



## Ordinary Beauty

*Laura Wiess*

Download now

Read Online ➔

# Ordinary Beauty

Laura Wiess

## Ordinary Beauty Laura Wiess

*How can you make someone love you when they won't?*

*And what if that person happens to be your mother?*

Sayre Bellavia grew up knowing she was a mistake: unplanned and unwanted. At five months shy of eighteen, she's become an expert in loneliness, heartache, and neglect. Her whole life she's been cursed, used, and left behind. Swallowed a thousand tears and ignored a thousand deliberate cruelties. Sayre's stuck by her mother through hell, tried to help her, be near her, be important to her even as her mother slipped away into a violent haze of addiction, destroying the only chance Sayre ever had for a real family.

Now her mother is lying in a hospital bed, near death, ravaged by her own destructive behavior. And as Sayre fights her way to her mother's bedside, she is terrified but determined to get the answer to a question no one should ever have to ask: *Did my mother ever really love me?* And what will Sayre do if the answer is yes?

## Ordinary Beauty Details

Date : Published June 14th 2011 by MTV Books

ISBN : 9781439193969

Author : Laura Wiess

Format : Paperback 290 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Contemporary, Fiction, Realistic Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit

 [Download Ordinary Beauty ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Ordinary Beauty ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online Ordinary Beauty Laura Wiess**

## From Reader Review Ordinary Beauty for online ebook

Aleeeeeza says

\*4.5 stars\*

So here's the thing: I really don't understand it when people say they don't like reading 'issue' books. In my opinion, the best type of escapist fiction is the one that deals with issues, turns them into ultimately satisfying stories that you get something out of. That's why Ordinary Beauty appealed to me right from the moment I read its summary (and, okay, totally swooned after its cover, because dang, it is GORGEOUS).

The book focuses on Sayre Bellavia, a girl who's been brought up in the dreariest conditions imaginable. She was an unwanted child, born to a sixteen-year-old mother who had high hopes of being a lawyer and ended up getting stuck with a child instead. It pretty much screams: THIS BOOK HAZ ISSUES. And the author herself is known for writing gripping novels that deal realistically with issues. I was sold.

I won an ARC of Where She Went by Gayle Forman a long time back and decided I was going to read it after my exams, since I'd heard about how depressing it was, and during exams I try to stay as far away as possible from depressing stuff. Had I known that Ordinary Beauty was such a harrowing book, I don't know if I'd have begun it. The effect it had on me was sort of like the Train Wreck Effect, a term I learned from my Goodreads friend Nomes, used to describe reading a book that's horrifying and gut-wrenching, but you keep on reading it anyway, unable to tear your eyes away from it. I mean this in the best possible way. Sayre has led the kind of life that had me shaking my head in shock at the horrors she'd been forced through, and as the story progressed my heart grew heavier and heavier until I couldn't bear it.

Her life unravels before us through alternating chapters of the present and the past—the past is an account of her bringing-up, while the present is about a cold night in which she's hitchhiking up the hospital to meet her mother, who's in a very critical condition. But she gets stalled when she barely misses getting hit by a huge truck that swerves at the last second, which causes it to fall over the hill. The only thing holding it up is the pine trees surrounding the crevasse and the walls in which the truck's settled in. And let me tell you, if that sounds horrible, it was absolutely terrifying to read it, all thanks to the author's amazing writing skills. Weiss employs many run-on sentences, like jumbled thoughts coming together, and while it took me a while to get used to, they suited the story really well.

And the suspense! The pacing was for the most part fantastic and I was dying to find out the events of the past that had led up to the present. There were a bit too many flashbacks in the second half, which got just a teensy bit tiring, but not so much that it annoyed me. Every character in this book has a solid history behind him/her, they all ring extremely true, and all of them made you feel. While the plot is spellbinding, so are the characters, especially Sayre's mother—I kept on thinking while reading about her: How can anyone be so cruel? How can someone like her ever redeem herself in the eyes of her daughter? HOW IS THERE ANY HOPE IN THE WORLD FOR SOMEONE LIKE SAYRE?

