

Dear Reader,

Here Lies Celeste is truly a compliment novel meaning the scenes were written with the understanding that the reader knows all of the characters and plot from *It's Just Broken*. Reading *Here Lies Celeste* without reading *It's Just Broken* will ruin a lot of the plot of *It's Just Broken* for you, and there are several scenes of *Here Lies Celeste* you may feel somewhat lost. However, I did feel Celeste's story was truly worthy of her own book.

(If you must "go rogue", there's a condensed family tree, timeline, and back story of *It's Just Broken* that would help in reading *Here Lies Celeste* on the last page of the sample excerpt on my website: www.lavinabond.com)

If you haven't read *It's Just Broken*, now is the place to stop. Even the preface will ruin *It's Just Broken*.

From Celeste - Preface:

It's Just Broken was not my book. That was Bilson's book. My role was only to help Haddy piece everything together so that she could help to heal Susan, and so eventually Haddy and Susan could help to heal Bilson and Sadie. I was dead through that entire book. In fact, probably because I was dead Bilson was even alive. She was a part of My Haddy and My Josie and My Pauly; I would have done anything for her.

This, this is my book. My whole life I never got to have a voice. I had to lie my entire life. To my other half, and quite honestly, most of my life even to myself. Now I'll get to have a voice. My book, so...

Here Lies Celeste

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www.lavinabond.com



Once a day she managed to come down. She was beautiful. There was no doubt about that. But her beauty wasn't enough to keep me from hating her. She was ugly on the inside (I would later be exposed to more humans than the three who lived in my house, and I would have to accept that she wasn't evil; she was distant, quiet, lonely, afraid – an introvert who put everything into her art. There is a difference between that and evil). Her hands were stained from painting even though she had washed those before she came down. Her hands were permanently stained, and I hated to admit it added to her mystery and allure. She lay on the couch. Haddy left her book. Immediately. Went to her. She pulled the top of her dress down and drank. Haddy loved to drink from her. We were three years old; I was surprised there was still milk in there for Haddy. I walked over. Mama smiled at me. “How long will you be able to have milk for Haddy?” “As long as Haddy wants to drink from me.” “Why do you only feed her once a day?” “I have things to do the rest of the day, but I enjoy this time with her.” “Did you ever feed me like that?” “I fed you both consistently when you were born until you were a year old. I thought Haddy would stop then too, but she never has.” It was the one time of day that woman acknowledged Haddy existed. Haddy would never stop drinking from her. Plus I really thought Haddy liked breasts, and I wasn't old enough yet to give that to her. She sucked on my nipple sometimes, for me - that was my soothing spot, but I didn't think she enjoyed my nipple like she liked Mama's breasts. Although one day, poor Haddy would transfer all desires for mama onto me because she would never really have a mama except for me. Haddy finished drinking from the unaffectionate, unconcerned goddess and rested her head to take a nap. Celia wrapped her arms around Haddy and fell asleep too. I watched them sleep. Haddy looked just like Mama.

Except inside Haddy had a soul. She was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. Mama was an artist so I had seen plenty of beautiful things. Beautiful art. Beautiful books. Daddy was an architect so I had seen plenty of beautiful buildings. Every morning I climbed out my window onto the roof and watched the sun rise. I had danced in a snowfall. I'd seen the waves roll in when we went to The Hamptons or The Cape. But nothing ever in my life compared to looking at Haddy. She was my beauty. She was my light. She was my reason for living. I loved her. Purely. Devotedly. Loved her. Would sacrifice anything and all of me for her to be happy. Haddy was made out of love. It seemed to be the only thing she understood. She was so loving. She was so smart too. She was already a talented artist at three years old. She could already read. We both could. Hours and hours a day that woman painted and we were practically in the house alone, we picked up books and taught ourselves how to read. Daddy started buying me fashion magazines and Haddy books. He bought us anything we asked for to help us pass the days, and no one had ever told him that three year olds aren't supposed to know how to read or paint or draw. Maybe someone had told him, but he knew enough to know his daughters weren't to be afforded “normal”. Celia woke up. Handed Pure Love to me so she could finish out her nap. Celia went up the stairs. Back to her studio. Her art. The daughter she really loved.

