

AFTER THE SUCKER PUNCH:

Logline: A former wild-child just finding her footing in life is ambushed by journals of her recently deceased father.

Short blurb (200 words)

They buried her father at noon, at five she found his journals, and in the time it took to read one-and-a-half pages her world turned upside down... he thought she was a failure.

Every child, no matter how old, wants to know their father loves them, and Tessa Curzio – thirty-six, emerging writer, ex-rocker, lapsed Catholic, defected Scientologist, and fourth in a family of eight complicated people – is no exception. But just as life was finally coming together, the one-two punch of her father’s death and posthumous indictment proves an existential knockout.

She tries to transcend, but his damning words skew everything from her relationship to the truth of her family, even her sense of self. It’s her little-known aunt, a nun and counselor, who lovingly strong-arms Tessa onto a journey of discovery and reinvention, a trip that’s not always pretty – or particularly wise – but one that leads to unexpected truths.

After the Sucker Punch takes an irreverent look at father/daughter relationships through the exploration of family, faith, creativity, love, and the struggle to define oneself against the inexplicable perceptions of a deceased parent. Mixing sass and sensibility, it’s a story wrapped in contemporary culture but with a very classic heart.

Longer blurb: (289 words)

They buried her father at noon, at five she found his journals, and in the time it took to read one-and-a-half pages her world turned upside down... he thought she was a failure.

Every child, no matter what age, wants to know their father loves them, and Tessa Curzio – thirty-six, emerging writer, ex-rocker, lapsed Catholic, defected Scientologist, and fourth in a family of eight complicated people – is no exception. But just when she thought her twitchy life was finally coming together – solid relationship, creative job; a view of the ocean – the one-two punch of her father’s death and posthumous indictment proves an existential knockout.

She tries to “just let it go,” as her sister suggests, but life viewed through the filter of his damning words is suddenly skewed, shaking the foundation of everything from her solid relationship and winning job to the truth of her family, even her sense of self. From there, friendships strain, bad behavior ensues, new men entreat, and family drama spikes, all leading to her little-known aunt, a nun and counselor, who lovingly strong-arms Tessa onto a

journey of discovery and reinvention. It's a trip that's not always pretty – or particularly wise – but somewhere in all the twists and turns unexpected truths are found.

Author and longtime *Huffington Post* contributor, Lorraine Devon Wilke, takes an irreverent look at father/daughter relationships through the unique prism of Tessa's saga and its exploration of family, faith, cults, creativity, new love and old, and the struggle to define oneself against the inexplicable perceptions of a deceased parent. Told with both sass and sensibility, with the unique bonus of a free downloadable song link in the epilogue, it's a story wrapped in contemporary culture but with a very classic heart.

Cover design by Grace Amandes @ www.gracemandes.com

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Full Synopsis: (613 words)

They buried her father at noon, at five she found his journals, and in the time it took her to read one-and-a-half pages, the world turned upside down: he thought she was “a failure.”

Every child, no matter what age, wants to know their father loves them, and Tessa Curzio – thirty-six, emerging writer, ex-rocker, lapsed Catholic, defected Scientologist, and fourth in a family of eight complicated people – is no exception. But just when she thought her twitchy life was finally coming together – solid relationship, creative job; a view of the ocean – the one-two punch of her father's death and posthumous indictment proves an existential knockout.

In the flip of those pages, all childhood memories and her most basic sense of self are thrown into question. Tessa struggles through the funeral weekend with its all-too-familiar sibling chaos and the never-ending drama that is her mother, and though she tries to “just let it go,” as her sisters suggest, the weight of hurt and confusion cracks her resolve. When she finally flees back home to Los Angeles the fallout hits.

First to go is David, the good man in her life. He loves her but can't fathom the depth of her crisis and their relationship implodes under the weight. Long-time friends, Kate and Ruby, swoop in to circle the wagons as they always do but ultimately they're busy, they have their own problems, and there's little they can offer beyond comforting words. When even Tessa's work at a successful online magazine loses its luster, her always inspiring boss, Marcia, assigns a series on father/daughter relationships, hoping to encourage Tessa to draw off her own pain to infuse her writing. Initially reluctant, Tessa is piqued enough to send for the rest of her father's journals under the guise of research... what she really hopes to find is some kind of redemption in his later entries.

Convincing the family of her intentions becomes a sticking point, particularly when her mother puts up a mighty resistance, convinced Tessa's out to destroy her father's legacy. Repeated calls to siblings only result in driving Tessa further from familial good will, and when adored but troubled little brother, Ronnie, arrives in Los Angeles at exactly the wrong moment, her quest becomes a mission, taking her to uncharted territory and unexpected people. Her most significant relief comes in her regular sessions with Aunt Joanne, her

father's sister, who is a Catholic nun and therapist, an arrangement that lends unexpected clarity to Tessa's burgeoning confusion.

And into this swirling eddy comes Haden Pierce, a wildly intriguing man who remembers her from earlier singing days and seems hell-bent on reminding her of her better self. She's skittish and smitten, confused enough to push him away while deconstructing in a rebellion of drinking and indiscriminate hooking up, uncharacteristic rage against all that's happened. But when the entire library of journals are lost somewhere between Chicago to LA, Tessa finally hits bottom.

It's then that Aunt Joanne emerges as the clearest voice in the din. With her compassion, guidance and deeply felt empathy, she helps Tessa reclaim both truth and memories; enough to gain a more authentic view of herself and the flawed, but ultimately loving, man who was her father...opening the door for forgiveness, hope and, just maybe, another crack at love.

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AFTER THE SUCKER PUNCH Highlights

- **Finalist, 2015 Book of the Year Award**, Independent Author Network
- **2014 indieB.R.A.G. Medallion** Honoree
- **Top 50 Indie Books, June 2014** —IndieAuthorNews
- **Top-5 Beach Reads** —Rosie Amber's Beach Reads Blog Tour 2015

- **Publishers Weekly/BookLife** — “A realistic and profound journey of realization and forgiveness...a solid novel that admirably explores the fragile, fraught relationship between parent and child.”

- **Tracy Trivas, author of *The Wish Stealers* (Simon & Schuster)**— “With bare-bone honesty and fiery dialogue, Wilke explores the loaded relationship between parents and their adult-children, examining the brave and lonely journey of self-discovery, reinvention, and healing...raw and brave.”

- **Junior Burke, author of *Something Gorgeous* (farfalla press/McMillan & Parrish)**— “A keenly executed character study. The novel is tightly structured and holds its complex elements with a sure and skillful grip. The dialogue pops...a thoroughly engaging and enjoyable read.”

- **Mark Barry, Green Wizard Publishing**— “A great, sweeping, beautifully written, page-turning read, gripping from page one. A family saga with ambition and class. Meant to be absorbed over time, savoured by lamplight.”