But there is! And that's sort of the point of the novel: the ordinary beauty in life found in simple things like

love, understanding, and respect. I do wish that we'd been the message had been given in a more profound way, one that would make the ending a lot more satisfying. Okay, so the ending was still really profound, and I'm probably just being nitpicky. I also wanted gotten to know more about Evan—the guy in the truck who Sayre helps get to the hospital, although I felt like I did get to know him fairly well by the end of the book. Is it my fault I like him so much that I want to read more about him? The way the author ended the book was the best possible ending there could be, and it very nearly brought me to tears.

---

Highly recommended to fans of contemporary fiction EVERYWHERE. Laura Weiss, I am totally going to stalk the rest of your books now. Har har.

---

### **Mandee Jablonski says**

So full of heartbreak, strength, & loss. A beautifully crafted story that is, unfortunately, far too real for so many.

Laura Wiess is amazing.

---

### **Sierra says**

I loved this book.

It was no surprise, really, since I've read and loved all of Laura Wiess's novels. Each one more and more powerful, heart wrenching and true that I can't believe it. At the end of each, I'm left shocked, though not surprised at the depth and trueness of them. This author has a knack for taking the gritty, dirty aspects of the real world, and shaping them into beautifully written and deep novels that stick with you, hours—days—after reading.

Ordinary Beauty is my new favorite Wiess novel. Hell, it's my new favorite novel. Period. It follows Sayre, a seventeen-year-old girl whose mother struggles with, and loses the battle to, drugs and alcohol. It speaks of the turmoil that a child feels when her mother neglects and ignores her, how terrible it feels when you realize, not for the first time, that your own mother doesn't love you. We follow Sayre through her battle with visiting her own mother, sick and dying in the hospital, and we struggle along with her as she comes to grips with her life as her mother so disgustingly shaped it.

Readers are taken on a journey that's full of heartbreak, painful realizations, tears, and the whole nine yards. Wiess manages to, again, take something as common as a parent neglecting a child for their own needs, and morphing it into one of the best book's I've read this year. I can't tell you of a book I've felt more in-tune with than Ordinary Beauty. You can't help but feel Sayre's loss and pain, can't help but cry along with her, and you can't help but feel the same towards the people around her as she herself feels. Anyone who has experienced, or anyone who hasn't experienced some of the similarities in their lives will love this book. I know I did.

Sayre, in my mind, is a real character. I don't know how Laura Wiess managed to make her so vivid a character, but she did.

Throughout this book, I must've gone through 30 tissues—I'm a sap, when it comes to child neglect, what can I say?

Anyone who enjoys real stories should give this one a chance.

Oh, and being the cover-junkie I am, let me reflect on how perfect this one is. The girl looks like an actual, seventeen-year-old who has seen and faced hardships in her life. None of those beautiful cover-models. This

---

girl looks real—and it makes the book, if possible, more relatable.

---

### **Sarah Findlay says**

It was a awesome well written emotional Rollercoaster.

---

### **Deria Agggraini says**

I don't think there is something wrong about this book. The writing style, the plot, the characters, they are fine. Everything's good. It's just that from the beginning I expected I would cry my heart out when I read this book, but I just didn't at all. I know the story is sad and there are moments where I thought 'God, this is so sad, so messed up' but it didn't rip my heart apart till I cry. I just didn't feel really connected to the story.

---

### **Greta is Erikasbuddy says**

Simply magnificent, brilliant, honest, and real.

A tragic masterpiece speckled with hope in a sturdy tarnished frame.

Loved every word that was written.

The characters were so vivid I could see each one in my head.

The hardships so detailed that at times you gasp, at times you sob, and at times you smile because you can't help yourself.

A story that I have never heard before. Original, vibrant, colorful, and yet dark.

I recommend it to all my friends.

\*\*\*Laura Wiess is a wonderful writer. She reminds me of the 1990s. Her books could be songs and her characters leave me speachless.

Definately someone to watch :)

---

## **Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says**

Originally posted on A Reader of Fictions.

