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"A Year and Six Seconds" is the true story of "New York Times"-bestselling memoirist Gillies's vibrant yet bumbling efforts to pick herself up after her husband leaves her for another woman--and then of how she stumbles upon true love.

## **A Year and Six Seconds: A Memoir of Stumbling from Heartbreak to Happiness Details**

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## **From Reader Review A Year and Six Seconds: A Memoir of Stumbling from Heartbreak to Happiness for online ebook**

### **Jodi says**

Okay -- I can't explain why I loved this so much, but I did. I read her first book and had the same reaction. Parts of it are written with such childlike innocence, I found myself thinking it was cheesy...but maybe that's how it seduces. She pulls you in with her honesty. I found myself thinking I could be friends with this woman (and then remembered she's famous). I read it in one day. If she writes another book, I'm sure the same thing will happen: I'll buy it, begin reading, wince at the cheese, keep reading and then be sad when it's over because I enjoyed it so much.

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### **melanie (lit\*chick) says**

Having read and enjoyed her first book Happens Every Day, I was curious about the rest of the story. What happened after she packs up her two boys, leaves her cheating college professor husband, and moves in with her parents in New York City? Aside from being a giant mess...how does she navigate this next part? As in her first book, author Gillies does not seem to hold back, even when it portrays her in a poor light.

I am confused about the purpose of this book - is it supposed to be triumphant, insightful, inspiring, or just serve the leftover questions from the first book? (I'm guessing the latter, guilty as charged). I already knew she remarries...a curiosity aroused after finishing book one and sated by google. Admittedly, I was expecting something a little less sloppy. And while I defended her right to fall apart while her marriage was crumbling, I didn't realize she was going to turn into one of those girls everyone knew in college (or high school) that always has a man or needs to have one or whatever. Granted, living with your parents as an adult is stressful enough without the added issues that come from divorce but I didn't get the sense that she was moving forward at all. She floated around, got her old job back, regularly swam in puddle of self pity, stumbled on her husband and now she's happy again. Sorry if that was a spoiler...but I'm not sure there is a fresh story to be spoiled here.

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### **Danielle says**

I read Gillies first memoir, Happens Every Day, and really enjoyed it so I decided to read this book as well. There's almost no need to read this book if you've read the first one as the first 80% or so is a more detailed description of the last few chapters of Happens Every Day after describing her life in NYC after moving back in with her parents with her two young sons following her divorce. She eventually picks up on some new material with getting back in the dating scene and meeting her second husband. Gillies is a good enough writer that I still enjoyed this book, but I wouldn't recommend reading both this and Happens Every Day because it's like reading the same book but with a short addendum. She has now broken my Augusten Burroughs memoir rule, which is that even if you had something interesting enough to write a memoir about to start with there is no need to continue chronicling your life in future memoirs from the point where that first memoir left off. Trust me you are not that interesting of a person. So now I am done reading your books unless you come up with a new topic.

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### **Peebee says**

OK, so Isabel Gillies is incredibly self-absorbed and a drama queen. It's not like I didn't know this from reading her first book. I'm not sure why I put this on my to-read list, because not long after I started, I'm thinking, "oh yeah, I really find her annoying, so why did I want to read about how it all worked out great for her?" That feeling persisted throughout the book.

She acts like she's the first person to have ever suffered heartbreak, or having her husband fall in love with someone else, or having to raise her children as a single mother, or having to start over her life by moving in with her parents after she became an adult. The truth is, she's a working actress who has regularly appeared on shows you've heard of, her parents have a large enough apartment in Manhattan to take her in, and her husband appears to be paying child support and attempting to remain part of her kids' lives. And she fell in love again just a few months after her divorce was final -- without even dating someone else seriously first -- and is now remarried to a great guy. So all in all, her life is not really so bad, at least to anyone but her, because, you see, her life was supposed to be perfect, being smart and beautiful and all. She writes well, and manages to make this story as interesting as it could be, but ultimately, it's not that interesting.

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### **Florinda says**

Isabel Gillies believes it takes a full six seconds to fall in love. However, one has to be ready and willing to experience those six seconds. After Gillies' first marriage ended, it took about a year for her to get to that readiness.