When Haddy woke, she kissed me. I loved kissing her. I loved uniting our tongues together. I loved feeling in the kissing we were one. I believe that's who we were. Identical twins who were meant to be one person but realized real quick inside that woman we would need another person so we weren't so lonely. The egg split. One side made of love. One side made to protect love. And to know love because she was in my life. Her kisses filled me with love too. We came out of the kiss, always seemed a mutual decision to break away at the same time. "I love you," Haddy said with a radiant smile. "You're the other half of me," I said.

"Let's go see what's for lunch." Haddy smiled at me. Daddy got us a cooler that he filled with ice every morning. He put that on the floor for us. He put bottles in there. He put little bowls filled with baby food in there with little spoons. Yes, we still ate baby food during the day. It was that or starve. Today was a buffet. Spinach which we both liked. Apples. I climbed in the chair by the table and got us both a banana. We sat in the floor and ate our lunch. After lunch we went outside. We climbed in our tree. Haddy loved that tree. I held her. She fell asleep again. Haddy loved to sleep. I looked in the window. I watched her paint.

She was talented. There was no doubt about that. But couldn't she give us half the time she gave to those paintings? He came home every night after working all day. Had a nice dinner for us that he stopped to get then spent the rest of the night with us. How did he have so much to give and she had so little? Her three year old daughters climbing a tree without anyone saying that's not safe. I heard the mom across the street sometimes. "No" and "Don't" seemed to be the only words she knew. We'd never heard those. I wasn't sure her children needed to hear those quite so much, but at least they were hearing something from her.

Love woke. Climbed higher. I never worried about her. She knew this tree. Better than she knew herself. I honestly believed Haddy could do anything. She jumped from one limb to another. Swung around that limb like she was a gymnast. Swung herself to standing on the limb. Started dancing. Smiled at me. Started singing "White Christmas". She loved that song. She loved Christmas, and living in Westchester, NY, we always got to see a white Christmas. She was so spunky. With me. Anyone else who ever saw her would have thought she was shy. She was around everyone else, but around me that spunk flew freely. I loved her. So much. For one moment out of the corner of my eye I noticed she wasn't painting. She was watching Love dance and sing. She was smiling watching her. Mouthing "White Christmas" along with her daughter. Swaying a little herself. My life would be filled with trying to grasp onto the moments she seemed slightly human. Haddy was my love. Celia was my mystery.

I went into the studio later that night to find a painting of Haddy dancing on that limb. Singing. Me watching. I looked at myself. I looked just like her too. More like her than Haddy. I studied myself in that painting. Watching Haddy. Loving Haddy. Mama came in her studio and saw me looking at the painting. Wrapped her arms around me. "I love that painting, Mama. Will you put it in our room?" "Sure, Baby." She

kissed my cheek. I turned to look at her. We stared. I felt her loneliness. I kissed her lips. A tear slid down her face. "I do love you, Celeste." "I love you, Mama." In that moment I did truly love her. All of her.

