Darren and Trey were characters I really liked in the first book Secret I could not imagine Shay and Paige choosing them in The Art of Endings. I had the feeling this book was pieced together meaning the author decided what she wanted to put in the book and added where she felt it was appropriate. My author was absent in this book but hey this is fiction and romance, maybe in the next book we will get a clearer view of what's going on and why, hopefully Darren and Trey will redeem themselves. This is a good

book but, it's not my favorite by this author , I will read anything this author writes, so I look forward to her next book.

Sophie Sealy says

Spoilers

There's a continuation to the progression of Trey's and Shayla's relationship which continues to grow, so yes "Secrets" should be read first (this is not a stand alone book) because although present, Shayla and Paige are part of the supporting cast. Paige's voice is not present so the ability to like her is slim to none. As a reader I could not figure out why she would love Darren in the first place, when he didn't make anyone loving him easy. What in her past allow her to follow a guy around even after he said it was ok to date his roommate. What event happened in her past to allow low self-esteem to creep in. Why she allow him to not only mistreat her but to do so in a cruel fashion. Was she in love? Only if you believe weak women who do dumb things is the product of love. Smart and beautiful but there was no real character build up here, she was weak and had no dimensions. Is this a mistake from the writer???? I don't think so. Why? because Nia Forrester is the queen of unfolding layered emotions and not one to drop the ball in character development. Yes I believe Paige role was intentional. In the "Art of Endings" the voices of the story are Trey's and Darren's. Nia is a people watcher and a good one at that. The emotions she captures in this story are from the men. Their insecurities, the need to be strong, the need to overcome, the need to protect, the need to conqueror and the need to love and feel love. For Darren she allows him to bared his soul, his past is what makes him who he is. His past prevents him for giving too much of himself. It convinces him for a moment that he carries the sins of his parents so therefore undeserving of more. Yet he overcomes, he realizes and faces his future head-on which is with Paige. Trey's battle is to step back and allow the women in his life to grow. That it is ok to want to protect but to do so from the sidelines. It's ok to let go because those who love you will return. Although Shayla is also part of the supporting case here you know she's growing despite of her past because you see it in the emotions that Trey battles. These are the struggles of men. The need to want to escape to someone else which allows them to continue to hide from the one they love. "Secrets" and "The Art of Endings" are on my "to read again shelf".

Carolyn J. says

Artful and entertaining

Book two was artful and quite entertaining. I loved seeing both couples grow in love. Family devotion was The primary theme in this story. Well written and nicely told.

tayara tate says

Loved it

Trey got take down by a damsel in distress. I also love how Darren and his girl found their way back to each other,I knew something happened between them when they Were in college. I was glad that the baby wasn't his because he waa stressing about it to much. I loved the ending that was so cute.

Kim says

This is probably the first book of Nia's that I didn't love. I hate to write this but I was really bored with the storyline. I kept waiting for something to happen but it just never came. I was expecting more from Darren and Paige. With their background it just seemed like they'd have some hot and heavy love affair instead of all the games. Trey and Shayla let me down a bit also. The whole baby situation, with the build up I really thought it would happen the opposite way it did. I also thought Paige should have run into Justin and face her fears. Secret was such a high and I really fell in love with these characters but this one fell a bit short. The writing was still well done, and ill continue to support Nia's work.....they all can't be 5 star reads.

Deena says

I've read all of Nia Forrester's books, and she has yet to disappoint. Lately, it seems that most books are pretty short, and the stories aren't as fully developed as they could be. This author is one of the exceptions to that 220-page rule, giving us story lines and characters that are well-drawn and fully developed. She allows us to get to know these people and what they are going through. I think is why we hate for the stories to end, we feel like we know these people, and hate to let them go.

This book centers on two couples, and each story is told from the male's perspective. Amazingly, the author pulls the storytelling off well, and the character's thoughts, feelings and emotions are very authentic. I wanted to shake Darren so many times, it was crazy! He knew what the deal with Paige, but kept trying to sabotage things. Just like a man, lol!