Gillies' 2009 memoir, *Happens Every Day*, explored her marriage to the father of her two young sons, which abruptly ended with her husband's announcement that he was leaving her for another woman. This follow-up opens as Gillies brings her children back to her own childhood home - her parents' New York City apartment - and takes the first shaky steps into a new stage of life as an unmarried woman and single parent. Not all of those steps move her directly forward, as she often finds herself sorting back through her broken marriage to understand how it happened. But as she focuses on creating a secure place for her children to grow, she's growing too, and coming to understand herself and what she wants in her next relationship. And she does want that next relationship...when it's time.

The tone of *A Year and Six Seconds* is candid and conversational. Gillies lets readers know up front that she does get those six seconds, and she engages us in the journey to reach them. Her depiction of her struggles, false starts, small triumphs and epiphanies will ring bells with anyone who's ever been through a breakup, and so will her determination to make a bad situation better. She gets closer to a happy ending than many of us do, and that doesn't happen every day.

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### **Carlene says**

A candid examination of the breakup of a marriage and life as a single mother. I was engrossed in her story through much of the book but finally began to get weary of her weeping and self absorption. As others have pointed out she was rather fortunate in the circumstances she had to fall back on (sharing an apartment in

Manhattan with her parents who were supportive and available for child care, her old acting job back, friends she grew up with nearby, support and monthly visitations with the children from her ex). Certainly it isn't easy though as she admits she is a drama queen. This became quite evident though she ends by recognizing this along with some other characters flaws and seeks therapy for improvement on these issues.

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### **Dawn Michelle says**

I read Isabel Gillies' first book "Happens Every Day" in 2010; just months before my whole world [like hers in that book] was turned upside down when my then husband, out of the clear blue, walked away from me and my marriage. I know that those first few months after it happened, I thought back to that book and how much grace and willingness to make the abnormal Isabel showed [even amidst the tantrums and anger and crying] to her ex throughout the process and strived to do the same thing [and I also remembered how my own Mum was during the process when my father left us and still how much grace she shows that man]; I often failed.

When I saw that she had written a second book that focuses on the first year after the separation and divorce, I knew I had to read it. I also knew I had to wait until I was in a better place myself, because I also knew this book was how she fell in love again and I was sure [at the time it was released] that I wasn't ready to read about that [no matter just how happy I was for her].

*APPARENTLY*, 7 years after my separation and divorce, I was still not ready to read about that. I cried A LOT during this book. A. LOT. And spent some time being envious of her being able to live in NYC [oh how I miss that city] and even though it was tough, had the opportunity to try and heal and move on in one of the greatest cities in the world instead of a dumb little town in the middle of nowhere Pennsylvania where everyone knows everyone and you get tired of people being in your business. But I digress.

And I was envious of the fact that she found love again. I think that will never happen for me again. I loved my ex completely and not only am I afraid of never finding that kind of love again, I am TERRIFIED of actually finding it again [you see the dilemma here right?]. It was interesting to see the process for her went and then what she had to deal with AFTER she got remarried and how she did that and became a better person in the process - a better person, mother and yes, wife.

This was a great read for me - even with all the tears and mild forays into envy [they didn't really last that long because I am, for the first time in a long time content with where I am. I miss the human contact of that kind of relationship, but I am okay with that most days]. I like how Isabel writes and how she portrays everyone in the book, including all the hilarity about herself. I am glad that I finally was able to read this.

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### **Courtney says**

I loved her first book and sympathized with her, the devoted wife cast aside for a newer younger French professor. This one was braver because after she moves in with her parents and two young children in NYC one starts to find her...annoying. She's open and honest about what it's like to be dumped, divorced, lonely and raising Two little boys. But it does somehow endear u you to Isabelle like the first memoir does. Still you find yourself relating to her insecurities and the mess of it all. And cheering for her when she meets her soulmate in Central Park.

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## **Beth says**

I listened to the audio version. The author should be lauded for her introspection (which other reviewers have labeled self-absorption) because she was looking within herself to figure out what part she may have played in the dissolution of her marriage. It would have been easier just to say her husband left her for another woman...which he did.

But the author also would have led us to believe that she was among the first divorced women in NYC. In this day and age, divorced single moms are not an aberration or a pariah.