I pulled out strawberries and kiwi from the fridge. Climbed in the chair. Got bananas. Moved the chair by the cabinets. Got a knife. Stood at the counter slicing my fruit. Made three plates. Sat two in the floor. Took one upstairs. She hadn't come down today yet. Didn't think she was quite planning on that at all. Haddy was in our room painting. Mama was in her studio painting. I opened the door. She was painting and crying. No sound just tears running down. I looked at what she was painting. Two girls sliding down a banister. "Want some fruit, Mama?" She turned to see me with the plate I had fixed for her. She sniffed. Wiped emotion off her face. "Thank you, Celeste." I stood in front of the painting. "Who's that?" It was obvious one of the girls was her. "Her name is Jaelyn. I miss her a lot." "You could go visit her." "I don't think she wants to see me." "I'm sorry, Mama. When you draw her, do you feel close to her again?" "Yes." "It's a good thing you're a talented artist, I guess. You can draw all the people you want to hang out with." She laughed. She had a beautiful laugh. "I can. And in my drawings they do whatever I want. It's a nice world I live in." "Yeah. Enjoy the fruit, Mama. I'm going to get Haddy and give her a snack." She picked up her plate and followed me out. "May I join you two?" I smiled at her. "We'd like that, Mama." She carried Haddy down the stairs. I couldn't believe it. Haddy smiled so big the whole way down the stairs. She picked up our plates from the floor and put those on the table. She sat me in a chair. Sat down with Haddy in her lap. She smiled at me. Her smile, when she allowed one, was as radiant as Haddy's smile. "How about a walk after our snack?" Haddy looked at me too. Every decision in this house was mine. "That sounds nice, Mama." The only rule Daddy had given was we weren't allowed to leave the house or fenced in backyard without Mama. 'You two are really pretty. Someone might try to snatch you. Please, Celeste, don't let anything happen to my girls.' 'I won't, Daddy.' On warm nights he took us for walks after dinner, but other than those nights, our house and backyard were the whole world according to Haddy and Celeste. At least it was a limitless world. Mama beamed like I was letting her into an exclusive club by letting her spend some time with us. It was sad she didn't realize I would have allowed her into our club anytime she bothered to notice us.

Haddy skipped along in front. I held Mama's hand. I saw all the women on their porches look at her. Hate her. Jealous of anyone with that much beauty and allure. Mama smiled at every one of them. I knew enough to know I would look just like her one day. I took notes so I would know how to look at the women who looked at me with jealousy. I practiced now. I smiled too like they were jealous of this powerful three year old. I would later come to think, they probably were. Haddy twirled. Didn't notice a damn thing on our street. "Look at me, Mommy." Her Mommy beamed at her. "You're so beautiful, Haddy." Haddy beamed.

We got home. She called Daddy. “Can I bring them into The City and us all go out to dinner tonight?” She dressed us up in our prettiest dresses. The Four Mangums about the town.

After this day we wouldn’t see her for two months. At least she gave Haddy a day to know a mother before she took off. Haddy cried every day. “Where’s Mommy?” A week there was no crying. She accepted she was gone. Of course that’s exactly when she walked back in.

The three Mangums were on the couch. Listening to the radio. Both of us curled on Daddy’s chest. Holding hands. The door opened. We all sat up. There she was. Staring at Daddy. “Zane, may I come in?” He sat us on the couch. Went to her. Pulled her into a hug. “You ok?” “Yes.” “You get her out of your system?” “Yes.” “She hurt you?” “A few times.” “I’m sorry, Celia.” “I honestly really missed you, Zane.” He laughed a little. “Yeah. I’m not such a bad guy.” She smiled. “I don’t think you’re bad at all. I’m sorry I can’t give you the wife you need.” “I don’t really need a lot, Celia. I love our friendship. I love you as you are. I’m sorry you’ve never known that before.” She started crying. “She never loved me, Zane.” “I know, Celia. Love and possession are different.” “I won’t leave again, Zane. I promise.” He kissed her cheek. “I know, Celia. But I also know you needed this time too. Put her in your drawings, ok?” “Ok. May I see the girls?” He backed away from her. She smiled at us. Her now four year old daughters on the couch. Holding hands. Wondering what was going on. She knelt in front of us. “My goodness, you two look so beautiful. I missed you every day.” *Don’t say it, Haddy. Don’t give her the power.* She didn’t hear my silent plea. “I missed you, Mommy.”

