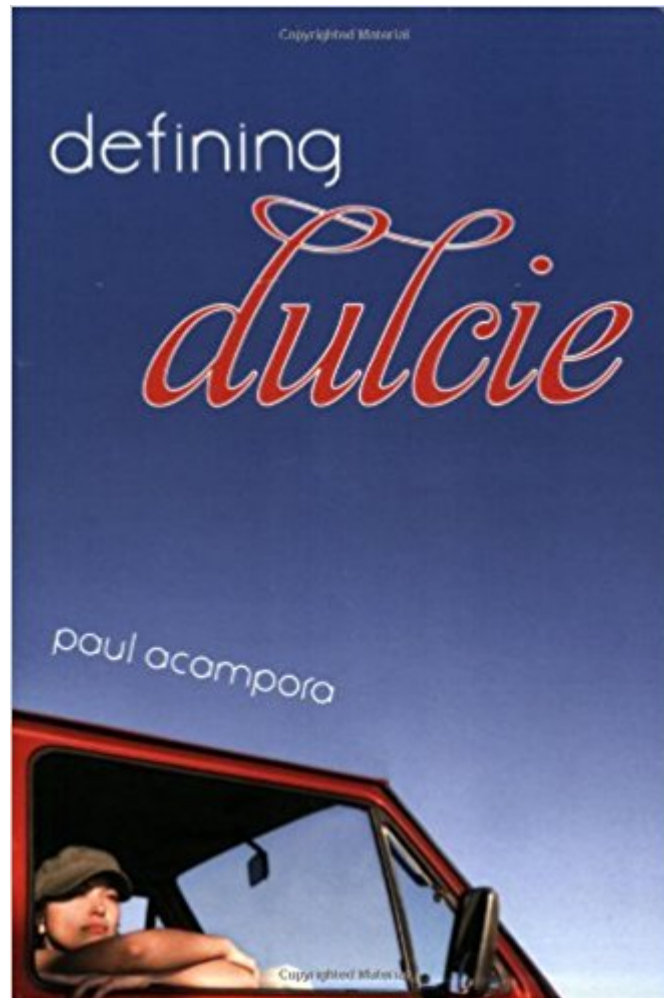




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# Defining Dulcie



## Synopsis

From a debut author comes a story of finding oneself in a place all too familiar. After Dulcie Morrigan Jones's dad dies, her mom decides they need to find a new life in California. But Dulcie doesn't understand what's wrong with her old life back in Newbury, Connecticut. So she heads across country and back home in her father's red 1968 Chevy pickup truck. When she arrives, she meets Roxanne, a girl whose home life makes Dulcie see that her own situation may not be all that bad after all. And as the summer comes to an end, Dulcie realizes that maybe it's necessary to leave a place in order to come back and find out who you really are.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 7-10-Strong and quirky characters who see life as an inextricable mix of sadness and humor, sorrow and hope, are the hallmark of this memorable first novel. When 16-year-old Dulcie's beloved dad dies, she and her mom leave her granddad in Connecticut and drive to California to start over. This doesn't work for the still-grieving Dulcie so she takes their truck and drives home to pick up the pieces of her old life and remember her father in all the old places. Her road trip and memories of it, along with events that occur once she arrives home, provide the figurative journey that begins her healing. Rather than being a sad or solemn read, however, the treatment is unexpectedly offbeat and, at times, wonderfully funny. By including details of Dulcie's interesting stops along the way,