I just love the way the stories played out. So many times, I thought Trey was gonna mess make a huge misstep, but I like the way that Dondria's character was used to bring clarity to his situation. And the whole Alicia thing? Nerve wracking, drawn out and beautifully handled.

Keep up the excellent work, Ms. Forrester. And please know that I'm sitting here anxiously awaiting your next book. Hurry!

L.V. Lewis says

As much as Secret was Shayla's story, The Art of Endings is Trey and Darren's stories and how they reconcile their pasts with the women who will be their futures. With Secret ending the way it did a reader might expect The Art of Endings to pick up there, but Nia surprised me yet again with her refusal to be boxed into a formulaic storyline to be populated by predictable characters.

Trey takes center stage in his and Shayla's romance this go round, and he has a doozy of a situation to work through. A former hook-up who happens to be the daughter of someone who could make or break his career is holding the paternity of an unborn child over his head, while he's simultaneously dealing with Tessa leaving the fold, and Shayla coming into her own career-wise. Not to mention, the looming specter of Shayla's ex Justin Ford's life possibly converging with theirs.

Darren finds himself soul-searching as he witnesses his best friend finding the kind of love that has always eluded him. In Paige Freeman he sees an opportunity lost, and a love that is forbidden, because she is the fiancé of his best friend who died in the military in the Middle East. He has set this woman on a pedestal and feels, as he always has concerning her, that he's just not good enough. In college he'd been unable to reconcile their dissimilar backgrounds, so when his friend Clint came along who possessed the pedigree of a man he thought that a woman like Paige deserved, he stepped aside.

The Art of Endings is a well-crafted story, delving into history coming back to bite two men who were both womanizers for various and sundry reasons who finally realize the "more" they want out of life can be found with the women who are right under their proverbial noses. There, of course, are other themes, but I'm not going any deeper. You'll have to read the book yourself to find the others.

My favorite and least-liked character was Darren. He's my favorite because he was so flawed, complicated, and more likely to eff up. And he was my least-liked because he did some trifling things as a result of his inability to reconcile his feelings for Paige early on. I wanted to send him off to a therapist several times in the book--or beat his ass, one of the two. However, I feel like he was thoroughly redeemed, despite everything he put Paige through. In fact, I believe I also liked Darren so much because he reminds me of a guy one of my best college friends fell for back in the day. They are married now and have a beautiful family, but she endured much of what Paige did before they finally got there. This goes to show that sometimes, it takes a very special woman/man to love that person that many see as totally unlovable.

I had to read The Art of Endings the moment it was released because I wanted to find out what happened with Shayla and Trey, but also to get a three-dimensional view of the lives of the secondary characters I'd grown to love almost as much as the primary characters.

Shahtia Gay-hairston says

Whew!

Alicia's pregnancy was like the longest ever? I love Trey and Shay together. I am wary of Dondria. Darren and Paige are interesting. They've wasted so many years. I wanted to wring his neck after the dinner party. Love can be so necessarily complicated.

Nikki Walker says

Where to start? It is so difficult to find the words to capture all that this book is--colors would be more appropriate. Vivid swirls of color. Riveting--Mind-numbing--are words that come to mind. Nia Forrester has the ability to pull you into her stories and she doesn't fail to do so in this one. She captures the challenge of two men who are having difficulty confronting the emotions they have for the women in their lives. We also see the women's response to callous actions, and how the conflict all plays out. All four people are emotionally laden but she brilliantly delves into heavy issues of distrust, betrayal, guilt and commitment, while accurately portraying the nuances of human behavior. Ms. Forrester paints a rich collage of relationship reality using flashbacks effortlessly in giving the backstory. She leaves one wondering if there can possibly be a happily ever after for either of these couples. This story is definitely a great read!

