



I Was Here

Gayle Forman

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The story follows Cody Reynolds in the months following her best friend Meg's suicide, as she delves into Meg's secret life in search of answers.

I Was Here Details

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Author : Gayle Forman

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From Reader Review I Was Here for online ebook

Lola says

Had you shoved this book at me without any author name written and with the single order to “Read.This.Book,” I never would have guessed that Gayle Forman wrote this story.

Because this is no breathtaking If I Stay, nor inspiring Where She Went. Not only do I think that the author rested on her laurels with the writing of this book, if we compare to the ones mentioned above, but I’m certain this could have successfully worked, had it been done a little differently.

In the first place, I have to bring up the fact that this relates Cody’s experience with loss, the way she reacts after learning her best friend, Meg, committed suicide. She, like most people, doesn’t want to let go just yet...because she doesn’t understand how she never saw any “signs” and she internally blames herself from not being able to prevent this from happening. So she digs deep, and tries to find anything that might give her an explanation and answer to this question : *Why?*

This has been done before, no denying here...but Gayle Forman did add something new to this scenario: suicide support groups, as for people who are thinking about killing themselves, but need a little more prompting, motivation to commit the final act.

That’s what kept me on continuing this read. I couldn’t just stop myself halfway in the plot, even if many of this book’s constituents, such as the romance, the slow pacing, the main character, Meg, made me quickly lose interest. I HAD to know the conclusion to this novel...and I must say that I was not impressed. I could have predicted that, and I guess I did – somewhat, but it still was underwhelming.

Cody was a good person, when I think of it, but was she a good *character* to read about? I have to say no, because there was this “openness” missing from her. I looked back while writing this review, and realized that Cody didn’t share much about herself during the read. Same for Meg, something that irritated me. When characters keep telling me how this girl or this boy is so special and that not knowing him/her is regretful, it exasperates me, but only if the person in question isn’t presented well; if I cannot imagine for myself what incredibility lays inside him/her. And that’s the problem: for Meg, I couldn’t see any of this “incredibility,” since the heroine didn’t care to present her to us in detail.

The romance was a big “bad-boy-turned-good” cliché. But it still could have worked! Ben was pretty believable in his role, but, when there’s no romantic chemistry between two people, it is most likely that I will not be credulous into thinking that they will last as a couple.

I feel sorry for saying this, but I’m so glad to be done with this read. Now I can focus on A Discovery of Witches.

Whitney Atkinson says

4.5 stars

Oh, man. Gayle's books are just phenomenal to real because they're so real. The emotions are so raw, the characters are so fleshed out. This book reads like a murder mystery and I was captivated by page 30 and read it in a day. This book is so real and bittersweet, showing the aftermath of a suicide and not sugar-coating anything. Gayle's voice in writing gets stronger and stronger with each book and this one definitely had me thinking.

I took off half a star because I thought the end was a slight bit anti-climactic and there was a bit of an unnecessary side romance, but the message of the book was so poignant that I'll be recommending this book for a long time.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

May contain spoilery!

Cody's best friend Meg has gone off to college and then she ends up committing suicide. Cody feels the guilt of not doing all she could to save her friend. She feels that it is partially her fault that her friend is gone.

She begins her search for answers and ends up finding an encrypted file on Meg's computer. With some help she gets it open and finds out that Meg has been participating with one of those awful sites that assist people with suicide. It's hard to imagine that something that vile actually exists.

This book packs a powerful punch and Forman seems to do very well with her characters being very realistic.

The thing I didn't care for in this book was the romancey stuff. Ben had "fucked" Meg..then he starts up with Cody. That's just not in my code. I don't believe in messing with someone that one of your girls has been involved with. Even if she is gone. Wrong, wrong, wrong. And it bugged me enough to distract me from the book.

Christine Alibutud says

I felt calm, peaceful, and full of love. And in that moment, I was reminded just why God wants us to forgive. Not simply because it's the key to a better world, but because of what it does for ourselves. Forgiveness is God's gift to us. Christ forgave us. He forgave our sins. That was his gift. But by allowing us to forgive each other, he opened us up to that divine love. The article had it right...

