



Never Say Goodbye

Susan Lewis

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For readers of Jodi Picoult, Heather Gudenkauf, and Elizabeth Flock comes a deeply moving novel of finding friendship and love in the most unexpected of places.

Josie Clarke, a loving wife and mother, struggles to make ends meet by cleaning homes and working at a diner while her husband drives a taxi. Josie's joy is her two children, just entering adulthood. But with her son recently imprisoned for a crime she is certain he didn't commit, and her daughter marrying too young, Josie now worries about the future—and wonders if she'll ever be able to ensure their safety and happiness.

Across town, in a gorgeous house by the sea, successful property developer Bel Monkton lives in comparative luxury. But she has struggles of her own. Since the death of her twin sister more than a year ago, Bel has been unable to rebuild her shattered world, and the troubled past she thought was behind her haunts her ever more.

Faced with uncertainty and heartbreak, Josie and Bel find each other and a surprising friendship that will change their lives.

Never Say Goodbye Details

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Author : Susan Lewis

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From Reader Review Never Say Goodbye for online ebook

Gemma says

I've given up on this one. It's far too long winded and over descriptive. Not really bonding with any of the characters either. Over half way through and I can't do anymore.

Linda Page says

Typical Susan Lewis - good decent read. Some serious issues, some happy outcomes. Enjoyable if light.

Stevie Carroll says

Previously reviewed on The Good, The Bad, & The Unread:

I nearly gave up on this one in the first chapter, but I stubbornly persevered and managed to find some redeeming qualities to it in later chapters, not all attributable to the writing improving further on compared to in the first chapter. On the other hand, lots of people love stories about characters struggling to cope with massive levels of unfairness being thrown at them, and I suspect that some of my issues with the plot and characterisation are standard tropes for the genre.

Josie is a working class woman living in the West of England, and very proud of the fact that she and her husband have managed to raise their children without ever relying on benefits or resorting to loan sharks. Their daughter is the first member of the family to go to university and is not only doing very well on her degree course, but has also started going out with a lad from a much better-off background. Meanwhile, their son falls in with a bad lot and takes the blame for a more serious crime than that his friends are convicted of. He now swears he didn't do it and is working hard to turn his life around and gain qualifications while in prison.

Josie and her family and friends don't quite ring true to me, for reasons that are hard to pin down; however, Bel, the heroine of the parallel and then converging story, feels marginally more real, although I'd have liked a little more backstory to explain where her money came from in the first place. Bel lost her sister to breast cancer, and as the story unfolds, Josie is diagnosed with a different form of the disease at the hospital which Bel visits as a volunteer support worker for a cancer charity. Sadly for me, Josie's list of symptoms read like one of the fictional case reports I have been known to write as part of my Day Job, so I knew from the outset where the story was headed.

The two are introduced because Josie is struggling to tell her family about her diagnosis and it's thought that speaking to someone who's been on the receiving end of similar news might help her work through her issues. The two then become friends and help each other through a series of other difficulties, although at times Josie comes across as rather spineless in facing up to the people she had to deal with, and Bel isn't much better.

The last few chapters, in which Josie grows a backbone and sets about making everything perfect for her

family, are better than what went before but don't raise this novel from being rather average, with distinctly unrealistic characters. It could have worked better as a much shorter piece: possibly an inspiring story in a magazine or on a website for cancer patients and their families. Not an author I'll be seeking out again in any format, however.

Maxime says

I was lucky enough to win this book with good reads
I am sorry to write a bad review but this book... I just could not get in to it.
Not to say it wasn't a good book just not the right storyline to grab my attention I tried several times to pick the book up & try again but to no avail.

Sarah says

Lovely read, very heartfelt couldn't put it down.

Leza Palguta says

It starts pretty slow, but the end is worth it.

Trish at Between My Lines says

4.5 stars.

Warning – this book caused me a humdinger of a book hangover and I think it's only fair to warn you that it may do the same to you! But read it anyway, it's worth the pain!

