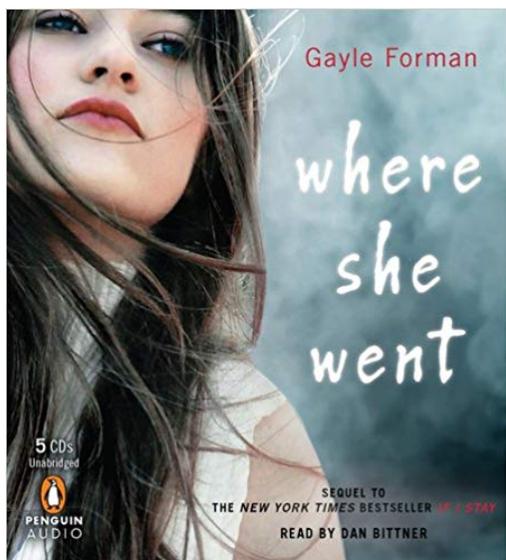


Where She Went by Gayle Forman



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ISBN: 0142428256

ISBN13: 978-0142428252

Author: Gayle Forman

Book title: Where She Went

Publisher: Penguin Audio; Unabridged edition (April 5, 2011)

Language: English

Category: Literature & Fiction

Size PDF version: 1402 kb

Size ePUB version: 1321 kb

Size FB2 version: 1639 kb

Other formats: doc azw docx lit

Unabridged, 5 CDs, 6 hours Read by TBA The highly anticipated sequel to the *New York Times* bestseller *If I Stay*.



Reviews of the *Where She Went* by Gayle Forman

Zonama

This book was the most recent choice for our book club. It was ripe for discussion as to whether or not the right decision (to stay or not to stay) was made, and why. While this book would be enjoyable for a singular reader, the points of view that emerge from discussing this book in a group greatly enrich the experience. For those that had seen the movie before reading the book, some of the additional details and information given in the book made the decision that was ultimately made make more sense to them. Our book club is going to watch the movie together soon and then discuss it again! :)

Jesmi

The premise of the story intrigued me, but that wasn't a huge part of the book. Most of the book is about Mia's back story, her relationship with her parents, her best friend and her boyfriend, her love

for the cello, etc. I was surprised at how strongly the story impacted me- it really made me examine my own life on a deep level and I found myself crying on several occasions. I'm quite surprised this is considered a YA book- even though the main character is a teenager, I found the themes resonated with me at age 49. The writing is also superb- I haven't read a book this good in a long time.

The only criticism I have- and it's a mild one- is that the "present-day" events, and what Mia goes through as she makes her decision, are not developed to the extent I thought they would have been. After all, it's the original premise of the book- you expect the character to go through a lot of struggles to decide whether to return to life or not. And in the end, you don't see her actually make the decision- it just kind of suddenly happens, and then the book is over. Perhaps not surprising since it leads you to immediately want to read "Where She Went" to find out what happens next. And honestly, the book was so good that I didn't even realize the life-or-death decision hadn't been explored fully until the book was over!

Agantrius

I must say that I liked *Where She Went* much better than *If I Stay*. Am I allowed to say that? The second book usually isn't as good as the first book. *If I Stay* was all about death and Mia being in a Coma the whole time, and wondering if she should live or die. I couldn't handle that.

It's been three years since the accident that took away Mia's family. Adam is a huge rock star now. His band *Shooting Star* is making albums, winning awards, and touring the world. Adam should be living it up, but he is no longer the same guy he was. His life is the shadow of what it should be and it all traces back to the accident that changed everything he believed in. He's a broken guy no longer in love with the music he used to eat, sleep and dream about. Instead he is a guy just floating by. A random chance encounter in NYC changes everything. The past that Adam thought was over and had left behind is suddenly right in his face leaving him no choice but to deal with his demons and decide if the past should be left in the past.

Where She Went is told in Adam's POV which I absolutely loved. I felt so bad for Adam. He was so heartbroken after Mia left, and I could really feel his pain. I was really mad at Mia for leaving him like that, but after reading further into the book I understand why she did what she did. I also liked that in the beginning of the chapters were Adam's lyrics to the songs he written. This book was just so beautifully written and it's an absolute must read.

Sadaron above the Gods

There are certain books that just emotionally drain you, and this was one of them. There are moments of sadness, moments of happiness, moments of pain, and moments of sweetness. It is a book whose story just stays with you.

I love the way the story of *If I Stay* is constructed. It is told from Mia's point of view, but it isn't just her version of the present. Instead, it travels back and forth through her history and those of the people she loves. This gives the entire book a bit of a bittersweet quality, as you experience loss with Mia. You are a part of her world after the fact and it makes the present all the sadder. It is a story of a girl with an incredibly quirky and fun family, a snarky best friend, and rocker boyfriend who represents everything she herself is not.

Mia's family is built on music and love. Her dad was a former punk rocker and her mom his biggest fan. Mia's boyfriend Adam was a rocker whose career is growing even before he finishes high school. And then there is Mia, the classical music loving cellist who is on her way to great things. But, in a single moment, everything changes for her and for her family.

The author doesn't shy away from the tough situations or questions that arise from Mia's personal tragedy. Instead, she makes Mia and the reader question themselves about family and choices. What

is a family? How do you choose when faced with such diverse choices?

This is a book about family and tragedy and unthinkable choices, but it is also a story of beauty. It speaks of the bonds between those we love. And with these themes, there is also the love between Adam and Mia. Their romance was beautiful, sweet and passionate. It was music that brought them together, no matter how different the two expressed it. And it was their differing musical genres that often threatened their relationship as their music took them in very different directions. I liked that their relationship was portrayed realistically. Instead of painting everything as perfect, it touched on problems and discord.

The interesting thing, however, was in how I related to Adam and Mia. If I Stay was Mia's story, but it was Adam that I identified with the most. There were moments during flashbacks where I felt like Mia was unfair or too demanding and it was Adam who was the sympathetic quality. And Adam's pain and anguish and selfless love was beautiful to watch. I watched the movie shortly after finishing the novel and I felt the same way for most of it, as well.

My Recommendation: If you like a good, emotional read that isn't all perfect happy endings, then this is an excellent read. The story is beautiful and sweet, even as it is tragic and sad at times.

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