...Forgiveness: It's a miracle drug. It's God's miracle drug.

Before anything else, I think this is the very first time that I ever cried over the Author's Note, instead of the actual story itself. I mean don't get me wrong, I absolutely loved the book, but there was something about the raw honesty with the story that Gayle shared on the Author's Note that made me bawl. The story Gayle shared on her note was mainly why I Was Here was born.

Yeah sorry, but that was an absolute tears fest.

"There are so many avenues. There are so many ways to live, to define what living means for you and you alone. We are so narrow in our thinking, and once you understand that, once you decide to not abide by these artificial constraints, anything is possible and you are so liberated."

Wow. Hmm. Where do I even begin with this book? To say that I was in a daze after reading this is putting it a bit mildly. It tackled the sensitive topic of suicide, and although I'm not a stranger to that concept, it still somehow felt foreign reading a story that centered around it. It seemed like such a delicate topic to touch, even the book felt fragile when I was holding it with my hands. I sound like I'm overreacting, but it was actually how it felt.

I also appreciated how different types of love were depicted in this book. Love among family, love among friends, and love between lovers. I liked how it wasn't only limited to romantic love, but of course, Cody and Ben's connection sparked my whole body. Surprisingly, it wasn't my favorite part about the book, but it did do a good number of tingles all throughout my read.

But then I saw you...like maybe you were who I was looking for."

The book was the perfect mixture of thrill, grief, romance, mystery, and drama. I guess the main reason why this book appealed so much to me is because it didn't romanticize suicide, instead, I think it was very brutal but captivating in its honesty about the feeling of loss and grief regarding the said concept.

Simply put, this book, though I wouldn't go past to saying it was perfect, was solely entrancing.

Kudos to Gayle Forman!

4.5 stars!

"It's an act of bravery to feel your feelings."

Sarah says

Thank God that is over. I could have finished this in a few hours but instead it took me 3 days. I'm getting worked up just thinking about how frustrating this book was. This is more like a rant rather than a review...

Things I did not like about this book:

- 1) Cody. She was so immature and childish. She constantly slut-shamed everyone. She thought she was amazing just because she was a virgin (she wasn't). She was irritating and self-centered.
- 2) Ben. Ben started off as a promising character. He seemed more realistic than the perfect Adam from If I Stay anyway but eventually Gayle Forman made him into a horrible cliché. His character just wasn't consistent.
- 3) Cody & Ben's relationship. Their relationship was definitely the most annoying thing about this book. Gayle Forman was trying to write an "opposites attract" kind of romance and it just did not work. They were so incompatible. Their exchanges made me want to burn this book and throw it down a well. It was so clichéd and frustrating.
- 4) The execution of the plot. The plot sounds intriguing but the story was not interesting whatsoever. This book was boring and flat.
- 5) The fact that the horrible love story took over the plot. The "love story" should have taken the backseat in this novel. It would have been so much better if it focused more on Cody & Meg's friendship.
- 6) The big pretty bow used to wrap this book up with a happy ending. COME ON GAYLE FORMAN! (view spoiler)

Things that were tolerable:

- 1) The writing. It was just okay. Some of the descriptions of Ben made me want to puke everywhere and a lot of it made me roll my eyes too but I wouldn't call the writing bad per say. It certainly wasn't gripping or interesting and there was a lot of pointless waffle just to fill pages.

And that is about it for my rant. I wouldn't recommend this to anyone.

Aly's Bookish Wonderland says

To read the full review, [CLICK ME!](#)

I tried to write a eulogy for that service. I did. I pulled out the disc Meg had burned of firefly songs for inspiration. The third one up was the Bishop Allen track "Fireflies." I don't know if I had ever really listened to the words before, because when I did now, they were like a smack from the grave: It says you can still forgive her. And she will forgive you back.

Suicide is a sensitive, difficult subject to write about and only a handful of authors can pull it off successfully. Gayle Forman took suicide and showed just how badly the aftermath affects those close to the victim, and how a victim isn't always in control. Meg and Cody's friendship was strong and indestructible, and being left behind is something Cody struggles to cope with. Not only that, but the fact that her best

friend had never let on how bad things had gotten for her forces Cody's hunt for answers. What really happened to her best friend?