First Line of Never Say Goodbye:

“ “So what do you think that’s all about?” Josie Clarke murmured, almost to herself, as she put down the phone.”

My Thoughts on Never Say Goodbye:

I requested this book on NetGalley as I've enjoyed books by this author before. I knew nada about it beyond who wrote it. And I very quickly learned it was a book where one of the main characters had cancer which is always a hard subject to read about. As an aside this should be in the synopsis, I need to mentally gear up for books like this and a little warning would be good.

However the characters in this book are amazing. They are so ordinary; Josie could be your next door neighbour. Jeff her man-of-few-words and not always likeable husband reminds me of so many men. Together they are living a quiet life, struggling to make ends meet not exactly happy but not unhappy either.

Until they find out Josie has cancer and it shakes everything up.

I think my favourite thing about this book is how all the characters grow on you and how realistic their reactions and interactions are. The book spotlights just how cancer hits the whole family and how they don't always know the right words to say. And a lot of Josie's energy goes into worrying about her family and how they will react and not into what is facing her. It all just felt sickeningly real.

What I also loved was how through a support group, Josie met Bel whose twin sister had died from the same disease. This book above all else is a book about friendship. How female friends can boost you up, push you on, give you strength when you think you think you've none. There is something so special about a friendship like this and reading about it gave me warm feels. There is romance but it's not centre-stage instead the dynamics between Josie and Bel is at the heart of this story.

The pace is well pitched and it all flows along smoothly. You want to know what is going to happen and all the characters are so interesting that you just keep reading and reading (and reading!). There are a few sub plots going on to break the momentum of the dark storyline. However the characters are the main reason that this is not a depressing read. They fizz and the dialogue adds lot of humour at times too.

Overall I can't explain just how much this book moved me. I sobbed, literally. This is one of those special books where the characters become so much more than just characters in books and their pain is your pain. Not an easy read but a wholly satisfying one.

Who should read Never Say Goodbye?

Highly recommended to those who enjoy contemporary fiction especially if you can cope with realistic storylines. If you love reading about strong, empowering female friendships and less than perfect romances, then you need to pick this one up. And if you need a tackle hug afterwards, I'm here for you!

Thanks to NetGalley and Random House Publishing Group - Ballantine for giving me a copy of this book in exchange for an honest, unbiased review.

Kristine says

Original review found at <http://kristineandterri.blogspot.ca/2013/08/never-say-goodbye-by-terri-ann.html>...

* I received an advanced readers copy of this book from Random House- Ballantine Books via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you!*

This book needs to come with a warning label. Nowhere in the synopsis does it indicate that the story is about a terminal illness when in fact the entire story revolves around it. This is something that readers should be aware of.

The book started out just OK for me. It was a little slow and I had a hard time getting into it. The story shifted back and forth between Josie and Bel and it kind of felt like I was reading two different books at the same time. I kept wondering when their paths would cross and where the story would go. I was drawn more to Bel and to her story and found Josie a little dull. The fact that I connected with Bel was perhaps because she was a twin (as I am) and I could feel and relate to all of her thoughts and emotions when it came to her

sister Talia. I had an over abundance of empathy for her character. Josie's character was dated and old fashioned and I had to keep reminding myself that she was only 42 as she came across as quite a bit older.

If I had to rate the book on the first half alone it would get a three star rating but then (finally) at 47% the two woman met and the story improved tremendously. The story really started at this point. It became a story of hope, survival, and friendship as Josie began her battle with her terminal illness and Bel battled her demons from the past. Both characters grew dramatically and I found myself equally invested in the two of them. It portrayed a very realistic view of the power of love and friendship through the most unthinkable and devastating of circumstances. Both woman's overpowering love for their families shone brightly and the bond they formed with each other was beautiful. Lewis showed that great beauty that can be found through pain and the power of love flawlessly. Her research and knowledge on the subject was very apparent.

I'd be lying if I said that I didn't shed any tears while reading this book. In fact I shed them more than once. To me, this is the sign of a good book because I wouldn't cry if I didn't care about the characters. I'm glad I made it through the first half of the book because the second half more than made up for it.

