



The Absence of Olivia

Anie Michaels

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My name is Evelyn.

I met Devon and instantly fell for him.

Weeks later he fell for my best friend.

Never one to make waves, I watched as they started a life together. I stood by as their family grew, was the maid of honor at their wedding and the godmother to their children. All the while, I was longing for him, watching as he became the perfect husband and father. I was never jealous. I wasn't even angry that my best friend had the only person I wanted. I had simply resigned myself to living without his love, but still being a part of his life.

Then, one terrible day, my best friend died.

She died and we all struggled to live life without her. Slowly, as the pain eased, our eyes opened and Devon finally saw me.

This is a story about second chances and second choices.

This is the story of how my life changed in the absence of Olivia.

The Absence of Olivia Details

Date :

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Author : Anie Michaels

Format :

Genre : Romance, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Absence of Olivia for online ebook

Carmen says

To tell the truth, this book didn't leave me happy.

But it gave one hell of food for thought!

WOW

I am impressed! This book was quite wise, it gave exactly how life usually gives:

Not what you want, but what she pleases. And life , given enough time, can show us what really was best.

This book shed some light on some things I've been thinking.

Always, ALWAYS be your own choice, you have to stand up for yourself

and Never, NEVER be someone's SECOND choice.

Sometimes we are in situations because we, WE! let ourselves feel that way.

Spending 10 years of your life hanging on to someone who never really thought of you,

WOW, This book gave me feels, even though I never passed through this situation, I had a few "crushes" of my own, and now, WOW, this book was a mindblown to me. I hope I'll never let myself feel that way again or ever. Pining over someone is the WORST!

Again, we got to remember, NEVER BE SOMEONE'S SECOND CHOICE!!! EEEEEERRR!!

We deserve to be cherished and treasured and be someone's one and only!

But, to have that we have to be our own FIRST choice, to see our own value.

This was the message of this book and I couldn't agree more.

To finish this:

"If your friend was still alive, he wouldn't be with you. The last decade of your life shows that."

That, people, is something truly brilliant!!

If, whoever you want, like, love whatever, If they don't pursue you, choose you over something

Well, you have your answer: They DON'T want you.

Yeah, it's harsh.

Yeah, I know the romance books, films, your friends say otherwise, but real life is not that way.

Another thing, people usually know when someone likes them, most of the time, so if your beloved hasn't come up to you, you got a NO.

This is my cue, I hope others have some insights too while reading this book.

Diane plourde says

ARC for The Absence of Olivia by Anie Michaels

I received this ARC in exchange for an honest review. It will be kept spoiler free. Trust me you don't want me to spoil it for you. I will be doing this review differently from all the other ones I've done so far. It deserves to be done that way. I usually start with how many stars I give and why, but not this time, it will come later on.

I've been reading for years now. My goodreads challenge states that I've read over 180 books this year. That's a lot of books multiplied by a lot of years. There is something I do 99,9% of the time. Half way through the story, I jump to the conclusion and read the epilogue. People ask me why I do that? For me, it fuels my enthusiasm and anticipation. I did not do anything differently with this book. After I did that, I was mildly disappointed because it was not supposed to end like that. I didn't have all my key players yet. The blurb led me to believe I was reading a certain kind of book. I thought I knew the progression of this book and how it would end. What I thought would happen didn't. But I'm very glad. I was under a false illusion on how I wanted it to go.

This story is so much more than a love/romantic book. I do not want to rob the readers of discovering themselves what this book is about. In order not to spoil it for the readers, I will focus on one character: Evelyn/ Evie/Lyn.

Evelyn met Devon first while she was in college, but she did not see him again until her best friend Olivia introduced him as her boyfriend. Evie spent a decade of her life living a lie and in the shadow of Olivia and Devon. She watched them marry and have children together. She was in love with Devon. During that period Devon cared and even loved Evie more than friends should. They never acted on it. The friendship between Evie and Olivia was strong but it was not where the focus was placed. Because there were times, I thought Olivia was a selfish, self-centred person. Olivia was Devon's first choice. Evie could not hold on to relationships during that time because she had unresolved feelings for Devon. She was always there for them throughout the years. Then Olivia dies. Evie spent a decade thinking Devon was it for her, but she was living under false pretences. Harsh reality; she doesn't know who she is.

" You deserve to be someone's first choice, Evelyn"

Evie thought she knew what she wanted but she doesn't. Now she needs to find herself first before finding an everlasting love. Once she leaves that shade, she starts to live a fulfilling life. She needs to step away in order to move forward. Evie is a fighter and a survivor even if she was in limbo for years. She has a lot of self control because she stepped away and let her best friend have her HEA.

