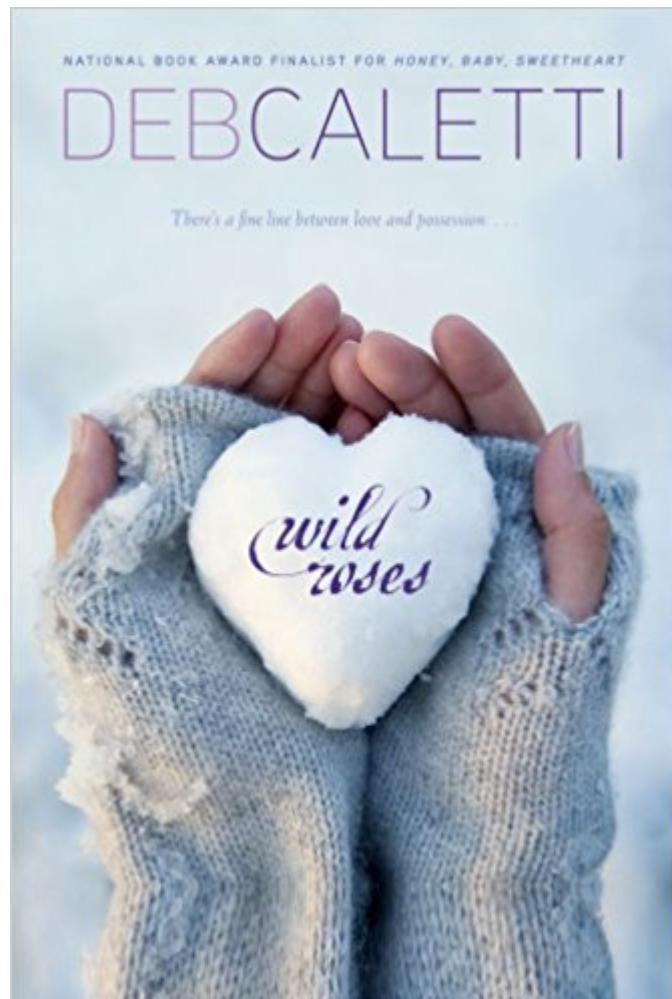


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# Wild Roses



## **Synopsis**

Seventeen-year-old Cassie Morgan lives with a time bomb (a.k.a. her stepfather, Dino Cavalli). To the public, Dino is a world-renowned violin player and composer. To Cassie, he's an erratic, self-centered bully. And he's getting worse: He no longer sleeps, and he grows increasingly paranoid. Before, Cassie was angry. Now she is afraid. Enter Ian Waters: a brilliant young violinist, and Dino's first-ever student. The minute Cassie lays eyes on Ian she knows she's doomed. Cassie thought she understood that love could bring pain, but this union will have consequences she could not have imagined. In the end, only one thing becomes clear: In the world of insanity, nothing is sacred....

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 7 Up—Cassie, 17, lives with her musician mother and her stepfather, Dino Cavali, a violinist who is considered to be a musical genius in Deb Caletti's novel (Simon & Schuster, 2005). But Dino is mentally ill and relies on his medication. Cassie tries very hard not to get involved in Dino's work, until he starts to tutor Ian, a talented violinist to whom Cassie is intensely drawn. As Dino prepares for his concert and Ian's scholarship audition, he stops taking his meds and become increasingly paranoid. Angela Dawe's narration is spot-on, and she fully voices all the characters.

The story is told in the first-person through flashbacks, and Dawe becomes Cassie. The intensity with which the tension mounts is so real that listeners will feel as if they are living the story right alongside Cassie and her long-in-denial mother as her life comes crashing down around both of them. This stellar production will please Caletti's fans. ©Stephanie A. Squicciarini, Fairport Public Library, NY (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 7-10. Caletti explores relationship between genius and madness in her third novel set in the Pacific Northwest. Cassie is the stepdaughter of violin virtuoso Dino Cavalli. Wild Roses is the name of the van Gogh painting that hangs over Dino's desk, and like the painter, Dino is mentally ill. Dino controls his delusions with medication, but as an anticipated comeback concert approaches, he stops taking it. Always bullying and brutish, Dino grows increasingly paranoid, but Cassie tries to balance her anger toward her father with her growing affection for his talented student, Ian. When tragedy strikes at the concert, Cassie discovers the relationship between passion and insanity, and comes to realize how her mother could love someone like Dino. Caletti's hyperbolic, endless-sentence style occasionally overwhelms her otherwise compelling story, but the sincerity of her message shines through in Cassie's descriptions of other historically troubled artists, her parents' painful divorce, and her own new romance. A good selection for mother-daughter book clubs. Jennifer HubertCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book was not what I was expecting. It went deeper into the mind of a very intelligent 17 year old girl named Cassie than I thought it would. I was expecting a somewhat lighthearted story about the life of a young girl who finds herself in the position of being the stepdaughter of a world renowned violinist. It was actually the story of a young girl who is living with a stepfather who has stopped taking his much needed medication because he believes that it interferes with his creativity. As his creativity soars, his madness grows and we watch his decline through Cassie's eyes. During this time he has taken on a very gifted young violinist named Ian as a student and in the middle of this turmoil Cassie and Ian fall in love. Obviously this was not your usual boy meets girl, they fall for each other and live happily ever after. It was well-written and the characters really came alive. This is my first book by Deb Caletti but it won't be the last. Recommended.