Zane and Celia. Two lonely people whose lives collided one night in The Hamptons when he went in to make love to her. She’d never been with a man. She loved women. Or one, Kat, who stole her innocence and her soul when she was only fourteen. Kat dragged my mother around emotionally like a ragdoll. He sort of raped her, but stopped. Stayed inside of her. She realized he’d be better for her than that woman. She realized he was kind. Understanding. Would understand her. Realized she needed him. “If I’m going to be forced to be with a man once in my life, can we at least make it pleasurable?” He wasn’t wearing protection. Her escape became clear in that moment. He’s an honorable man. He’ll take care of me and his children. Haddy and Celeste were made. Lonely artist met lonely architect and Haddy and Celeste were designed.

Thirty-six years later there would be a phone call. A car crash. A dead Mom and Dad. A funeral. A cup of coffee with Kahlua. A Haddy. Haddy. Love. I came to. “Do you want to sell their house?” Sell their house? I wasn’t hearing everything she was saying. “I have different plans for that house.” She went with me. Held my hand as we watched a wrecking ball obliterate our childhood. *Now it didn’t happen to me.*

Weeks I moved. Statuesque. Haddy asking Max to make her grocery lists. Haddy talking to all four of our girls as they took the four of us fracturing out on each other. Haddy handled all of it. Once a full four fourteen year old girls fight going on in front of me. I watched. Statuesque. Just watched. They could have kabobed each other, and I would have just sat and watched. The first time this ever happened. "Shut the fuck up! All four of you. I've had it. Go to your rooms. Now. Your own room. Don't even think about talking to each other. And if I calm down by six o'clock, I will come get you for dinner." They stared at her. Stared. Almost fifteen years old before she had ever yelled at them. Me. They would have moved quickly but never been shocked I yelled. They were shocked. Frozen. Which angered her more. "Move, damnit!" They moved. My girls out the kitchen door to their own home. Her girls we heard on the steps. She poured wine. She poured me a glass. She drank her glass down so quickly. She picked up the phone. "I need you to bring home dinner." She hung up. That was all the information constantly loving Haddy had said to my husband. I'm sure. I'm sure she didn't call her own husband. Something was broken. Haddy's unhappy. I know unhappy. I took her hand. I brought it to my lips. "Thank you for the wine." Half smile. "You're welcome, Celeste."

We were in the same place when the swimmers came in. Roger carrying big bags. We sat. "Josie, could you go tell the girls to come eat please? They're in their rooms." Josie tried to look at me. My loyalty was to my other half. Josie saw it. Ran up the stairs. To her sisters. We sat. Pauly tried to kiss her. She moved her chair closer to me. After this night Pauly wouldn't come home much. Stay at The Club until 9:00 or 10:00 training swimmers for Olympic Selection. Their parents were happy to pay for extra Paul Annesley time. He was happy to run away from the falling apart Annesleys. We heard her three on the stairs. Too scared to come in the kitchen. They went out the front door to go to my house and fetch my daughters. Roger started getting plates. Pauly stood. "A little help please." "Sorry, Roger." We sat. Holding hands. Finishing our third glass of wine each. The girls came in. Haddy stood. Grabbed two plates. Everyone staring at her. She never did this. I always fixed her plate for her. She was Celeste now. Everyone stared. "Is there wine at your house?" "Yes." She turned to the family. "We just lost our parents. We are going to grieve together. Alone. I dare any of you to intrude or need a damn thing from either of us tonight. Roger, Katie, and Kendal, you will be sleeping here. Pauly, do you what you do best, make it a fun night for everyone." She practically spat this at him. "Let's go, Celeste." I finally stood. Even then unsure. I grabbed the belt loop of her jeans so I was sure to follow correctly as Haddy stormed out with two plates in her hand and led me to my own home.