I really hadn't even heard of this one, but I have always wanted to be part of a book club, so when I learned about the Not So YA Book Club I had to be a part of it. This was their book for September, so I checked the library and they DIDN'T HAVE IT. Epic tragedy. So I checked Amazon and HURRAH! They had it for like 5 bucks. So I bought it and some other books, not expecting much, but deeming it worthwhile for the overall experience.

Turns out, though, that I really liked this. When I was a teen and up until a few months ago, I really shied away from 'issues books,' because they're depressing and who needs that from your escapist reads, right? Plus, I'm pretty sure I assumed they were all like Lurlene McDaniel or something, disgustingly sappy and unrealistic. After reading a couple though, I realized that I actually LOVE the incredibly heartrending contemps that make all of the people with souls cry, though I generally don't.

Ordinary Beauty is almost unrelentingly depressing. The overall tone is one of despair and desperation. Sayre Bellavia has had an awful, awful life, all because of the influence of her drug addict mother. Ordinary Beauty focuses on that relationship. Some other things happen and some other characters do matter, but what it really comes down to is Sayre and her mother.

Impregnated at 15, already a party girl and maker of bad decisions, Sayre's mother decided to have her baby, I think mostly because she only realized she was pregnant when it was too late to do anything about it. The news of Sayre's impending birth caused the grandfather to keel over for one reason or another, throwing the pampered daughter into a spiral and serious drug abuse from which she never recovered. The mother always resents Sayre for destroying her life, never shows any motherly tenderness, which Sayre can never stop craving. I wanted so badly to shake her and get her to freaking leave and go ANYWHERE.

Luckily, Sayre spent the first seven years of her life in a fairly stable environment, living with her grandmother and not her mom. This gave her a fairly normal outlook, and perhaps spared her from some of the worst emotional scars. However, most of the rest of her life has been a succession of dirty houses, abuse (mostly verbal) and neglect.

The story alternates between numbered chapters, the present timeline, in which Sayre's mother is dying from, well, basically her life, and titled chapters that are her reflections on the past inspired by the mom's impending death. Because it's not linear, we know that, even when times get better, that even worse things are ahead for Sayre, so there's some major dramatic irony going on. Also, even though I essentially knew what was coming, I really didn't guess how it would happen.

The whole group had some issues with the book, each of us struggling with Sayre's normalcy and with some of the situations in the book. One that we all doubted was that Sayre's mom would go to the hospital and receive Oxycontin, even though she'd been sent to rehab in the past for drug abuse. Even though I did look askance at a number of things like that, they didn't really subtract from the reading experience too much, because I got so caught up in Sayre's story.

The ending, though. The ending just felt so rushed and out of left field. The rest of the book was so sad and

then all of a sudden there's a happy ending? What? Plus, there are some sort of dropped plot lines and some skipped time and it's just really unclear. Sayre just magically gets over everything so fast and this, I felt, was the most unrealistic part of the book, little inconsistencies aside. Much as I want Sayre to have a happy ending, it should not have been so idyllic, so untempered by her painful past.

Overall, I still really, really liked this, and now want to read all of Wiess's other books. I think everyone in the book club liked it, though most of them sobbed and don't want to read another sad book for like a year. I, however, want more of them.

---

### **Lisa says**

3 1/2 stars.

Sometimes I have a hard time when it comes to rating a book by an author whose work I have previously read. I compare it to the author's other books. So this is why rating "Ordinary Beauty" was a bit difficult for me because I liked all her other books better, in this order:

How it ends

Leftovers

Such a Pretty Girl

Such great books, really. All dealing with tough issues in unique ways. I LOVE the way Laura Wiess writes. It's gorgeous, really. So even though this story in particular was lacking slightly for me, I liked it because it was written so well. It was well built and she really made you hurt along with the main character.

Yeah. I couldn't give it a 4 because I didn't really reallllly like it. I thought it was well written but I didn't feel the lurve. You know, the book love? I felt that love after "How it ends". So much love. And after "Leftovers", I was left wide-eyed at the story I had just read. It made me think so much.