Full review to feature on 100% Rock!

Thank you NetGalley for this ARC in exchange for an honest review!

Claire Robinson says

2 - "If that's what happens to normal, what hope is there for the rest of us?" Stars.

I think I should firstly say that I am a huge fan of Gayle Forman's books. She somehow manages to take a bunch of fairly unremarkable, usual characters and give them what starts out as an ordinary story, but with one unique twist, turns them into extraordinary books. I am guaranteed to need tissues and want a hug after finishing a book by her, but I always feel I am a better person for having read the story she has given me.

You get all of the above with *I Was Here* with the exception of needing tissues and wanting a hug. This book left me cold; I know that is a pretty blunt summation, but that's how I felt. I am not sure what went wrong but for me there was no emotion from me or the characters, I felt no empathy or sympathy for what any of them were experiencing, and I could find no real solid reasoning for half of the things Cody did, thought or said. I would go as far as to say disliked her, her mother, their attitudes and just them in general intensely.

Ben didn't evoke much from me either, in fact no one in the book did really, apart from Meg's little brother Scottie. Meg's suicide and the reasoning behind it, her family's behavior in the aftermath, and the actions Cody took to try and get to the bottom of the mystery... nothing. I felt absolutely nothing, I kept reading as I was sure that at some point something would happen to give me that lump in my throat, bring on that lip wobble or just a slight tear to the eye.

I have absolutely no doubt that I am probably in the minority with my feelings about this book, Gayle is, and will always be an author I am happy to read a book by. I guess that sometimes, some subjects and the story and characters an author chooses to build around them just don't work for even their ardent fans. That is definitely the camp I am in on this occasion.

"I have time."

ARC generously provided via Netgalley, in exchange for the above honest review.

Thomas says

Meg and Cody have been best friends forever, until Meg kills herself in a hotel room and leaves the maid a sizable tip. For the past few months, Cody has kept her distance from Meg, separated by all the miles

between their dead-end town in Washington and Meg's prestigious college. But when Cody gets the news from Meg's automated email and goes to pack up Meg's remaining belongings, she finds that her best friend has kept secrets from her she never would have expected. Cody embarks on a mission to solve the mystery behind Meg's suicide and to put together the pieces of the life she herself once knew.

As I have said many times before, Gayle Forman has such a water-like quality to her writing: it flows from one page to the next with simplicity and grace, and I always appreciate it after a long dry spell. In *I Was Here*, she tackles the difficult topic of suicide in a smart way, through Cody, our protagonist with a purpose. Forman imbues Cody's narrative with the perfect blend of resilience and introspection. We see her strive to decode all of the ambiguity surrounding Meg's death, but we also see her at her most vulnerable, struggling with her own relationships and the best friend she never thought she would lose. Forman treats suicide in an appropriate and sensitive way, honoring the painfulness that comes with it and ending her novel with a note of hope.

While I did not feel the same spark from *I Was Here* that I felt when reading *If I Stay* or *Just One Day*, I would still recommend this novel to Forman fans, as well as to those who enjoy contemporary YA in general. Though Cody and Ben's relationship rung a little hollow to me, Forman's clear prose and her ability to capture voice made *I Was Here* a refreshing, bittersweet, and meaningful read.

Laura says

Warning: this book may trigger suicidal thoughts. Please read as well the Author's Note.

To say I was excited about reading this book isn't exactly wrong at all, Gayle Forman is an amazing storyteller but also I was pretty nervous. *I Was Here* is about a topic I've found myself thinking, not now but way back and so I felt this book was going to be totally great or a disaster. For me there wasn't an in-between.