While Gillies's writing is not particularly lyrical or rich, she comes up with some golden observations/lessons. The epilogue, in which her son is struggling with homework so they Skype her ex-husband, was sweet as she urged that, by staying friends with an ex-, there are many important things the divorced parents can do together for their children.

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## **Tammy Dotts says**

When her marriage ends, Isabel Gillies finds herself and her two young sons back in New York, living with her parents. Her memoir, *A Year and Six Seconds: A Love Story*, recounts her struggles to put the pieces of their lives if not back together again, at least together enough to take on a new shape.

Gillies' voice is that of a close friend, and the memoir reads as if the reader and Gillies were catching up over a cup of coffee. The tone is engaging. Memoirs can often read as if the author is dumping all her dirty laundry onto the page for readers to revel in and for the author to take pride in. Although there's something to be said for the "no shame" approach, Gillies takes a different tack.

She retells the initial days of moving back to the family home with the right mix of full disclosure and privacy. She cops to feelings of embarrassment about living with her parents and how it affects their lives, but doesn't dwell too much on it. This is not a "woe is me" memoir. Gillies never panders to her readers, offering clichéd advice about surviving divorce or jumping into the dating pool again.

Instead, Gillies matter-of-factly describes the events of the year after her marriage ended, without excessive hand wringing or wallowing. She doesn't whitewash events either. She's the first to admit when she's incapable of rising above feelings of jealousy, anger and complete sorrow. The emotions of the past are still fresh in her mind, but the perspective of time lets Gillies write about them with a slight sense of distance.

What comes through most of all is her love for her two sons. The move from a suburban college town in Ohio to Manhattan couldn't have been easy for the family. But Gillies and her parents make the most of it for the boys. Whether it's turning getting dressed in winter gear into a game with waiting chairs or finding the perfect nanny through Craigslist, Gillies writes with honesty about single motherhood. She has a strong support system and acknowledges it as helping get her through the year.

Details of the marriage's end are left to Gillies' previous book, *Happens Every Day: An All-True Story*. *A Year and Six Seconds* spends its time looking at how divorcing parents try to remain a family across state lines and how Gillies is able to accept that reconciliation is out of the question and she wouldn't want it anyway.

The six seconds of the title refers something a friend told Gillies – it takes six seconds to fall in love. As she

explains, six-second love isn't "a fleeting thought about how someone is hot, and I'm not talking about a crush; I'm talking about knowing with certainty that you could spend your life with this person. In an instant, not only are you down the aisle, but you have had the babies, you have reached old age, and you are buried side by side under a tree for all eternity. In six seconds, you see it all. And you feel it; you feel the love that will make your whole life shift. Six-second love is real, but it doesn't always get you to happily ever after."

Gillies gets a second chance at six-second love toward the end of the memoir, about a year chronologically after her first marriage ends. This isn't a spoiler: Gillies tells readers up front that there's a second love in her life. But the memoir doesn't follow Gillies on madcap adventures in dating. She talks about her first post-marriage kiss (a true New York moment) and some of the dates she went on, but they're not important to who she is now and Gillies rightly leaves details out of the memoir. Some readers may want more from the book in this regard, but the love story of the subtitle is really about Gillies' love for her sons and (as corny as it can sound) for herself.

If the memoir had ended before Gillies' second marriage or even before she met her husband, you have the feeling she and the boys were going to be okay. And you look forward to the next time you can get together over coffee.

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### **Donura says**

RATING: 5 out 5

In this follow-up memoir to "It Happens Every Day", Isabel Gillies, bares her heart and all the raw emotions that came in the aftermath of her separation from her husband who has fallen in love with someone else. She leaves her home, most of her possessions, most of the possessions of her children, and the Midwestern town she has called home.

She is honest with her hurt and pain as she heads back to her parents' apartment in New York with her two very small little boys. My first thoughts when I began this book was why would she move back in with her parents but once the scene unfolds, you realize that it was the best move she could have made for all of them in terms of a safe, warm, loving cocoon that helped both her and the boys heal. Her frankness about the obstacles, uncertainty, and the depression that comes to her in waves almost every day, is a wonderful gift to other women who may be going through this kind of separation and loss of a relationship and will help them see that they are the only out there with the same or similar problems.

