



# The Six Rules of Maybe

By *Deb Caletti*

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## The Six Rules of Maybe By Deb Caletti Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #918092 in eBooks
- Published on: 2010-02-24
- Released on: 2010-03-16
- Format: Kindle eBook
- Number of items: 1

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## Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 9 Up—Caletti invites readers into Scarlet Hughes's life and all its "maybes." The introspective teen copes when her charismatic older sister, Juliet, shows up suddenly married (and pregnant) after time away at a Portland hotel singing gig. Both Scarlet and her mother quickly come to adore her husband—Scarlet perhaps a little too much. Hayden is not only smart and good-looking, but he is also funny, great at listening, and deeply in love with Juliet. He writes her poetry and love notes, which Scarlet cannot help but read. She also can't seem to stop trying to help her motley collection of neighbors. The elderly couple too easily conned by Internet scams, the Goth girl whose chalk drawings inspire some prom date interference, and the retired postal worker who is flirting with senility are all part of Scarlet's habit of trying to fix things. Maybe she can stop her sister's tendency to run scared of the commitment Hayden offers her and her yearning for her train wreck of an old boyfriend. Maybe she can convince her mother that she shouldn't marry someone who spends all his time criticizing her. Maybe she can make up with the friend whose crush seems to like Scarlet instead. All of these dealings are about hope as the fuel of one's dreams and efforts, about the frequent necessity of persistence, and about how to know when to let go. Reminiscent of the best of Sarah Dessen's work, this novel is beautifully written, deftly plotted, and movingly characterized.—*Suzanne Gordon, Peachtree Ridge High School, Suwanee, GA*

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From [Booklist](#)

Seventeen-year-old Scarlet is used to her older sister, Juliet, getting all the attention. Juliet's the beautiful one who got off Parrish Island, Oregon, and has a job singing in Portland. Then Juliet returns with a new husband, Hayden, and a baby on the way. While Juliet is the kind of girl who's mostly interested in herself, Scarlet finds herself becoming quite interested in Hayden, who is unrequitedly devoted to Juliet. There are familiar elements here, but Caletti executes them exceedingly well. Scarlet's adoration of Hayden is both poignant and realistic, her devotion tempered by hopes and fears for the baby. Juliet's pursuit of an old boyfriend, a bad boy, rings true, especially considering the family history. Still, other elements are over the top, like the subplot about neighbors who seem to have found the one Nigerian e-mailer who wants to make good on a business proposition. Caletti is at her best as she makes the case for the "Rules of Maybe," how to hope, ways to persist, when to give up, and how to go on. Grades 8-12. --Ilene Cooper

Review

Juliet was always in the lead, and I was her echo." So says seventeen-year-old Scarlet about her older sister, who is once again in the lead, having returned home with a husband neither Scarlet nor her mother have ever heard of, let alone met, and a baby on the way. As the summer progresses, Scarlet grows close to Hayden, Juliet's husband, and begins to worry that Juliet's old selfishness is going to destroy her new family even before it's established. Caletti's fluid, musing style and keen perceptions serve her particularly well in this depiction of Scarlet's summer of maturation; it's not so much that the external events are momentous as they believably provide just enough impetus for Scarlet to enrich and transform her view of herself, her sister, and her family. Scarlet's characterization is particularly original: a happy meddler in people's lives, she adores leaving secret gifts and pulling strings in ways that will bring joy, and she empathizes too much with clingy lonely outsiders to tell them to get lost. Her relationship with Hayden, a combination of friendship, protectiveness, and crush, is touching and credible, and it provides an effective agent for her increasing flashes of greater understanding. The fact that all three women, Scarlet, Juliet, and their mother, struggle with their view of men is explored with particular depth and subtlety, each is affected in her own way not only by the departure of Scarlett and Juliet's father but by the responses of the other two to that fact. This is a

kind of reconsideration that's a key component of maturation, and young adults in the thick of the process will find much of themselves in Scarlet's journey. -- **BULLETIN, May 2010, STAR**

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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