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at [Carole's Random Life](#)

I received an advance reader edition of this book from Random House Publishing Group and Net Galley for the purpose of providing an honest review.

4 Stars

This was a good book that took me forever to read. I spent almost two months reading this book. When I requested this book from Net Galley, I had absolutely no idea that it was about somebody battling breast cancer. I am not sure that I would have made that request at this point in my life if I known that little piece of information.

My mother is currently battling breast cancer for the third time. Her first battle was over 17 years ago when she had her first mastectomy. We thought she had beat it but 9 years later it showed up again, so she went through more chemo. Once again, the family thought that she had beat it. Unfortunately, we were not so lucky and she was diagnosed with a different form of breast cancer in the fall of 2013. My life since her diagnosis has consisted of going to every surgery, every doctor appointment, and every chemo treatment. I had my first week in 2014 that I did not need to take her to a doctor appointment just a couple of weeks ago.

I am sharing this short glimpse into my life because I think it has a big impact on how I look at a book like this one. Since I have spent a lot of time reading in the oncologist's office this year, I often found myself setting this book aside to read something else. I read to escape. At this point in my life, I want to read about things other than cancer. I think I chose the wrong time to read this book.

This book was well written and I grew to like all of the characters. I must admit that I wanted to reach into the book and shake some sense into Josie quite a few times during the book. I understand that she was in serious denial but some of her actions drove me crazy. I really liked Bel's character and found her friendship with Josie to be authentic.

This is not an uplifting book. It deals with cancer and how it impacts the lives of everyone close to the patient. While Bel is not a cancer patient, she has quite a few difficult issues that she is dealing with during this story. Josie helps Bel out just as much as Bel helps Josie which is how friendship should work. All of the characters grow over the course of the story and discover what is really important.

I would recommend this book to others with the warning that it deals with cancer. This was the first book by Susan Lewis that I have had the opportunity to read. I look forward to reading other works by this author in the future.

Bev Taylor says

how would u cope with losing someone u love?

josie is the sort of woman u never forget. she is warm, always has time for anyone, loves her family and lends a listening ear plus comfort or advice or needed

then her world is turned upside down when is is diagnosed with breast cancer and has to undergo 6 months of chemo all before her daughter's wedding

this brings her into contact with bel who lost her twin sister to cancer who is now rich but lonely and haunted by a past that has destroyed her confidence and made her fearful of the future

can the 2 of them aid each other in navigating the paths ahead of them whilst also finding their true selves?

a deeply moving novel very well written with great characterisation that brings u up short and really makes u appreciate what u have and just enjoy each day as it comes.

just one question - surely the victim could have identified the person who hit him plus there would have been hand prints on the weapon

bev

Ashley says

This review can also be found at <http://chiquitablogger.wordpress.com>

Yeah, so this has been a rollercoaster of books for me. The last one I read was SO good! This one? Not so much.

The book is written in 3rd person about Josie who literally does nothing but go on and on about her daughter and amazingly wonderful and awesome she is. And then her son is in jail, and literally the talk about these two goes on for NINE PAGES! We get it. You love your kids. But her husband refuses to see her son cause he's in jail. Like this was seriously the first 20% of the book. I'm sorry. I need a little more meat in my stories, so I unfortunately had to DNF it. Take a pass on this one.

Received an ARC for honest review.

Judy Collins says

Thanks to NetGalley and Random House Ballantine for providing an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review.

First and foremost, when I search for a new book to read (especially by an author I have not read previously), there are a few key critical factors (1) Does the front cover draw me in and is it a high resolution image? (2) The synopsis of the book. Does it appeal to me? (3) Praise by another author I have read or follow? (4) Other reviews which is sometimes difficult, if a pre-release.

Yes, Yes, and YES . . . to all of the above, **NEVER SAY GOOD-BYE** is brilliantly written- *Bittersweet!* Having read all of *Diane Chamberlain's* books (one of my favorite authors), to see her quote on the front cover – sealed the deal, even before I began reading. And oh, the stunning cover.