Trish Watson says

Loved It

This book touched on so many issues that arise in learning to truly love after so much loss. Be it the loss of one's parents at such a young age or the loss of parental love due to one or both parents withholding it for their own selfish reasons, it makes letting go of the negative, realizing that one deserves love, and recognizing one is perfectly capable of loving others freely that much more difficult to see. Thanks for wonderfully illustrating these concepts because they are personal to me and I needed this reminder that it's OK to love freely.

Cindy Kruydenhof says

This book finally resurfaced!

I read Secret about 6 months ago. When I had finished that book I found out that there was a book 2 and book 3. When I tried to buy book 2 it yielded no results anywhere. I could not get it on Amazon or from any other booksellers. So I was so happy when I was browsing miss Forrester's Amazon page yesterday, to see that book 2 was back in the collection. I immediately bought it on Kindle and just finished it. Which means that now I have read the whole series (I could not wait so I read book 3 before this one). Anyway, I loved the series. Though book 1 and book 3 can be read as stand alone, TAOE ties them together. The only thing is that I don't really get why Trey was so wary of commitment.

Ladyamelia says

This was not as good as Nia's other books. And it ended so abruptly....

Tia Kelly says

I was one of many that eagerly anticipated this sequel and I was not disappointed. After reading a few reviews, I wanted to add one as well, because I got something different from The Art of Endings. Quite often, I end up wanting a sequel so bad that once I read it, I am highly disappointed because it did not live up to the high from the first read. When I started reading The Art of Endings, I didn't know what to expect. A few pages in, I realized that this was not a Trey and Shayla story, it was about Trey coming to terms with monogamy along with his love for Shayla and Trey's best friend Darren discovering he has a heart and it belongs to someone from his past.

"Secret" had a few loose ends that left me biting my nails anticipating what would happen next. For one, I made it quite clear that I did not want Trey to end up fathering that woman's baby. I mean, I made that abundantly clear. So I bought The Art of Endings just to find out if he was the father or not. I also wanted to

see more of Shayla's freedom journey, as she was finally rid of her "secret" - a rape that traumatized her well into her relationship with Trey. Yet once I got into *The Art of Endings*, there were new focal points to explore and I enjoyed not staying stuck in the past (although there were a few story lines that reflected past actions, but they were all new to the reader).

Reading a few reviews, I can understand why a few readers felt the Secret story lines were lacking. Then I remember why I like Nia Forrester's novels. She writes about reality, not drama. When Trey approached the baby dilemma in "Secret," Shayla responded as a woman that was crushed but also knew that this child was conceived before she met Trey. There was no need for drive by cuss outs or constant reminders for the remaining trimesters. Shayla, being who Shayla is, was also a runner and not a confronter. Shayla handled the baby ordeal in a way that suited her and I got that. So did Trey. In fact, Trey impressed me with the handling of the whole situation in comparison to how he dealt with it in Secret.

Shayla was also a supporting role in this novel. Perhaps that is why many readers are a little put off because she took a back seat in this one. I wish there was a little more of Shayla, but quite frankly, I think her character was where she needed to be. Well not necessarily, because she did not need to be with the professor either... We forget that Shayla was released from the woman she used to be when she finally told Trey what Justin had done. That was her moment to truly heal, but like some assault victims, they will always have their moments where the past haunts them. Shayla demonstrated it on occasion, but she was no longer the same girl that moved into Trey and Tessa's basement. She was free of Justin, so that story was not what defined her any more. Her close encounters were another thing. I don't think Shayla would seek out Justin and if Justin had the guts to go to her, then I would imagine Shayla would have handled it the best way she could. I held my breath once it was said they would be in close proximity of each other because I wanted Shayla to keep moving forward and I think that the hardest part of her past was closed in Secret, with the help of Trey. There was no need to reopen it back up, but Nia Forrester demonstrated the reality that the scars will always be there.

Trey was also maturing and we watched him go from selfish, charming player to a man that loves a woman. That's a big step for anyone that does not do relationships and what we witnessed with Trey reflected his growth. I loved his struggle as a possible father, as a mate, as a friend, professionally and even as a brother. Trey grew up in *The Art of Endings*, so who Trey was in Secret is no more.