She put the plates on my kitchen table. My kitchen table had practically been mere decoration for fifteen years. She pulled a chair out for me. She seriously helped me sit because I really think I had forgotten how. She opened several drawers. Open. Close. I heard it. I think I knew what she was looking for. I could have said, second on the right from the stove. I couldn't. She didn't ask. She understood. She finally came to the table with silverware. She found glasses. Wine. Poured. I watched the red swirl into my glass - I saw my blood swirl in the water in the bath after I lost my virginity when I was seven. Mama. So beautiful. Loving

me. Kissing me. Bathing me. I took a wrecking ball to that house. *Now it didn't happen to me.* I looked at Haddy. Almost forty. She looks just like Mama when it started. She understood. "Pick up the fork, Baby." I nodded. She moved her chair closer. She held my hand. Haddy left handed. Me right handed. It made it easy to hold hands and eat. Put down a fork. Pick up a wine glass. Every action really like a mirror was there. My mirror.

She picked up our plates and put those beside the sink. Not in it. Didn't rinse those. Beside. I smiled. It's ok. Nothing perfect anyway. It's ok. She poured my wine. She pulled my chair back. She helped me stand. She put my glass in my hand. She grabbed her glass and the bottle and another bottle and the corkscrew. I grabbed her belt loop and followed again. The only thing she required was me to hold my wine glass. I concentrated hard. Make sure none sloshed out. There wasn't anything Haddy hated more than what she jokingly called alcohol abuse. I smiled thinking of this, floating up the stairs with her. She sat me in a chair. I barely recognized my own bathroom. I expected to be in another bathroom. She put her glass and bottles on the vanity. I heard water. I watched her light candles. She came over. Took my glass. Kissed me. Haddy kisses. I closed my eyes. I moaned. "Will it traumatize you for me to remove your clothes?" "No. I'll like it."

Eventually I was aware I was in water, leaning against Pure Love. Drinking wine. Only the light of candles. Otherwise darkness. It was romantic. Beautiful. Like everything about Haddy. I felt words surface that I let escape, "I love you, Haddy." She breathed. "You're the other half of me, Celeste." I smiled.

Eventually Haddy was opening and closing drawers again. She found two tank tops and two pairs of underwear. The pair she put on herself she said she was going to keep. I remember I smiled. I actually smiled. She held me all night. Right before I fell asleep in her arms I released, "Thank you, Baby." "I've got you, Celeste." She's got me. She's got Annesleys. She's got everything. She'll take care of me now. Pure Love.

We walked to her house holding hands. Four blondes at her table. Getting along. The world had righted itself. She sat me in a chair. She made me a cup of coffee that she sat in front of me then she went to the stove. Not to cook. Haddy didn't cook, but to love her husband. Not her husband. But her husband. He was making waffles. I could gather that. He wrapped her in his arms. They could always revive each other. She's my rock so now he will be her rock. They understood balance. They understood love. Her husband wasn't making her happy so my husband would compensate for his little brother's weaknesses. This is a dance the four of us have been doing for twenty years. The unspoken slight hurts, the unspoken dances and compensations when one of us was down, everything unspoken because at the end of the day, the end of the slight hurt, the four of us truly loved each other, truly needed each other, truly were happy with each other.

"Good morning, Girls." I'm sure I said it. I'm sure I did. I must have because all four of them in unison said, "Good morning." Haddy smiled at me so radiantly. We're the same age. That's not Haddy. Did I really just have to tell myself that's not Haddy? Maddie. Maddie smiled at me so radiantly. Little Haddy.

Haddy isn't smiling like that anymore. Haddy is unhappy. She brought plates to the table kissing each girl's head as she put a plate in front of them. She put a plate in front of me. She put a plate at the void. She went to make herself a cup of coffee. She rose from the table. That's not Haddy. Maddie rose from the table. Went to her mother. I turned. Haddy wrapped Maddie so tightly. They didn't get to have their morning time because Haddy was taking care of me. Haddy wouldn't be able to be balanced all day. She didn't get her time to sleep with Maddie. "I love you so much, Baby." "I love you, Mommy." Almost fifteen and sometimes she still said mommy. "I'm sorry about Grandpa and CiCi." Haddy kissed her. "Thank you, Baby." Haddy locked eyes with me holding onto the younger version of her willing us back to then, not then, before then, younger so it didn't happen to me. She accepted she couldn't. She accepted she's not God. She's Haddy. Pure Love.