I Was Here is about Cody, a young girl who is facing her best friend's suicide, they were apart for a while then. Meg was attending to college in Tacoma and Cody stayed back in town. Cody comes from a very "dysfunctional" home, her mom, Tricia, isn't really the mother of the year and from a very young age Cody found in Meg's house a second home. Meg's suicide left everyone speechless, since the girl was a wildfire. You know those people who are beautiful, funny, kind, lucky and caring? Those people who attract other people just by being themselves? Well, she was like that, so her drinking poison in a motel and leaving everyone good-bye emails wasn't something easy to swallow. Meg's parents, Joe and Sue, asked Cody to go to Tacoma and retrieve her stuff from her dorm but when she did so she met Meg's roommates and the guy Meg got a crush on which wasn't pleasant whatsoever but soon she found out weird files on Meg's computers. Did Meg kill herself with someone's else help? Was she protecting someone? Did someone actually force her to do it?

Cody has to find out what really happened to her friend while dealing with the fact she's no longer there, wasn't for a while, but also she has to deal with her own rage, sadness and fear.

I want to talk about how well written it was, first. Gayle has this style, you feel like you're reading your own

life. She gets you IN the book so I really had to step away from it a couple of time because I kind of got myself a little too involved—that's something I really admire.

At the beginning I had a hard time with Cody. She was angry all the time, which I understood, but she was also rude, which I didn't. Like, just plain rude. I knew once I got to know her story better I'd forget about it, which sort of happened, but damn it was hard. Er, I feel so weird writing this because the main reason I didn't like Cody first was because I could see myself in her. She responded the same way I did and I still do, so there's that.

But back to the book... I enjoyed not so much from it. Don't get me wrong, I think it was a terrific book, a well handled story with great character's developments but I just felt it so personal it's odd to write about it.

I understood Cody's slipping away from Meg's life, things like that happen. I've been there. *"Sometimes we meet people and are so symbiotic with them, it's as if we are one person, with one mind, one destiny."* that's scary. The idea of sharing so much with a person that they became a part of you like that is scary, at least for me. And often life leads you to differents ways, even if you don't move from where you are.

I have to say I didn't mind the romance here, partly because it wasn't cheese and you didn't really see it until it was right there and even though I think that just because some people came from the same place and overcame heavy stuff doesn't mean they're perfect for each other, I do believe Ben and Cody make it work.

Now, I want to say something about the main topic here: depression.

I liked that Meg was suffering from depression, I liked that almost no one knew about it, I liked that she seemed to be just fine because that's exactly how it is. You don't wear a sign on your forehead that says "I'm depressed", you may seem the happiest person on the planet but being all darkness inside and it's something that affects everyone in the way out society handles it.

What I want to say is that everyone has different opinions on life and death, and whether it's ours to take it or continue on it but at the end of the day you don't know what could have happened if you stayed. Maybe nothing would happen but maybe everything would. I get that is the same thing with death but at least you see it coming. Once you take that step, once I take that step, there's not coming back.

This isn't really a review but a concerned opinion, and again: please read the Author's Note.

Maybe it's not you, maybe it will never be you but knowing what to do could help someone someday.

Rachel Reads Ravenously says

4.5 stars

Suicide is a very popular topic in the young adult genre, and normally a topic I stay away from. But when I saw this book with the pretty cover I couldn't resist.

Cody is astonished when she discovers her friend Meg has committed suicide. Meg's parents ask Cody to go to Meg's school and pack up her thing, which is where Cody discovers Meg held a very different life than the one she told Cody. Due to a weird phrasing in Meg's suicide note, Cody investigates the circumstances

of Meg's death and discovers she was involved in a chat room where the participants support other users in taking their own lives. Cody becomes obsessed with one user in particular, and thinks they may hold the answers to her friend's death.

I think the thing I loved most about this book was how it is set in the first year after high school. There are so few books like this out there, I can really only name one or two others, and they don't address the issues that come after graduation. For many teenagers, just getting into college is the endgame and they don't consider what's next. Life doesn't always turn out how we expect, and I felt that was a small theme of this book. But the important thing is to embrace the change and either accept our path or change it ourselves. I liked the fact that Forman's main character attended community college, because many teens choose to do this over a four year university. Cody was an intelligent young woman, but if everyone who was intelligent was able to go to college we would all be living in a different world.