I loved everything about this poignant story- did not disappoint! Was so impressed with *Susan Lewis*; I will most definitely be reading more from this talented storyteller.

The characters are real, and flawed; each of them experience growth from the time the story begins until ending--excited to share in their journey. The ending was perfect, and you come away with a sense of peace and reflection. Readers will fall in love with each of the characters, and a thought-provoking takeaway, lingering long after the book ends.

The altruistic Josie, loving wife and mother who puts her family first; Jeff the hard nose husband and father which turned out to be a lovable humble puppy; Ryan and Lilly, her children she always protects; and Bella, which I loved from the beginning to the end – an angel and a best friend we all want to have in our back pocket. *Her past, present and future were also an integral part of the book.*

This novel is more than differences between poor and rich, and cancer - it is about friendship, love, family bonds, even romance; how circumstances and obstacles make us stronger, and how people or angels are sent to us at just the right time when we need them the most (*sometimes a family member will just not do*).

On a personal note, this book has special meaning to me. My mom had just received the news she has colon cancer, metastasized to the liver. She worked out six days a week (age 81) and very healthy and fit, with no history of cancer in the family. My dad had just received the diagnosis of leukemia (stage one) a few months prior. Everyone was shocked. (she starts chemo in April).

During the week she was in the hospital, I started this book as perfect timing. **Never Say Goodbye** really demonstrated to me how a cancer victim worries about family members, more than themselves and how faith, determination, and the support of close friends can heal their souls and bodies. (this is so true).

I so enjoyed this quote, “The cancer and treatment are only the staples holding things together; the pages are for the story of my life and I intend to keep filling them.”

Resilience and courage are the key points of this powerful yet compelling story, told with sensitivity and compassion. I highly recommend the book and this newfound author!

12/2015: "Hi everyone, Update: Mom is 83 now; cancer is still lingering; however, she has finished chemo 6 mos ago, and all the doctors are stunned. She is doing great, looks and feels like a new woman- we forget she even has cancer. Much better than last Xmas..the chemo took a toll on her. Dad is doing great too!"

Anna says

Josie Clarke and her husband are struggling to make ends meet. Their son Ryan is in prison and their daughter Lily is at the university. Despite life's hardships, Josie tries to maintain a positive outlook. For Josie, family comes first. When she is diagnosed with breast cancer, her first thoughts and concerns are for her family. She struggles with telling them the devastating news. Bella, having lost her twin sister to cancer is asked to meet with Josie to counsel and support her in her battle with cancer. A beautiful friendship develops between the two women and they find they are able to mutually support one another. Bella struggles with the loss of her sister, and accepting the new wife of her brother-in-law. They are her tie to her sister. Bella also has some unresolved guilt and hurt from her childhood. Bella and Josie each needed a friend to face the future and to share secrets with.

The story is a compassionate look at not only the person who has cancer but also the effects a cancer diagnosis has on family and friends. A sad, but memorable story.

Trish Mcdee says

This is the type of book you gel with instantly, perhaps because of the subject matter. It is gripping yet so informative, and, later on, rather emotional but don't let that put you off!

An excellent read. I will look out for more from this author, Susan Lewis.

Melinda says

Lewis is known for her ability to tug at readers heartstrings while traversing complex and poignant family issues fully demonstrated in *Never Say Goodbye*.

Quite a tearjerker this story struck home with me. The devastation of breast cancer for both victim and family is tastefully presented. The characters are compelling, both Bel and Josie greet you with incredible warmth and love you become so wrapped up in them it's almost as if their close friends of yours. The narrative is brimming with sensitivity, compassion and incredible depth. A heartbreakng novel peppered with humor bringing an envelope of plausibility. Two women vastly different bridged together by harsh circumstances, a shared tragedy.

A beautiful story of relationships, friendship, family and the incredible power of love in this emotionally raw novel. Lewis and her smooth prose will appeal to your heart and soul. Touching story, anyone suffering a loss of a loved one will have a connection to this moving story. Heartwarming and heart wrenching.