This is wonderful personal story that takes you through all the different stages of the failing of a relationship. You wonder at times if Isabel will come out on the other in tact or will she withdraw with the help of her aging parents. Her story is one that can be recommended to a friend who might be going through a separation or divorce, to someone you know who is finding it difficult to move on just yet, or simply anyone who want to see that there is light on the other side of any bad situation.

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### **Carianne Carleo-Evangelist says**

I went into it with minimal expectations - I'm vaguely familiar with her work as an actor, but a friend invited me to an upcoming booktalk and I figured I should at least thumb through this so I was familiar with her work as an author.

If I'd started reading this earlier in the day, I would have finished it in one sitting. I could not put it down. Her writing is so compelling and this is every woman's story- love, loss and children. The premise is, you may know in six seconds if this is The One -- but that even The One might not be the forever one. She'd relocated do Oberlin, Ohio for her then-husband's job and within a year and a half, he'd left her and their two young boys. This is the story of Gillies' move back to NYC, her childhood bedroom and a mix of the practical (establishing residency to be qualified to take over her parents' lease) to the amusing: hanging a Red Hot CHili Peppers' poster in her former and current bedroom. THe story culminates in her meeting and marrying her second husband, also a divorcé.

An excellent read -- her voice is strong and her writing is engaging.

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### **Ann says**

This memoir is a sequel to "Happens Every Day", in which Isabel Gillies described her (first) marriage to a brilliant but difficult literature professor, their life in the hippie college town of Oberlin, Ohio, and the eventual breakdown of her marriage. That book was very touching, because it alternated the joy of finding love, having babies, creating a new life, with the sudden bewilderment of finding out that your husband just doesn't want to be married to you any more (of course there's another woman in the offing).

This book picks up just when Isabel has returned to New York City with her two small boys. She moves in with her parents in their fancy-but-small Manhattan apartment (with view on Central Park), tries to get on with the daily aspects of parenting (finding a preschool, finding a pediatrician) and in general tries to get on with her life. This includes some tentative dates. Eventually, about one year after her first marriage fell apart, she falls in love with an old acquaintance and they merge their two families. Happily ever after.

Without wanting to minimize the heartache and hurt that the author felt, this book came across as "divorce-light". Perhaps it was because she had so many safety nets, compared to other women? The old parental coop to fly back into, loads of caring (and rich) friends to pick up the threads with?Isabel Gillies seems to have fitted right back into her Old Money life in New York, including wearing her friends' designer castoffs to dates. She seems to get a job somewhere, but there is definitely a sense of there being a financial cushion. When her husband flies over to spend the weekend with his sons, she takes off for a spa weekend with her girlfriends - somehow it all came across as too easy, too much like a Hallmark movie. Her children's anxiety and sadness comes through occasionally, but even then it's usually in relationship to her own life.

So all in all, not as touching as the first book.

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### **Anna Louise says**

When the story opens, it's a dark and slushy winter in New York City, where Isabel is arriving by airplane from Ohio, two toddlers in tow, to move in with her parents; her husband has left her for another woman. In subsequent scene after hilarious scene, Isabel shares her valiant, misguided, and bumbling attempts to

understand her own part in the disintegration of her marriage and to feel strong and loveable. And, one by one, she begins to cross items off a staggering single mom to-do list that includes: change last name, get bank account, get work, have breakdowns only in front of best friend and not in front of children, find rare preschool slot for son midyear in Manhattan, get along with three generations of family in tight quarters, find a man who can plant one great and romantic kiss, accept self, accept love, be happy.

She cries, she dates, she (and her mother and father and children) get the flu, and then, just when she least expects it, Isabel falls in love.

With humility and a refreshing sense of humor, Isabel stumbles many times but also laughs, forgives, discovers new treasures from old friends, marries again, and more than that, finds good love itself within and around her.

Beautiful writing but a heartbreak story until the end! I found myself relating to her as a woman who is going through a divorce while worrying about her children and trying not to make the same mistakes again in her life. I cried tears with her tears in the story and found myself crying at the end of the book because she found her true love and happiness. I would recommend it for a soul searching tale of the bumpy road that leads you to where you were meant to be.

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### **Alice Chang says**

Humble, unassuming, honest, and funny - like listening to a girlfriend

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