including her experiences with a field of fainting goats, Acampora demonstrates a Joan Bauer-like knack for making ordinary life worth a second look. Teens will appreciate both the warm security that surrounds Dulcie and the hard truth that life can be painful.-Faith Brautigam, Gail Borden Public Library, Elgin, IL Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** Gr. 7-10. "I was a John Jacob Jerome High School janitor like my dad," Dulcie explains in her droll, up-front manner, referring to her after-school job. "So far I'd lived to tell about it." Her father had not--dying suddenly after a freak encounter with toxic fumes. Now Dulcie's mother wants to escape their small Connecticut town, and whisks Dulcie away to California. Grieving for both her father and her old, comfortable life, the plucky teen borrows her mom's Chevy truck and drives back home to live and work with her grandfather, a janitor at the same school. During a transformative summer, she and her loving family--reconciled Mom included--rally to help another student janitor through a crisis of her own. Dulcie's deadpan wit, the quirky road-trip premise, and a cast of appealing adult and teen characters combine in this unusually strong first novel, which may remind some of Joan Bauer's *Rules of the Road* (1998). Despite an unfortunate cover image, which depicts a girl who appears much younger than Dulcie's 16 years, many YAs will connect to an outwardly tough character who can nonetheless admit that sometimes she "feel[s] very breakable." An affecting, engaging family story, uniquely told through the janitor's lens. Anne O'MalleyCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

I got this book because I had heard the first sentence, and had to know what the rest of the book was. This book got into my head, and I thought about it off and on for a few days after reading it. It is now passing through my class like wildfire, and each of my kids who has gotten it, has loved it. The main character, Dulcie, is going through hard times and has suffered some loss, but she is a strong minded character and gets through it, helping others along the way. Well written, realistic characters.

Wasn't too interested in the book but that doesn't mean you wouldn't be...everyone has their own tastes! Thought it would be a good book for my 11 year old, but not interested.

A wonderful story and very popular with my students. Our class book group plans on reading this

book next month.

Working in a high school library affords me the enviable privilege of "checking out" those volumes that attract my interest. Some of them, quite a few, in fact, find themselves reshelfed after I've read only a few pages or a couple of chapters. Defining Dulcie by Paul Campora was NOT one of those. It is a story of a teenage girl and her mother who are forced to come to terms with the accidental and tragic death of their father/husband. Each of the family members deals with his/her loss in different ways, and that's where the rub comes in. Defining Dulcie is written with intelligence, wit, and heart and describes a family, torn by grief, but held together by strong bonds of love, respect and a sense of honor and humor. The language is clean, the dialogue sparse, but sparkling. Defining Dulcie was written with sensitivity and insight, and I can recommend it without reservation.

Dulcie's father, a janitor, just died. Her mother decides to move her and Dulcie cross country to California from Connecticut. As soon as Dulcie steps foot in CA, she knows that's not where she belongs. She steals her mother's truck and makes her way back to Newbury, to her grandfather and her home. Dulcie's grandfather, Frank, lets her come back and work for him, without pay, as punishment for worrying her mother when she left. Frank has already hired another helper, Roxanne. Soon, Roxanne and Dulcie become friends. When Dulcie and Frank discover the truth about Roxanne's relationship with her abusive mother, they have to figure out a way to help her. When I first picked up this book, I thought it would be a sad story about death and moving on. It was sad, but the novel also had a feeling of hope and looking towards the future. Aside from death, Defining Dulcie also dealt with serious issues like abuse. This book was pretty good, especially for a debut novel. I'll be looking forward to reading more books by the author. Reviewed by Flamingnet Book Reviews[...] Preteen, teen, and young adult book reviews and recommendations.

You know from the first few pages that this book is in narrative hands you fully trust. Dulcie's father just died. Her mom's reaction: Let's move across the country and leave it all behind. Dulcie thinks that losing her dad is enough change for one sixteen-year-old. To describe the plot does not do this book justice, because it is Dulcie, and her relationships, that make this book shine. There is humor building under the surface at all times, so even in her darkest hours, there's the threat of an out-loud laugh around the corner. All the characters in this book are fallible, recognizable people. People you will love spending time with. If you enjoy character-driven fiction, humor, and a lot of heart, don't hesitate. Buy this book.

Young adult books are short sweet and near and dear to heart. I always learn something about myself. Thank you Paul

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