



The Last Best Kiss

By Claire LaZebnik

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Jane Austen comes to modern-day Los Angeles in Claire LaZebnik's imaginative take on *Persuasion*, where seventeen-year-old Anna Eliot finds out whether there's such a thing as a second chance when it comes to first love. Fans of Polly Shulman, Maureen Johnson, Elizabeth Eulberg, Stephanie Perkins, and, of course, Jane Austen will love this irresistibly funny and romantic contemporary tale.

Anna is tired of worrying about what other people think. After all, that was how she lost the only guy she ever really liked, Finn Westbrook. Now, three years after she broke his heart, the one who got away is back in her life—and he wants nothing to do with her.

Anna keeps trying to persuade herself that she doesn't care about Finn either, but even though they've both changed since they first met, deep down she knows he's the guy for her. Now if only she can get him to believe that, too . . .

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 9 Up—Anna Eliot has had the past three years to regret her treatment of Finn Westbrook, at the time a fellow freshman, geek, and Anna's secret boyfriend. When confronted with her friends' opinions of Finn, she pretended not to know him and broke his heart. Now he's back, and Anna hopes to get a second chance to apologize and maybe something more, but her former beau is no longer interested. The protagonist has more to worry about besides her romance troubles, however. Her sisters Lizzie and Molly are both off to college, and she is left living with her narcissistic father, who may or may not be dating one of Lizzie's friends. Then a weekend musical festival changes everything for Anna and Finn. A modern retelling of Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, Anna's first-person narrative is filled with humor and honesty. While the pair's love story is the main focus, plotlines involving secondary characters are woven together well. References to drugs, alcohol, and sex make this suitable for teens looking for a realistic YA romance novel with relatable characters—especially fans of LaZebnik's previous Austen updates.—Natalie Struecker, Rock Island Public Library, IL

From [Booklist](#)

Anna can't help but be attracted to bright, offbeat, and totally uncool Finn. But what about those completely wrong clothes and the nerdy glasses? Eventually she breaks his heart, because, seriously, what would her friends say about such a klutzy guy? She is not without regret or guilt, though, even as Finn moves away. Fast-forward to senior year and look who is back—and no longer uncool at all. LaZebnik's delightful coming-of-age romance cleverly retells Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, a story about bowing to social pressure and letting the good guy get away. The intense social wrangling, wry humor, razor-sharp depictions of the social scene, and fashion commentary serve up a fun Austen tableau, but the lively narrative and believable characters also provide a poignant story of high-school pressures, families that don't support their teens, risky behavior, and the search for identity and acceptance. Readers will eagerly follow the Austen redux for its forthright, sincere leading lady and her perilous, though familiar, journey. Grades 8-11. --Anne OMalley

From the Back Cover

When it comes to love, is there such a thing as a second chance?

Anna Eliot is tired of worrying about what other people think. After all, that was how she lost the only guy she ever really liked. Back in freshman year she was too embarrassed to admit to her friends that she liked skinny, nerdy Finn Westbrook. Then his family moved away, and all Anna had left was regret.

Now it's senior year, and Finn is back. Anna can't believe her luck—maybe now she'll get the chance to relive their last kiss again (and again and again). But he obviously hasn't forgotten how she treated him, and while this newly confident, adorable Finn is happy to flirt with all of Anna's friends, he makes it clear he has no interest in having anything to do with her.

Anna keeps trying to persuade herself that she doesn't care about Finn either, but even though they've both changed since they first met, deep down she knows he's the guy for her. Now if only she can get him to believe that, too . . .

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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