



Just As I Am

Virginia Smith

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When purple-haired Mayla Strong struts down the center aisle of Salliesburg Independent Christian Church, the bug-eyed congregation strains to get a peek at her pierced nose and lip. But Pastor Paul welcomes her with a huge, infectious grin and baptizes her on the spot. Determined to make her Heavenly Father proud, Mayla's sincere and often hilarious attempts to let Him change her from the inside out take her into some difficult places. Through it all she grows in faith and wisdom--sometimes through pain, sometimes through humor, but always in a way that is uniquely Mayla.

Just As I Am Details

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Author : Virginia Smith

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From Reader Review Just As I Am for online ebook

Allison says

I obtained this book as a free download for my Kindle and was pleasantly surprised! Christian fiction is something I would not even second glance at normally.

Without getting into religious debate, to sum the book up, the Authour takes you on a journey of self discovery through the main character "Mayla" and how she deals with prejudice on both sides of the coin.

The only part that disappoints is how Mayla conforms to how one should look when one is Christian, when really what happened is her rebellious phase was over and she had grown up! I think the author could have explored that a little better.

Altogether though this was an enjoyable light read and have added the second book to my wishlist :)

Paula Phillips says

This Christian fiction novel is for all those out there that have ever wondered that just because they want to become a Christian - do they have to change their appearances on the outside . Before New Adult became a popular genre in the past few years, there was just teens and adult books and Just As I Am was considered an adult novel but it is in fact aimed at the mid -late 20's and possibly early 30's age group as we meet Mayla who I would put as late 20's . She has purple hair and facial piercings and works in a bar at night as her second job. Her mother has been talking her ear off about becoming a Christian and during her reluctance to attend one of her mum's local church services, Mayla finds herself drawn in and like God is speaking to her and one thing leads to another and she finds herself getting baptised in a robe and her hot pink panties which her mum calls her hooker panties. Join Mayla as she will navigate the next few months through her beginning Christian walk and showing others that even though she has become a Christian, its just a part of her - she is still the same Mayla , just a better version inside. We read Mayla's journey as she meets new friends, goes through heartache and pain , have friends turn their back on her and cause trouble and even lead some of the most unsuspecting people to Christ without even trying.

If you have enjoyed Melody Carlson's books, then you will find yourself right at home with Virginia Smith's series "Just As I Am" .

Deann Kachelmeier says

I wish I could drop this book in everybody's house. It was a great story for all ages. Funny but real . Have some fun with this book.

Charlene says

5 "Let your light shine" Stars!

The story of Mayla who develops a relationship with Jesus Christ at the age of twenty two surpassed my expectations. I read it in one sitting as I didn't want to put it down.

Virginia Smith lead me a beautiful Journey of a new Christian learning to walk in a relationship with Jesus Just as she was.

Some parts made me laugh but surprisingly I also cried a few times (not a regular occurrence for me). Walking every day with Jesus is not easy but if you choose to, you can bless the lives of those around you just like Mayla demonstrates in this story and just like Christ teaches us to.

The characters were very relatable. I especially liked Mayla, Alex, pastor Paul and Sylvia. But my favourite has to be Mr Holmes who doesn't like a grouchy old man with a big heart? :)

This story is written for the audience of young adults but some of the topics that were addressed were difficult but beautifully written.

I recommend this book to new and mature Christians because it really speaks to our hearts about treating everyone with the love of Christ regardless of there differences.

I am looking forward to reading book two VERY soon!

Jocey says

Just As I Am is a book about a girl named Mayla. Early on in the book Mayla becomes a Christian. This book is about her new life as a Christian. Mayla has purple hair, piercings and wears the craziest of clothings. All of who she is changes once she devotes herself to God.

In this book I learned that you can be what ever you want to be. I also learned that nothing is to far from reach. I liked that this book had very strong messages. I didn't like how the moral of the story was to be yourself but the character changes whgo she is. I aslo didn't like how the author portrayed a lot of the things in this book.

I was happy when I started reading this book. The whole message was to just be yourself. I got pretty angry towards the end of the book. When Mayla started to change how she looked. I thought that it was kind of dump to set that as a message and have the character change.

Linnette says

Loved this book! Now, I have to say that I am NOT!!! a first person POV fan. NOT in the least! But, Virginia Smith did an amazing job with "Just As I Am." She touched on topics within Christianity - namely hypocrisy and what it means to be a REAL Christian.

Virginia, I rarely give out five stars, so congratulations on a book well written!

Honestly! I've read first person POV that have bored me to tears. I've read first person POV that have made me hate it to the point that if I saw a book was written in first person I would put it down without even seeing what it was about. First person POV is definitely the type of book I will put down if I'm not hooked in the first paragraph.

Virginia did a fabulous job and I can't wait to read book #2!