I can't slag this book off. There is really no major problem with it. I just didn't get the tingles.

One thing I thought was weird was the first 80 or so pages which was actually REALLY interesting to me and then it kind of went in another direction. It never went back to the story with Evan. That disappointed me. I didn't see the point of that.

Sigh.

The story itself was good though. Reading about an absolutely horrible mother-daughter relationship was interesting and made me think about how lucky I am to have a mother who I consider my best friend. The childhood described was just so sad and especially because Sayre, as a child, didn't realize how messed up it was. There is a scene where she tells someone bad things that have been happening to her but she makes it sound like it's ordinary things.

\*Slight Spoiler\* (view spoiler)

Okay. So bad mother/daughter relationship. Very sad story. Makes you think, as all Laura Wiess books do. But it's fault lies in the fact that I like/love her other books more than this one and also that I liked the first 80 pages the best. The actual story was very well written though and heartbreakin.

My rating might change slightly. Not sure. This may be one of those books that I'll later decide to up the rating. Who knows?

I recommend her books in general. I love her as an author. I will definitely continue to read her books.

---

### **Jessica Rodriguez says**

I believe this maybe the best book I have every read!!

Ordinary Beauty has to be the best book I've read so far! I am not saying this lightly this is why- first off the emotions I felt reading this book. Laura Wiess can write her ass off because this reader was an emotional roller coaster right from the beginning. I felt sad, disgusted, agonizing over rather I could finish it and then joy in the end when I did. Second Sayre- she was strong and craved love through out the book from someone that just didn't seem like she could give it. She survived her life by creating a hard shell around herself masking her real feelings. I couldn't believe all the things this girl goes through through out her life. To me she became someone to look up to if she could get through her mother's crap then anything in life had to be easier than she had it. Laura Wiess makes every character get under your skin from Sayre's mom to her best friend Candy who really disgusted me. As well as Miss Mo who was a foster mom to Sayre at one point in the book and was beyond kind and compassionate. The best parts in this book were the happier times for Sayre and her mom when they almost had their perfect family and then of course tragedy follows. Laura Wiess is a genius and she either did some major research or she wrote this off of experience. My husbands mother was very similar to the way Sayre describes her mother and this story. He also had to deal with a mother's addictions and this story hit my heart hard. This book is one I will truly never forget. It grabs you deep inside and feels you with sadness and joy, it makes you take a step back and really re-evaluate your own life. Now how many books can you say have done that.

---

### **Joni Thomas says**

This story hit me hard. There were times in this book that I had to put it down and walk away. I received this in the mail about a week ago and it has taken me that long to get through it. Not because it was a bad book. On the contrary, Laura Wiess has done it again by creating a startlingly honest novel about something people know happens but choose to ignore. I am sure we have all seen the kid in school with the dirty clothes who seems to never bathe and most people, at least at my old school, blamed the kid for the way they appeared. But this story brings up the point that it's not the child's choice to live that way. You have no idea what goes on behind closed doors.

In this story the main character, Sayre has lived with her mother and her mother's addictions her whole life. Her mother is an alcoholic and has been addicted to meth and is now addicted to pain pills. She has never taken care of Sayre, and spends every cent they have on her addictions. To say this girl had an awful life is not even the half of it. At one point her mother's best friend tried to kill her with a hammer. A neighbor called the police and her mother was arrested but as soon as her mother was released, Sayre was made to live with her again. That's one of the most disturbing thing about this story. Though no one knew everything that was going on, people knew enough and yet they never did anything to stop it. Now, Sayre is 17 and her mother is in the hospital dying of liver failure. Sayre is determined that before her mother dies to find out the truth once and for all. A question no child should ever have to ask. Did my mother ever love me?

This book is haunting. For me on personal levels. My own mother was an addict. She gave me up and I lived

with my grandparents and then after they fell ill, I moved in with distant cousins. But reading this book was like reading the way my life could have turned out. The fact that things like this happen, that there are children out there living a life close to how Sayre lives is heartbreaking. There is not one person out there that can read this story and not be haunted by it. All in all, a breathtaking, haunting, amazing story. Laura Wiess has done it again.