" You're worth so much more than you're asking for. You ask people for the bare minimum and then thank them when they give it to you. You deserve more."

This is an ABOVE 5 glorious, wonderful, emotional heartfelt stars. The author wrote words of profound meaning and thoughts. Her words and the main character grabbed onto me and held on tight even hours after I was done this book. What an emotional roller coaster ride it was. Anies writing is exceptional. She has such a sweet and gentle way with words. Well paced progression of the story, told in Evie's point of view. The author was able to create characters that made me feel a variety of emotions. This story pulled me in from the start and bewitched me throughout the story. Anies deep understanding and grasp on situations between people that are difficult, painful and emotional, is one of the things that made this book so real and so heartwarming. This novel taps into human emotions so profoundly. I couldn't put it down and read for hours after my bedtime. It's just so beautifully written.

This story is about a journey to self discovery. Sometimes when things seem to fall apart they may actually be falling into place. I don't cry very often over a book but this one did. I lived through the characters. The author made sure of that. This book is in my top favourites and most memorable reads so far. It is told in Evie's point of view, no cliffhanger and an HEA. The ending was perfectly well thought out. After my epilogue incident, I went in full force and had a better understanding of the full meaning of the story. There is no cheating and no love triangle. I strongly recommend this book. This book is worth your time and money. Her previous reads are worth your time too.

London says

Why on earth would I want to read a romance about a man that never noticed the heroine romantically until the love of his life dies. She's obviously going to be second best and why would she want to be with someone that never wanted her and married, had children, and loved her best friend.

No thank you! That's not romantic at all.

Sara says

I really enjoyed this book. I read through it pretty quickly.

Being that it's about a girl who falls in love with her best friend's boyfriend and fast forward her best friend dies. I was thinking this was going to go the typical route.

Evelyn saw Devon first, but Olivia starting dating him. When Devon meets his girlfriend's best friend, the realization hits for both of them. A missed opportunity. So they secretly keep feelings on lock down. Never once giving in to them.

But I also don't think they both really loved their lives fully. They kept thinking what could have been and it made me feel like they were trapped in a time warp wishing for a do-over.

I was expecting the book to go one way and I was extremely glad the author took it the opposite!

Was there a far fetched item or two? Yes. But I still really enjoyed the book. I will definitely be reading the next.

1-Click Addict Support Group says

This was one of those books that snuck in, all quiet and unassuming, and then sucker punched me straight in the feels. It wasn't the large moments—those were sad, but manageable. It was the small observances that really hit home for me in the grief department.

“There was still a glass on her bedside table with a stack of paperbacks next to it...”

“Everything seemed to be waiting for her to return.”

These are the truths of grieving that hurt the most. The relationship between Evie and Olivia's children was beautifully portrayed. Evie never tried to replace their mother, just to fill a void in their lives. It was the awkward, never realized, what could have been with their father that frustrated the story. Even in this, though, the author did not cheap out.

No easy way out in this story, and it absolutely did not take the path alluded to. It spiraled into a tragically beautiful tale of options and choices, and always being your own first choice. It became so much more than a love story between two people. It was, at heart, a story of learning to love and appreciate yourself.

The ending was wonderful, but it still managed to sneak up on me and bring me to tears. The descriptions of how a house can be so full of memories of a person, from pictures to blankets, and yet so devoid of their presence. The bittersweet coming to terms with memories and loss, and with moving on. It was haunting and

beautiful, and I loved it! ~ George, 5 stars

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This book was so much more than I expected! I was hooked by the synopsis and so glad that I was. It was such an amazing read that I couldn't put down!

**“I was in love with my best friend’s husband; it was the ultimate betrayal.”**

Evie has been in love with Devon since the very first day that she met him in her freshman year of college. However, her best friend, Olivia, got to him first so she silently loved him for ten years while trying to move on. However, the unthinkable happens, Olivia dies.

The days, weeks, and months that follow are heartbreaking for both Evie and Devon along with Olivia's two children, Ruby and Jax. Emotions are on overload and everybody is so confused.

**“The first time I kiss you shouldn’t be a mistake.”**

This story was about so much more than unrequited love. It was about finding happiness within yourself, not being someone's second choice, and second chances. It was both heartbreaking and heartwarming. The story did not end as I was expecting—it was so much better!