Part of that growth rubbed off on Darren, a minor character in Secret that had a big role in *The Art of Endings*. Trey was not pleased by some of Darren's behavior and Darren recognized that. Their shift was subtle, but again, another thing that made me see *The Art of Endings* as its own separate novel and not a duplicate of Secret. Darren walked into the novel as a class-A jerk, but Nia Forrester took us through Darren's thought process and experiences, helping us to see him differently by the end. Just as I was about to yell to Paige, "Girl, he doesn't deserve you!" Nia turned it around and I ended up wanting them together.

The stages of Paige and Darren's relationship was hard to read and it did make me look at Paige skeptically for a while. I mean what woman puts up with a grown man's blatant disrespect like she did. Then as I recognized Darren's struggle, I became cognizant of Paige's awareness of it as well. And it became another reminder of that Nia Forrester realism many of us love and don't even realize it.

And Tessa. She was in the background, too. Trey needed her to help him be the man we saw at the end. A man that was finally free of his own secrets and a man that was finally ready to love.

I would have given it a full five stars, but I was a little upset with a few scenes. Paige was drawn to Darren in ways many of us are drawn to things we know can't be good for us, but we want it anyway. It hurt to see her

constantly playing with fire and subsequently getting burned. I did not care for Shayla's relationship with the professor, nor did I like the direction Trey and his coworker went in. They all made sense and worked for the story, but they made me upset with the character's actions.

When it all came to an end and the paternity was revealed, I felt closure with these characters. I will miss them, but I am content with where Nia Forrester took us.

KBeautiful1 says

Real World.....Real Talk.....Real Life.....Real Problems.....Real Love!

Trey and Shayla...Darren and Paige, two couples with a myriad of multi layered issues. In book one "Secrets" we meet Shayla and Trey which primarily focuses on a tenant landlord situation at first (Trey is the landlord and Shayla is the tenant). And from there we watch a tentative and budding friendship take place and eventually the two become lovers. Notwithstanding your usual complications which always have secrets and towards the end of the book, we are left with believing a HEA.

And then book two "The Art of Endings" we were are back with Trey and Shayla but now the little glimpse that we caught of Darren and Paige comes roaring in with gusto. What can I say about this story? It was so hard hitting and gritty that you forget that it is a story of about true love. We read about the confusion between the couples, there are secrets that are coming to the surface, we see true fear of not being good enough, we see fear of being left/forsaken, we see true brokenness. What you read in this story is true life and it feels as if you are right there going through all of the emotions with your friends. You are consoling, your angry, your laughing, your cussing folks out and again just like in real life.

There were answers to questions that left us wondering and guessing, there were revelations that made you say "Aha." Everything that transpired in this amazing story, I never felt lost, I knew what was going on and at times it seem like there was a lot going on it still all made sense. The main women characters (Shayla and Paige) where just like you and I, they weren't people that we as women couldn't relate to. They were two women stripped down to the barest bones where you got a chance to see their hearts, to experience they ups and downs with them and their joy and pain.

The two main men characters (Trey and Darren) were real, complex, loving, crazy and broken. You were angry with them, happy for them, broken for them and began to understand how they were shaped into becoming the men we have come to read about and root hard for them to finally be happy.

I know that whenever I read a story written by author Nia Forrester, I better be ready for something to hit real close to home and have thing revealed in my own heart. She tells stories that are true for many of us and we may not have the names of the main characters but some how our own life stories are intertwined within her books.

There are still so many things I can still write about this story but you will need to read it for yourselves. What I will leave you with is this, We get more insight into Alicia (Trey's former sex partner who is now pregnant and the question of paternity will be answered. Also we get to see more of Tessa, she is Trey's and get to know a little more about her. Then their is Darren's little brother Devon the college student and budding artist who loves his big brother to know end)

Well that is all I will write with my review and until next time Ciao Bellas!