I'm going to get a little bit personal here, but I want to put it out there. My first year of college was tough, really tough for me. I went to a school 7 hours away from home and only one other kid from my high school went there and he dropped out. I had an easy start making friends, but I soon learned that not everyone is as nice or actually cares about you as much as you think they do. I remember feeling so alone that first year, and it really didn't get better for me until my freshman year was almost over. My friends from home had their own things they were dealing with at home or at their own colleges and it became hard to stay connected with them. So, in a small way I can relate to Meg, in that I felt incredibly lonely in a place where I was surrounded by people all the time. I'm very different from Meg in that I never, NEVER contemplated suicide. But my experience reminds me that it's easy for young college students to become vulnerable in a new place with people they don't feel connected to. And that's where the predators can strike.

Basically, I really connected with this book and loved it. I realize this book might not be for everyone, but as I always say about books, you never know until you try.

Some people who reach out for help sometimes reach to the wrong person or place, and it's important to remember that suicide is not the answer. It gets better, it did for me, it will for you. No matter how you feel, there are people who care about you, whether you know it or not, whether you believe it or not.

And if you do know someone, or loved someone who took their own lives, it's not your fault.

Maddie (Heart Full Of Books) says

Heartbreaking, delicate and determined, I Was Here will stand out in my mind when I think back on what I've read this year. Gayle Forman's writing style is something I can only aspire to.

Maureen says

Well I wasn't expecting to finish this book in one day but HERE WE ARE. I listened to the audiobook which I think added to my experience a lot. Overall, I thought this book was pretty good. I liked the main character alright and her journey was really interesting, as well as the minor characters. I also think this is a really important book for its focus on suicide and its effect.

In the end, I liked it alright it wasn't the BEST but I'm still pretty emotional.

Tw: suicide

Kassidy says

4.5

A very engaging, beautiful, and touching story.

Emerald says

“Anything that kills hope is a sin.”

Aj the Ravenous Reader says

3.5 stars

I Was Here is a very poignant story about suicide and depression and one that doesn't attempt to romanticize these things either. It's raw and yes, very sad but also very relatable and at times I find myself laughing at the main character's sarcasm. It's not hard to empathize with a girl whose best friend and probably the most important person in her life, more like her other half, took her own life.

I like what the story is trying to achieve and I appreciate the plot devices the author used to achieve her purpose. I like how the story is trying to educate readers and at the same time, helping them realize that like any illness, depression can be cured and not encouraged or celebrated by suicide support groups online. As gleaned from the book, you don't treat an alcoholic by giving him more alcohol the same way that you don't convince a depressed person that her life isn't worth saving.

Quoting the author:

“Life can be hard and beautiful and messy, but hopefully, it will be long.”

I know I once mentioned that I tend to avoid books on these topics but they seem to find a way to me and I'm surprised that I'm liking them. Gayle Forman truly has a way with words. Her writing is lyrical and at the same time very genuinely true. I also appreciate her notes in the end.

Perhaps my only complaint is the romance which came out of nowhere and the sort of cheesy ending that got me going “What the hell?” Lol! But other than, I think this book deserves to be read. ?

Emily May says

I told Joe and Sue that I was sorry, that I couldn't give a eulogy because I couldn't think of anything to say. It was the first time I ever lied to them.

In the hands of most authors, this book would have been nothing more than a standard, trope-ridden NA romance. It almost was, anyway.

Forman's contemporary novels have always contained a heavy romantic element that has propped up the central themes of grief, growing up and friendship. This book is no exception, but I felt that this time the story of two teen girls, their friendship and the suicide of one of them was even more orchestrated around the romance between Cody and Ben.

Common elements of every other New Adult romance pop up constantly as this novel moves along: death of a mutual friend brings a girl and guy together, a road trip laced with tension takes place, she's a virgin and he's slept with hundreds of girls but he suddenly finds himself wanting to change his ways for her. Do I really need to go on?

The romance was so cliched and obvious from the moment Cody set her eyes on this "player" that I almost put the book down for good. I didn't, though, and I'm glad for that. Because this book was written by Gayle Forman and even when she writes cliches she manages to add emotional depth to them and make this a novel that doesn't rely solely on the romance to be good.