**“You’re so much more than I could have ever imagined.”**

If you are looking for a passionate, sensitive read, this is the perfect book for you. I did shed some tears, but I also smiled a lot. Watching Evie find out who she truly is and what makes her happy was magnificent. I really loved how the story flipped back and forth between the past and the present. I look forward to more works from Ms. Michaels! ~ Tiffany, 5 stars

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## Kate Benson says

As avid readers, I think it's a sad downfall that after so many love stories, we tend to find ourselves reading a similar story over and over again. Sure, names change, locations shift, but many are very similar. There are core pieces of this genre that keep us coming back, but if you look over the course of so many books, many of them tend to fall into a forgotten file in your mind of things you read one day.

This book was not one of them.

While the author was able to capture what I feel to be important pieces of any good love story (amazing and relatable characters, angst, excitement, conflict, a dash of despair at just the right moment and the hope of an eventual HEA), this book was not like anything I've ever read before.

From the first page, I was pulled into Evie's reality, both captivated and heartbroken for the beautifully damaged soul we first meet. As I slowly made my way deeper into her world, though, I found that she was nothing like the other heroines I'd read. Devon? He was everything I needed him to be in those pages. However, perhaps the most amazing thing to me about this story was how Anie was able to capture so much of the people Olivia left behind, yet still make me love her just as much as those who were struggling to move on in her absence. I think that says a lot about a writer.

As I ran through a gamut of emotions from start to finish, finally brought to the end of this epic adventure, there was little I could do but release a long sigh and then smile.

This is the power of a really good love story. No matter what preconceived notions you have when you begin or what happens on your journey with the characters, that little gasp at the end? That's the sweet spot and Anie Michaels takes you there with this story in the most beautiful way.

Bravo, Anie!

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## Booknut says

**Okay...this book surprised me. Big time.**

I'll admit it - I totally started off this book with a bucket-load of assumptions.

I assumed that it was going to be one of those book that stuck to the contemporary romance cliché of pairing up the two 'star crossed' lovers mentioned in the blurb in an extremely obvious manner.

Now, I don't want to spoil the book...but boy was I wrong! I am so in love with Anie Michaels and her ability to break through the clichés and to come up with a unique and heart-wrenching story like this one.

After reading a tonne of contemporary romance, I feel like I've kind of become desensitized to the genre as a whole. Girl meets guy, guy meets girl, they like one another, something gets in the way of that, but they manage to get through it and make out a lot. *That's* the basic skeleton of typical cliché contemporary romances. But *The Absence of Olivia* is so much more. It takes that skeleton and throws it out the window. It dares to be different. It dares to create characters with depth, who are unpredictable and so very real.

If you want a book that keeps you guessing and pulls on your heartstrings, grab a box of tissues and a copy of *The Absence of Olivia*!

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## Megan says

UNBELIEVABLE. INCREDIBLE.

There aren't many books that I completely love from the beginning to the end.  
There are too many decent and ok ones but definitely not enough of **BOOKS LIKE THIS!!!**

**"I was so used to loving you both. Having her with me and you just out of reach."**

**"Olivia's absence took you so much farther away from me. Even though you're here, in my house every day. You're here, but you're never been more out of reach."**

I was moved and gutted and no way prepared for this book to take my heart and mind and make me fall so hard. I can't explain how different the story was. It just was. I thought for sure the ending was mapped out so obviously but I didn't feel that **THAT** ending was deserved and by God I am so happy the ending that DID happen was perfect. Although, towards the end I was screaming at Evelyn...*what why??????* But truly after

all the living she did for HIM she needed to live for

***H E R !!!!!!!!!*** It's why it's so unique. It's a love story but with different meaning. It's not always traditional and easily told. It's hard to endure, emotional to read and beautiful at the end.

**"But I know your secret. It's the same secret I've kept all these years."**

If any piece of the storyline had been leaked to me I would seriously have gone total loony and totally upset that I didn't experience this all on my own. Granted, I held back at one MAJOR point because it killed me not knowing where this was going but truthfully that's why it was so flipping good. I needed to know but I could never skip ahead and spoil the feelings, the excitement, the love, even the mournful mood I had while reading.

This was emotional on so many fronts. The love, the feeling, the break, the tears. Not just one character, either. These characters had charm and were so alluring. I didn't hate a single one. I understood them all. ALL of them. The writing was absolutely flawless with this task, not making me pick favorites. I felt like I saw every scene play out in front of my eyes and not just words. That's how good the portrayal and realness of the words were. This just wasn't a book. It was her life. It wasn't a carbon copy. There were no rules. It was *life*. It was mine the entire time I read it.

