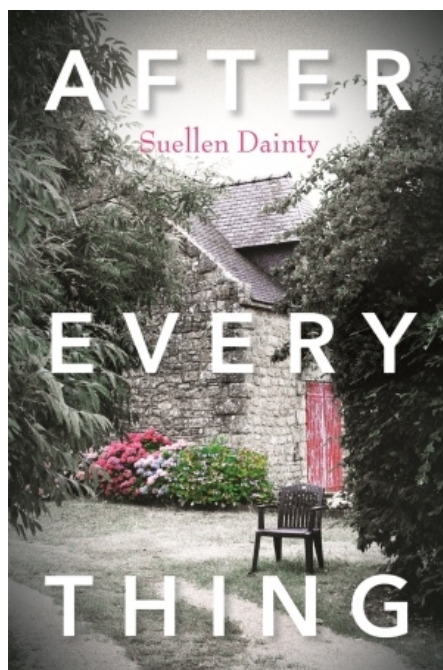




After Everything

Suellen Dainty

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For readers who were swept away by *Under the Tuscan Sun*, charmed by *Le Divorce*, and intrigued by *The Descendants*, comes a heartwarming novel about midlife coming-of-age.

It's never too late to make amends.

In contemporary London and rural France, a small group of friends reach their late fifties and discover that life still presents them with surprises and unexpected chances for new beginnings.

Recently divorced and seeking to reinvent herself, Penny moves to a picturesque town in France and renounces sex—until she meets an irresistible American philosophy professor. Meanwhile, handsome and unmarried Peter falls head over heels for the first time in his life with plump, sexy, and fiercely independent Frieda; David and Angie face challenges in their childless and co-dependent marriage; and Jeremy, twice divorced and the most successful of them all, develops a destructive interest in underage girls.

At the heart of the story is Sandy, Penny's ex-husband and a once acclaimed songwriter who realizes too late that he took his marriage and two children for granted. He wants to make amends with his family, but first he'll have to confront a secret tragedy that has haunted him for decades.

Wonderfully wise and deeply engaging, *After Everything* provides an insightful look into the complicated relationships we all experience at some point in our lives. As this beautifully written debut novel unfolds, some relationships blossom, some fade, but all reveal the ambivalent nature of the ties that bind us together.

After Everything Details

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From Reader Review After Everything for online ebook

Anne Wolfe says

Sandy and Penny are the center couple in this tale of four male friends in their 50s who have maintained close contact since school years. They are recently divorced and Penny has moved to France in a cottage she loves being alone in. Peter is a bachelor, Tim and Angie are childless, and Jeremy, another focal character, is not all he seems to be.

Sandy, a former successful songwriter and present alcoholic, ends up in the hospital having stepped off a curb and being hit by a car. Suicide attempt? Maybe. He doesn't remember.

These interwoven lives show the benefits and dangers of close friendships. Yes, there is support but also betrayal.

Sandy and Penny's children migrate to India for meaning and enlightenment and Sandy's journey to mend fences with them is a fascinating travelogue.

Overall, an interesting and gripping story makes this book a worthwhile read.

Alison says

I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

I love how this author is able to write so well from both the male and female perspective. This is the story about a group of friends with whom we share their many insecurities, regrets, habits, innermost thoughts and faults as they grow older and their priorities are changing. Each one very different in their approach to life, yet there for each other through thick and thin. Beautifully told, this story kept me very interested in finding out how these characters end up. The story takes place in England, France and India, and the author gives us a wonderful feel for the locations. This story made me think about how, when we are younger and invincible we are quite self-centered, and how we hopefully learn some lessons along the way that will bring us happiness and a sense of our true selves.

Christine says

Recently divorced and seeking to reinvent herself, Penny moves to a picturesque town in France and renounces sex—until she meets an irresistible American philosophy professor. Meanwhile, handsome and unmarried Peter falls head over heels for the first time in his life with plump, sexy, and fiercely independent Frieda; David and Angie face challenges in their childless and co-dependent marriage; and Jeremy, twice divorced and the most successful of them all, develops a destructive interest in underage girls.

At the heart of the story is Sandy, Penny's ex-husband and a once acclaimed songwriter who realizes too late that he took his marriage and two children for granted. He wants to make amends with his family, but first he'll have to confront a secret tragedy that has haunted him for decades.

Sandy says

Interesting read about friendship, loyalty and family. It felt real and relatable and, unusually for a female writer, was partly written from a middle-aged male perspective.