They came to the table. Haddy with two cups of coffee. One for her husband. He switched to mine as he kissed me before he sat down. He was so handsome and loving and stable. Always so stable. I loved that about him. I loved him. Roger, thank you for dinner last night. Thank you for breakfast this morning. Come out. Say it. Say something to him. "Pick up your fork, Baby." I looked at Haddy. I nodded. I did as I was told. I didn't say it. He'll go all day without knowing how much I appreciate him. I didn't say anything.

Whose clothes are those? Max. My daughters are wrapped in Max. I could go home and get them their own clothes. I sat. I picked up my fork as I had been told to do. It seriously was all I was capable of.

It would be all I was capable of for a while. Everyday wanting to tell him that I love him. That I appreciate him. And every day disappointed with my inabilities. He withered more and more. I saw him in my bed looking so lonely. Just reach your arm out. Touch him. He doesn't require sex just some affection, some awareness that I see him, that I see how much he's trying. My arm didn't go to him. More and more he went to Haddy. Whole days the two of them found each other. Haddy is unhappy. I need to knock some sense into Pauly. He'll listen to me. He knows I don't put up with a mistreatment of My Baby. He retreated from her. I retreated from Roger. They found each other. He had always been in love with her. He knew she wouldn't break her vows. He found another woman who hadn't taken vows. I liked her. I had always liked her. Not anymore. She slept with my husband. I actually could have handled him sleeping with Haddy. The four of us were married. He went outside of Our Marriage. He had an affair. My fault. A part of me knows that.

A part of me had never been so hurt. We were just so happy. I know it happened. And mere months later he's kissing another woman. Making love to another woman. Holding another woman. Then he lost of us both. Haddy wouldn't talk to him anymore. She was mean to him. It was official. Our Marriage is over.

Zane and Celia Mangum

Haddy and Celeste (their identical twin daughters who look exactly like Celia)

1962 - 20 years old, Haddy married Paul(y) Annesley, Celeste married Roger Annesley, Roger is Pauly's older brother, they had one ceremony and the four of them became one circle they call Our Marriage

Pauly and Haddy

Max (Maxine) and Maddie (Madelyn)

Roger and Celeste

Katie (Kathryn) and Kendal

Yes, Identical Twin sisters have to also get pregnant simultaneously with identical twins at 24 years old A month before the sets of twins (The Girls) are born, they move into their huge, beautiful Dream Homes in Lake Placid, NY. And the four of them open Annesley Elite Swim Club. Pauly, former Olympic Gold Medalist's coaching talent, Haddy's design, and Celeste and Roger's business sense –

The only plan we made was Perfection. Together. Always.

Josie (Jocelyn) – a few months after The Girls are born, Haddy is pregnant with a swimmer, a Paul Jr. that thrills Haddy and Pauly, but Celeste isn't pregnant, and it is the first time they didn't do something together.

And Roger wants more children, a lot more, and Haddy just gave Pauly more children, Haddy opened her legs after delivering twins, so why won't Celeste? What's wrong with my wife that she won't give me more?

New Year's Eve 1981, ringing in 1982 and Celia calls Celeste. Something she has to tell her when Celeste and Roger had just finally had nine months of complete happiness, bliss, and Celeste had finally, finally, finally felt like she broke away from them, Zane and Celia, and the abuse she endured her entire life. After the very important phone call, Celia puts her and Zane in a car that she intentionally crashes and kills them both.

And. Then. **It's Just Broken.**

All of Celeste's abuse. And 20 years of perfect Our Marriage that was only perfect because of *silence*, because of *don't rock the boat*, because of *we all came from dysfunction and we want to give our daughters a perfect, happy, happy home, so please, please, please, not one of the four Annesleys dare speak out that Our Marriage isn't nearly as perfect as we all pretend it is*. But how long can all of that truly stay quiet, unspoken, without need? Until. There's. A. Crash.