**"I won't just have you, I'll keep you this time."**

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**Jennifer Kyle says**

**4.5 Stars**

***"I know your secret. It's the same secret I've kept all these years."***

This is my first book by this author and honestly it was a **VERY** angsty, sad, nail bitter of a ride. The story is told in present and past chapters as we are shown the instant attraction Olivia has to Devon and the pain of finding her best friend has laid claim when the two meet again.

***"You've been pretending since the first day we met. Pretending there wasn't this thing between us. Pretending it didn't cloud every single time we've ever been in the same room. It's exhausting pretending not to be drawn to you."***

In the present, Evelyn is struggling with the loss of her very best friend, Olivia, all the while trying her best to be there for small Jaxx and Ruby. Devon seems ready to act on this ten year attraction. Devon is very grateful for all of Evelyn's help in the present and he thinks it's time to finally pursue something with her. Has their time already passed?

***"Olivia being dead isn't the reason we can't be together. But, it can never be the reason we are."***

Evelyn's attraction and connection to Devon has been so very strong over the years that it has left her accepting second place for her best friend, a position she doesn't deserve. Her struggle and feelings left me angry on her behalf because when Devon finally states his feelings it's not exactly how I envisioned them.



*"I was so content. I was so used to loving you both. Having her with me and you just out of reach."*

*"In the years before she was married, I would have given anything to take her place, but after she died, I didn't want to be her replacement."*

Meanwhile, for the first time Evelyn has meet someone who lights her up, the same way or maybe more than Devon every could. Nate is willing to always put her first. Nate, was a too good to be true type and how the events unfold towards the end left me like... really? Anyway, Nate is very sure about his feelings for Evelyn.

This story brought such an assortment of emotions in me and a huge need to discuss with anyone would listen to me. I think the author did a fantastic job in breaking and mending Evelyn. One thing in the story was too farfetched and could have been remedied easily. (view spoiler)

Fans of heartbreak and forbidden love should totally check this book out. I stayed up entirely too late and read it from cover to cover. The ride was well delivered even if I had one or two gripes I loved the transformation of Evelyn.

*"No one else is going to put me first if I don't."*

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**Nuki says**

**\*Revised\***

4 HEARTBREAKING, BITTERSWEET, UGLY SOBBING STARS

**!Spoiler Alert!**

Honestly I don't know where to begin. I was in the mood for some angst and a heartbreaking story on love but what i got was **ANGST & HEARTBREAK** in big bloody block letters. I was angry, confused, frustrated, annoyed and trepidatious through the read. Let me start by saying that if you read the blurb and expected it to go exactly as it suggests then get ready for a whole new ball game cos it is definitely misleading.. in a 'Haha.. I got you' kinda way cos the signs were there. I pretty much devoured this book in one day cos i was so emotionally wrought through out the story. It was like looking at an accident in slow motion or repeatedly watching Game Of Thrones and hoping that somehow the good hot guys don't get

killed (as if repeatedly watching them get slaughtered will change the outcome miraculously) even though we anticipate it at some stage (Yeah, the Fans know what I mean)

I don't want to elaborate on the story.. the blurb pretty much touches on the main plot line. But there are some things I need to vent about. I really like Evelyn, she was an easy character to relate to and her reasoning was quite sound at most times. However, I didn't see or feel why the big fuss on Olivia though.. I didn't feel that Olivia deserved that much of devotion and love from Evelyn. I saw her as a selfish teenage girl who didn't care much about anyone else around her except to serve her in some way. She knew that something was up between Devon and Evelyn and yet didn't try to question anything and clear things out with Evelyn, someone she considered a lifelong friend. She was definitely not my best friend material! And then there was Devon! Don't get me **STARTED** on that Idiot!! The whole thing was a cluster-fuck becoss he had no balls.

\*Sigh\* Now that that is out of my system a conversation I had with a friend comes into mind..

*"You don't always get to pick and choose who you fall in love with.."*

I wholeheartedly agree. I felt that Evie made some bad choices but in the end I think this book got us to a realistic ending considering everything that happened in their lives. This book reminds us of some of the basic hurdles in love..

"Never accept to be anyone's second choice when you deserve to be the first.."

And Evelyn truly deserved better..

So I give it 4 stars. I think I needed more convincing to the story's outcome and a stronger connection and bond between Lyn & Nate.

Sometimes I have a song in my head that assigns itself to a particular book in my head and Both Sides Now by Natalie Prass on my Acoustics playlist kept popping in.. I dedicate this song for Absence of Olivia.

There's no doubt about the fact that I really liked this story. I really hoped and wished that the MCs would have found their way back to each other.. I wish.. I wish.. I wish..but Ms Micheals clearly wanted to remind us that we all can't have happy endings we want for us and destiny has different plans.