Karen Pomerantz says

The story - a coming of age for the 50+ crowd, is written with maturity and depth. The characters are what you might expect if someone did a 50+ Friends series after they grew up, became more rounded, experienced life, and death - the characters are mostly appealing, flawed, sometimes funny, sometimes hurt, and sometimes victorious. Affected by friendships, broken relationships, and secrets.

The settings - in England, France and India are vivid, and lovely. A book well worth picking up.

Claire says

I received After Everything as part of a Goodreads giveaway.

A washed-up songwriter facing the breakup of his marriage, Sandy steps off a curb one day and is hit by a car in an apparent suicide attempt. Surrounding Sandy are his ex-wife Penny, now living in France, their two children, Matt and Emily, who have traveled to India in a bout of soul-searching, and Penny's and Sandy's circle of middle-aged friends: Jeremy, a successful businessman with a troubling attraction to young girls, David and Angie, muddling through a long but childless marriage that has gone tepid, and Peter, who finds himself pining for a woman who seems to constantly slip just out of reach.

The characterizations and setting are interesting, but for some reason the story didn't grab me too strongly. As a twenty-something, I suspect that it's a time of my life I haven't experienced yet, so it's a lot of situations and feelings that I'm not familiar with. In short, I may be too young to fully appreciate it. Dainty is an excellent author, great at crafting three-dimensional characters and vibrant settings. Looking forward to reading more from her in the future.

Elisabeth Gifford says

Like Deborah Moggach, Suellen portrays with poignant and gentle humour the hopes and foibles of people who should know better. It kept me turning the pages to find out what would happen to people who I now feel I have met somewhere in London and count among my friends. With beautifully evoked scenes in France and London, this book was a great pleasure. Highly recommended. Looking forward to the next book.

Deborah says

I loved the premise of the story. Being a member of the mid-life coming of age generation, I was eager to read this book. I was a little disappointed as I had difficulty sticking with it and I wasn't riveted by the story line. I think that some of the characters could have been developed a little better having said that, I enjoyed watching Sandy grow and develop in his ability to have relationships outside of himself. I think the description of this book is misleading as I didn't see that it was so much about the friendship between the 4 men as it was about Sandy and his growth. The others were minor support for Sandy during his growth. In my mind giving this book three stars is mostly because it was not the story I was expecting from the description and that disappointed me.

Mark says

It took me a while to get into this book. There are quite a few characters to track, but once you've remembered and have the relationships sorted, it unravels into a brilliant story that holds drama, suspense, action, romance, adventure and comedy. It's a great character play that is engrossing and satisfying. It tells the story of four men, who have been friends for life, their partners and the challenges of change in their lives. The cover synopsis makes it sound like an everyday romance, but I found it much more complex and satisfying than I thought. Nicely written, with engaging prose and a pace that keeps you interested.

Kylie Fitzpatrick says

I loved this novel. It is the perfect fusion of beautiful and closely-imagined writing, of real characters whose flaws and heartaches make them believable and sympathetic, and an intricately-woven story that keeps the pages turning. I especially liked the sequences set in India, which were so visceral that I felt that I was there. I can't wait to read Suellen Dainty's next novel; she is an author to watch.

Alan Bevan says

A great character study of people around my age who are still working out what matters in their lives. There is a clarity in Dainty's portrayal of motivation, insecurity, fears and fractured relationships. Yet, it offers some hope without becoming trite.

Janine says

This didn't exactly blow my mind but I never got bored with it either. The characters actually grew on me and I'm glad I decided to read it

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

ARC from Reading Room

Leslie says

I won this in a First Reads, Goodreads giveaway. I want to thank them and the publishers for providing me a copy of this book.

This premise sounded interesting and I was excited to read this. The characters having their own POV was interesting and I liked that a lot. It gave a lot more depth. That being said, the story just didn't grab me and keep a hold of me. I struggled to finish this book. So overall, it was just an okay book for me.

Liz Houghton says

This is a beautifully written and gripping book with an important theme: the damage that can be caused to an individual and those around them by a buried secret. The characters are varied and convincing, the locations in London, France and India are successfully evoked and there is plenty to entertain and delight the reader along the way. However the success of the book lies chiefly in the mature wisdom that is brought to bear on the lives of the two main characters. They both thought that a tragedy and a lie could be buried, but beneath the male bravado that has united them, and their two other male friends, they have both been damaged by a pact of silence maintained over decades. You will keep turning the pages to find out what is in store for them and you won't be disappointed.