Beth Peninger says

3.5 stars

I've not read Virginia Smith before and this book's description intrigued me a couple of years back. I'm sloooooowly working my way through my "to read" list and then this book also landed on the list "Books my library doesn't have" so I'm also sloooooowly working my way through that list which means I have to request them through InterLibrary Loan, which is awesome but takes a while. :)

Mayla has purple hair and some piercings. Her Mama has been trying to get her to meet Jesus for a few years and until *now* she has resisted. Until one Sunday when something the Pastor at her Mama's church said and she felt pierced. In a whirlwind of action she found herself propelled to the altar by her own feet and turned around to see her Mama about to fall over from the shock. Sometimes when we want something we don't quite believe it will actually ever happen, Mayla's Mama fell into that category. After Mayla says she believes an impromptu baptism takes place and in a moment Mayla's life changes. Quite literally. Much to her surprise she no longer has a desire to swear, sleep with men she barely knows, or party like she was. The people around her are just as confused as Mayla was at first and then disbelieving. Mayla battles stereotypes and man-made traditions the church at large has created and emerges quite confident that she is good just as she is. Smith must have thought Mayla's story had more to offer as this is book 1 of 2. Book 2 is on request through InterLibrary loan as I type this. :)

Virginia Smith writes well. She is relateable and has developed her characters at a nice pace. My favorite sub-storyline in the book was the one of Mayla and Alex, a man dying of AIDS that she befriends, reluctantly at first and then with growing care. Something about Smith's description of Alex and his snippet of story made my heart ache and I teared up several times when the book was focused on Mayla and Alex. Smith didn't totally bend to the "christianese" and text book answers in this book and I really appreciated that. This first read of Smith's writing hasn't left me wanting - I will try some of her other titles as well in the future.

Jodi says

So, the story is cute. But it's a very idealistic, saccharin sweet tale of girl in her early twenties following her commitment to Christ. I can appreciate the story, but it seems slightly unrealistic and does not connect with the many individuals I know who have given their lives to God. It has some serious stereotypes in it that made me roll my eyes. It also read like juvenile literature. I would recommend this for 8th grade on up due to some "adult" themes.

Despite my bashing up above, the point of the book is a good one. The girl was accepted just as she was and caused people to question Christian "rules."

Kathryn says

Typically for Christian fiction I found I was annoyed by what seemed to be shoehorning of bible references and Christian acts were sign posted. Would a Pastor Baptise someone at no notice? In my own church prior to an adult or even youths Baptism/Confirmation you are expected to take a class to ensure you are aware and comfortable with the act of joining the Church and the main tenets of the Faith.

The latter parts of the story felt more natural less forcing of the religion acts upon the reader with the subtlety of a semi truck. I did feel it was slightly wrong for her to choose to remove the piercing she'd fought for and choose the more natural hair after having only just said that people ought to just be accepted and then instantly changed herself to conform.

Would be willing to read later books but won't actively seek them out.

Erin says

I love stories of God getting hold of one's heart! "Just As I Am" begins with the day Mayla found herself at the altar, a purple-haired, nose-stud-wearing young lady ready to let Jesus be Lord of her life. I was so proud of her as she immediately started studying her Bible and put her pastor on speed dial so she could frequently run questions by him. Her old friends are left wondering about the new Mayla, with mixed reactions - including her roommate threatening to kick her out! Mayla is a very real character and both her growth and her setbacks seemed very natural to me. If you have ever been a new believer, if you have ever seen God work a change in your own heart, if you have ever had helpful people try to find you a place of service in the church, then this book is for you! 6 out of 5 stars.

Roseanne says

Its okay. I don't like preachy but it is quite peachy keen

I like the different MC style/type person. Not typical good girl persona. And not the run of the mill coming of age story.

A bit theme heavy. But likable enough that I kept coming back to it. However, not pageflipping interesting as I kept putting off reading it.

Margaret Chind says

I started backward, and read the sequel first, but enjoyed it so well that I was excited to go back to read this one. I cannot tell you how long it has been since I have read a book that made me cry, but this one definitely was successful with that more than once. This is such a great story!

I've enjoyed Ginny Smith's books for a while now, but this just makes me like her all the more. As a 23 year old, former punk/goth teenager, I can tell you from experience that her books with Mayla hit home. The sequel was good with certain topics, but this one is just fabulous.

Mayla's story is really that of an alternative young person finding Christ and starting their life as a Christian.

Not everyone has the same background and this book is great for all people whether they were brought up in the Church or know nothing about it.

I'd recommend this book to teens, young adults, older adults (to understand the younger) and anyone really. I strongly recommend it for people to read who are not Christian. It might show a good insight to how things "can" be.

jazz-ee2 says

GreenMetropolis.com

Description:

'When purple-haired Mayla Strong slumps into the back pew of Mama's little country church she has only one goal - to get Mama off her back. But Pastor Paul's message pierces her soul, and almost before she knows what's happening she's in front of the congregation, lip stud and all, praying the prayer that changes her life forever. She is baptized on the spot, wearing Mama's slip under her white baptism robe to hide her hot pink panties from eyes of the curious congregation. Coming out of the water, Mayla knows life will never be the same.'

I really enjoyed this book, highlighting as it does the notion of attitude towards individuality and 'difference' within the church. For me, spirituality is an issue less of religion and more of faith - how you live your life and treat others speaks volumes. I would love to see more Mayla's in the church and community, and will think fondly of her for a long time to come.

The version I read was an ebook, available free from Amazon Kindle Store.

Lisa says

This story of Mayla, a non-traditional example of a young Christian, handles the difference between what the norm of what a Christian looks like with grace and tact. This story keeps the reader engaged and the message is so incredibly inspiring. This is a must read for those who enjoy Christian Fiction.

Miralee says

Loved this book! Mayla is a brand new Christian, but her purple hair, multiple piercings, and friends will stay intact, thank you very much. She has a mind of her own and isn't afraid to speak it.

Virginia Smith has done a wonderful job portraying issues and challenges of a very worldly person who's just gotten saved...along with letting us take a peek into one the life of one of Mayla's new friends, a man who's dying of aids that she's decided to befriend. There's a tremendous amount of depth to this story, but it's an easy, fast read. One that will keep you thinking about your own faith and where you stand on a number of sensitive issues. Highly recommended!