I had to revise this review once more cos I posted it at 3:40am in the morning after suffering a major book hangover as insomnia hit me and partly gibbered through it so for all those who read thru this, I sincerely apologise for my incoherency.

Would I Recommend this? Absolutely! Don't mind sharing a piece of Hell!;)

I look forward to reading other works off Ms Anie Micheals.

Thank you for giving us a heartfelt story.

## **Brit says**

[Sorta, Yes (hide spoiler)]

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## **\*~\* Susie says**

I was pleasantly surprised with this book. A freebie on Amazon, at first I thought I'd read before. But then looking through my books, I realized I read one similar, but not this one.

I thought Evelyn showed so much strength. Once she realized she wanted to put herself first, she took a huge risk and found herself. I love how this ended, to me it was perfect.

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## **Paula says**

[ Something tells me Liv knew the entire time how Devon and Evie felt about each other. I feel like she was a bit of a manipulator and a user. (hide spoiler)]

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## **Michelle says**

I was immediately intrigued by the blurb for this book. Along with the author's note that this was not a love triangle and that no cheating would take place – I was ready to give this a shot. I sort of prepared myself for an emotional rollercoaster, imagining myself clutching my Kindle in tears through most of this story. That's not really how this all played out though.

So, a bit about the story... Evelyn fell in love with a boy, it wasn't really love at first sight, but it was close. Until she sees his arms wrapped around her best friend. For years, Evelyn has pushed down her feelings for Devon, even allowing her feelings to ruin her relationships. But she stayed faithful to her best friend. Through dating, through discovering she's pregnant, to marrying him, and then when she passes away - agreeing to take care of her family. But the feelings weren't just one sided. Devon had his own attraction to deal with all those years, but he made his choice. He was happy. A loving husband and father and now a widower struggling, leaning on a woman that loves him more than she should.

But still she remains a second choice. There because someone else isn't.

Now there was a twist to this story that I was not expecting. I am sure that book two will sway me of the stalemate I find myself dealing with right now. Part of me was really holding onto my own ideas as to how this all should end. So I am still a bit hesitant.

Although I really did enjoy this story, the premise and the characters it lacked that jolt of emotions I really wanted to experience. I had a hard time really connecting to any of the characters. I did not feel overwhelmed with how these characters felt about each other because the story lacked a bit of intimacy. I feel like I should warn that this is a pretty PG-13 romance, we get very detailed and steamy kissing but then it just sort of abruptly shifts, not even really a 'fade to black' type thing. Now, not all romances need to have sex scenes, but sometimes those scenes are needed to help solidify a bond with the characters. I had trouble

really seeing any relationship in this story as being multi-dimensional because I just couldn't see any connection forming.

I am very interested in reading the second book to get the whole story and to bring the story some closure for me. I wanted to love this book, I really, really did – and perhaps hindered my experience a bit, but I just never got hit right in the chest with a ton of emotions and I really wanted this one to get me right in the heart.

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## Lina's Reviews 🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾 Book Blog?? 🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾🐾 says

### ++++4 Stars++++

I was very eager to read this book. The blurb sounded promising and the premise very tantalising. The writing was excellent and the plot moved forward quickly.

Evie has one and only friend; Olivia. They are best friends and they are like sisters. Everything changes when Olivia meets Devon. They fall in love. They get married. They create a family. Evie is devastated because her friend's happiness is her misery. She loves Devon with a passion. She met him first but now he belongs to Olivia. She buries her feelings and sticks by her friend...until Olivia is gone.

Devon is devastated. Evie as well. But what happens in the absence of Olivia?

Boundaries are crossed, feelings are revealed and heartache is inevitable.

I loved the way Evie's emotions and inner thoughts were portrayed. I loved her loyalty to Olivia. I loved how much she stood by Devon and his kids. I felt that at times she was used by the people around her; even Olivia was cruel to her at times. I wanted to see her standing up for herself more at times. I wanted her to grasp at opportunities. She spent ten years carrying the burden of unrequited love. I wanted her to be happy.

I loved all the secondary characters. They played very important parts. I also enjoyed the length of the book. It was not tiring at all.

What lost this book my one star was the ending. I was not satisfied with the way the story turned out. As a reader I want things to be at least a bit realistic and the ending was, but after the heavy theme of the book I was expecting the story to take a different direction. Evie spent most of her adult life pining for Devon.

Emotionally, I was invested in their story so...I expected something different.

I did love the book but the ending left me a bit...empty.

I still recommend it. Great book but the ending just didn't fulfil my expectations.

*ARC provided by the author in exchange for an honest review.*

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