I am giving this book 5 stars based simply on the fact that I have never before related so much to the concept of a book. Deb Caletti really hit the nail on the head with this plot, this character, this assessment of depression/paranoia and how mental illness affects its victims' families. So many times while reading this book it felt like Cassie was reading my mind and putting my words on the page. She makes it easy to sympathize with someone who doesn't sympathize with a mentally ill person, and I think that's something people should understand. Sometimes it's just not enough of an excuse. Sometimes the accusations and "woe is me, nobody understands" mentality just get to be too much and a line has to be drawn. Even Cassie's mother had the same attitude toward it as the real wife of someone who acts like Dino (like, for instance, my mother)... she still loves him despite everything, but eventually she has to decide to do what's best for her and her daughter. The happy ending in this book actually gave me hope for my real life and, more importantly, my mom's. The romance aspect of Wild Roses was sweet and kind of provided an escape from the reality of the rest of it. The connection between Cassie and Ian may have been slightly generic but that doesn't stop you from rooting for them, and their relationship does deepen throughout the book. The end leaves it unclear whether they will make it, but it has also provided so much hope and optimism that you can't help but feel like they will. And anyway, the romance was not the most significant thing going on in this book, so if you're at all disappointed with the end, it's because you didn't understand it. I would suggest *The Nature of Jade* for those who want a perfect, romantic "happily ever after." Read this book if you want an honest narrator, a believable story, a sweet romance and a book that will leave you thinking.

I really enjoy the easy complexity of her work. This was a great depiction of living with mental illness (. Bipolar) while coming of age.

~2/5 I've read two other books by Caletti, one of which I really enjoyed (*the Nature of Jade*) and one of which I thought was more meh (*the Queen of Everything*), and this one ended up being rather below meh, and a very big disappointment since I had thought it would be very good. Cassie Morgan lives with her mother and her mother's new husband, Dino. Dino is a genius musical composer, and he's going literally crazy. He's beyond paranoid, sometimes goes a bit off the deep end for very little reason, is snippy often, and is also just a general ass about things. Cassie does not like Dino, nor has she ever, but she's stuck living for a majority of the time with him, going only on weekends to her father's house. And then Dino starts teaching Ian, a boy Cassie's age, who is also a very talented violinist, hoping to get into a very big, hard school several states away. The book opened

very good, the premise was very good, and even the Dino storyline was rather good. I liked the time Cassie spent with her father, her mother was frustrating but understandable. It was Cassie and the romance that I didn't like. I guess it's not really Cassie herself that I didn't like; she actually seemed okay. But she gave several slut-shaming comments that bothered me. One pertaining to a girl in her school whose nickname, apparently, is Whore because her last name sounds similar, and because she supposedly wears revealing clothes that show her big breasts. Another was a jibe about girls who sleep around. They were both distasteful and offensive, they didn't particularly seem to be needed, and they bothered me a lot. The second thing that really brought me down was the romance. I was rather looking forward to the romance, and even at the beginning, when Cassie was forewarning about the first time she saw him and that it was practically love at first sight, it didn't bother me. Caletti seems to have a way of making love at first sight, that people are destined to be a part of another's life, natural, at least to me. So I was okay with that. But then, pretty much the first time Cassie ever has a conversation with the boy, they kiss. And they kind of fight a couple of times but move on from it, and she acts like she's devastated that he has to go away for school. And throughout the whole thing, the reader barely ever gets to read an actual, intimate conversation between the two that doesn't last more than a couple of pages. They say they love each other rather early. And while their relationship does expand throughout a year, I never felt the connection. No swoon, no actual love, nothing. Their interactions were just so small and there were so few that actually seemed to mean anything. I was very disappointed by this. But even while saying that, and overall being unhappy and disappointed with the book, there were good parts. The ending for Dino and Cassie and her mother was pretty good, I liked seeing Dino's downfall and paranoia (even though I feel his storyline could have been made more intense), and there were just a lot of small thoughts that I enjoyed reading. I liked Cassie's father and her Nannie (particularly her Nannie). That's why the rating is a wavy 2 stars, no higher, but I don't think it'll waver lower (although it might go to a 1.5, with time). I still have three Caletti books to read from forever ago, and I hope to read one somewhat soon. And I can only hope that they're better than this one. [This review is also available on my blog.]

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