---

### **Jessie Marie says**

Oh this book. My heart is broken, but I'm strangely at peace about it.

---

### **Tez says**

[I really did like the book, but I just found it...convenient that Beale wanted Sayre to be part of his new family, and he'd saved up \$6000 for her, so she can afford to live in the house next door...

I don't know. It just didn't feel real, knowing that most addicts' chil

---

### **Kate says**

Ordinary Beauty is a harsh wake up call that children suffer abuse at the hands of the very people who are suppose to love them and protect them: Their parents. It tells a heartbreaking and gut-wrenching story of a young girl named Sayre, who has lived a life of abuse, abandonment and neglect at the hands of her mother with very few moments of hope. I felt sorry for Sayre and praise her for her determination to survive and not let her struggles define her and give her a much deserved happy ending. This proves that people who have endured such hardships can survive and grow up to be decent human beings.

I felt no pity at all for her mother, Dianne, who appears to me nothing more than a textbook narcissist and spoilt immature brat. As far as I am concerned her behavior and mistreatment of Sayre cannot be excused by drug use, having Sayre at fifteen or hardships.

She was a rotten human being long before she was on drugs, fell pregnant with Sayre and during brief periods when she was clean and sober. There were even warning signs from when she was young, prime examples are being spoiled, indulged and constantly bailed out of trouble by her father (princess syndrome), cruel to her mother, being a bully, even her guidance councilor diagnosing Dianne as having an antisocial personality.

As far as I am concerned Dianne had a provided life growing up, had a home and income that she later inherited from her parents and could have gone towards her education and set her up, but instead squandered on drugs, hence losing the house and living on the streets. Dianne was a step close to securing a privileged life again with a descent, clean living man named Beale who was a hundred times more the parent Sayre needed and deserved, but of course stuffed that up.

Dianne does nothing but blame the whole world, including Sayre for her own problems, misfortunes and even drug uses when in reality she is responsible for her own destruction. Even on her deathbed, Dianne doesn't even muster up the strength to apologize to Sayre for the way she treated her. But sadly that is the reality of most situations. Ther is no apologies, no reconciliation, no closure.

I did get angry at some of the characters 'playing god' by trying to get Dianne off drugs, reconcile mother and daughter and overlooking the abuse and mistreatment when it was right under their very noses.

I agree entirely that this novel will leave you emotionally drained from reading a book.

This book is not only for teens, but also for teachers, social workers and law enforcement officers. This book is a prime example of an issue that had been long overlooked and needs to be dealt with. Sometimes the harsh reality is some people do not and cannot be helped and some kids are better off without their parents.

---

### **Morgan F says**

I love this cover because the model doesn't look perfect. She looks like a girl.

---

### **Charlotte says**

Ordinary Beauty is the most heart-wrenching book I have read in a very long time. I read it in bed last night and cried pretty much through the entire book. The rebuttal of #YAsaves is based on the premise that many teens live DARK lives, that reading books like Ordinary Beauty and 13 Reasons Why give teens an outlet for their own situations and feelings . At lunch today I was discussing the book with my coworkers and what had happened to Ellie - which I felt was one of the more farfetched portions of the book - when my co-worker piped up and said that a similar scenario had happened in Casper about ten years ago. Her testimony reiterates the fact that Young Adults today don't generally lead happy cheery lives. And even if they do on the outside, there are inner demons being fought on the inside.

Ordinary Beauty may be a dark novel, but it is a novel about a young woman who is a fighter. A young woman who is determined to not only survive, but succeed despite what her mother puts her through. I think that is a positive role model for any teen no matter what their situation. I enjoyed this novel so much and it moved me so much, it gets a "Best of" tag and I think it is a well deserved tag. Ordinary Beauty is on sale Tuesday, June 14th.

<http://charlotteswebofbooks.blogspot....>

---