The main plot line is about Cody coming to terms with the suicide of her best friend - Meg. The two of them have grown up together and were practically like sisters, so Cody's grief is amplified by the fact she had no idea her best friend was suicidal. Then she uncovers something unexpected: deleted emails and encrypted files on Meg's computer. With the help of a tech-savvy friend, she sets out to discover the truth about Meg's death. She is led towards online suicide forums and a group of people who may have had a hand in her friend's decision to die.

There were two things I thought were done excellently in this book and neither of them were the romance. First, I absolutely loved the handling and development of the relationship between Cody and her mum. It's a difficult, troubled relationship being pulled apart by lack of communication and understanding. However, the relationship dynamic goes through many changes by the novel's close and it tugged at my heartstrings numerous times.

Secondly, Forman looks at the fine line between suicide and the very common and morbid habit of considering one's own death. Almost everyone has briefly entertained the question "if I did, how would I do it?" So what happens when that question becomes "and let's say I was going to, how and where would I get what I needed?" I found myself marvelling at how easy the gradual progression from a casual thought to a realistic possibility can be. It was frightening.

I would say this book is worth reading if you can look past the tired tropes used for the romance and focus on the novel's strengths. Though, I think *I Was Here* would have been better if the romance had not existed at all.

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Maria Espadinha says

Fatal ou Evitável?

Meg e Cody são ervilhas da mesma vagem. Amigas de infância, cresceram inseparáveis até que um daqueles designados motivos de força maior, finalmente as descola!

Concluído o secundário, Meg parte para uma Universidade situada numa cidade distante, mas Cody fica.

Meg era divertida e extrovertida. Dispunha bem os que com ela privavam, agradando naturalmente, sem esforço...

O suicídio e ela não combinavam! Não!... Não com a Meg que Cody tão bem conhecia!

Era inacreditável! Impensável! Inconcebível! ...

O seu suicídio podia ser qualificado com todos os 'Ins' imagináveis!

De nervos esfrangalhados e com o espírito desassossegado, Cody empreende uma investigação por conta própria, em busca da Verdade escondida...

Quanto a mim, por muita confusão que reinásse na vida e cabeça de Meg, se ela não tivesse partido tão abruptamente para longe das suas raízes, para longe dos seus que a amavam e confortavam, talvez o malfadado suicídio não dispusesse de meios suficientes para se concretizar!?

É prática corrente em muitos países enviar jovens para universidades longínquas.

Tal medida será certamente benéfica para os espíritos mais aventureiros. Contudo, no que toca aos que caem fora desse universo, i.e. aqueles cujo equilíbrio psicológico está fortemente condicionado pelo apoio de familiares e amigos íntimos, poderá ocasionar resultados desastrosos e culminar em epílogos fatais!...

Inspirado num caso real, este é mais um livro capaz de nos pôr a pensar sobre as causas possíveis do suicídio juvenil.

Só por isso, vale!!!

Jesse (JesseTheReader) says

hear more of my thoughts here: <http://youtu.be/GiN-1CvvC2k>

This book was so emotional! The only thing that I really didn't like about it was the romance. It was a major turn off for me, but other than that this book was fantastic, but sad, oh so very sad.

Mandy says

OH MY GOSH! OH MY GOSH, OH MY GOSH!!!! Oh this book, all the feels..... Seriously how did I not find this book earlier? I have a book hangover. This novel surrounded my heart like a cloak. How will I go on?! Oh this book.....

Cody's best friend, Meg commits suicide in the worse way possible and Cody goes on a mission to find how how and why and ends up discovering herself in the midst of it. The characters are amazing and lovable and written so well.

I love Ben McCallister. Oh my gosh I want him as my boyfriend. He is rough but with this tenderness to him that is so attractive. I love boys like that.

If I could give this book 10 stars I would. One of my top 3 favorites... This book is written into me like Dark Places was. I just connected with it. Oh my gosh. This book!

I also read it will be a movie soon, so happy dance!!!!!!

Read it!

Ahmad Sharabiani says

I Was Here, Gayle Forman

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