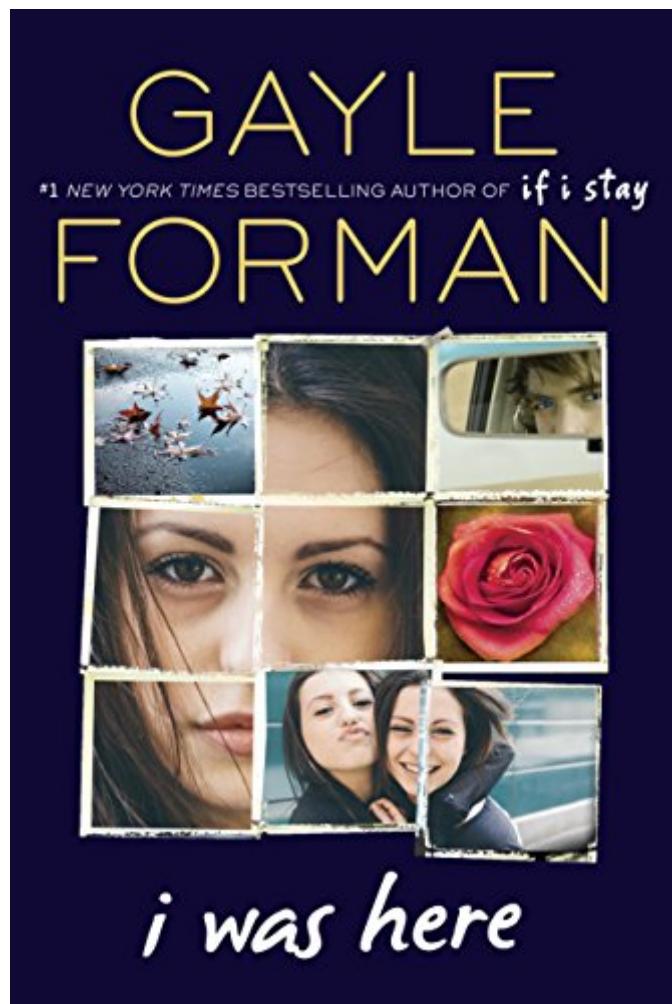


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# I Was Here



## Synopsis

Cody and Meg were inseparable...Until they weren't. When her best friend, Meg, drinks a bottle of industrial-strength cleaner alone in a motel room, Cody is understandably shocked and devastated. She and Meg shared everything "so how was there no warning? But when Cody travels to Meg's college town to pack up the belongings left behind, she discovers that there's a lot that Meg never told her. About her old roommates, the sort of people Cody never would have met in her dead-end small town in Washington. About Ben McAllister, the boy with a guitar and a sneer, and some secrets of his own. And about an encrypted computer file that Cody can't open "until she does, and suddenly everything Cody thought she knew about her best friend's death gets thrown into question." "I Was Here is a pitch-perfect blend of mystery, tragedy, and romance. Gayle Forman has given us an unflinchingly honest portrait of the bravery that it takes to live after devastating loss." Stephen Chbosky, author of the #1 New York Times bestselling *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is definitely a book you have to go into understanding the subject matter. The heroine isn't unlikable, she is a realistic representation of someone who lost the center of their world and support system to an unexpected tragedy. That's a very painful difficult experience when you have no one else to trust or confide in. Building relationships takes trust and time. People around her have not behaved in a way to build trust and being suddenly alone doesn't change that. You don't just leap into an intimate friendship because the last one you had is gone there is no replacement waiting in the wings. All that said I did enjoy this book. It's a good journey story about evaluating your perceptions and first impressions. Muddling through a tragedy as best you can when you have no one to turn to. I do have an appreciation for darker subject matter so it may not suit tastes of the majority but I feel it has important lessons.

Grade: C  
One Word: atypical  
Cody, reeling from the suicide of her childhood best friend, sets out to learn how the young woman she thought she knew could have done something so out of character. Gayle Forman gave narrator Cody a sarcastic, angry voice that made rooting for her difficult. She was self centered, often caring only about her loss and pain. I could understand her guardedness, but do often people reached out and tried to befriend and help Cody and she responded with lies and unkindness. I don't think the trope of a \*\*young person in pain, pushing people away yet they keep trying' despite their own agony \*\* is a realistic one, yet I see it often in YA lit. Perhaps having the loving support of others to break down the wall makes for good drama. The minor characters all had distinct personalities. The plot of Cody searching for answers in a pro-suicide support group was unique. I had heard about such groups on a Law&Order: SVU episode, but when I searched the Internet to see if such websites actually exist, I found nothing. Forman wrote Megan's character based on a real girl who used such a site to kill herself, so maybe this was an isolated case or such websites have been shut down. It's horrible to think of something like this existing, when depressed people need to be steered toward medical/therapeutic support. I like Forman's use of voice and very readable prose. Even when I don't like characters, she does a great job creating multidimensional people who we've all encountered, despite Cody feeling somewhat cliché.  
THEMES: suicide, depression, friendship, romance, family

Amazing book that I could not put down. Though it's not a true story it has a real life illness in it. Depression I think everyone has dealt with at least one time in their lives. However, some are so depressed, they don't think they can go on any longer, and choose to take their own life. Everyone should read this book. I think anyone going through depression should read this. All teenagers

should read this book. To know there are other choices to choose rather than suicide. I will have my daughter read this as well. Depression is real and a illness, getting help is not weak, it's bravery.

I tend to not read Contemporary YA. I'm not sure why, because when I do, I devour it. Maybe that's why I don't? Maybe because I think I read them to quickly. Doesn't matter. I was pretty excited for "I Was Here" after I adored her If I Stay Duology (I still haven't watched the movie, btw) last year, I knew I would pre-order anything by her in the future--and I did just that. I received this book in the mail the day after it was released, and I started it a few days later because I was finishing up another book. I knew it was going to be sad--I mean, even the synopsis is kind of sad. I mean, we open at a teen's (I think she's a teen, all we know is she is under 21 maybe?) explanation of attending her best friend's funeral and various prayer services. So that should be sad, right? But I didn't feel sadness. I didn't feel sympathy for the main character--and it's not like I was just removed from the action of the entire book, I felt for Meg's parents, and Meg's little brother (his portions were probably the most emotionally connected I felt throughout the entire book). But I just didn't care about Cody. Most of the time I found her to be unnecessarily keeping secrets and then whining because no one else knows what's going on. The introduction of Ben McAllister, and his connection with Meg, and that Cody seeks him out, was a great point and a realistic aspect of the story. I feel like if my best friend killed herself, I would absolutely seek out the last person that she contacted. So, I really liked this plot point, and I liked Ben a lot as a character. He was probably the most realistic responses to the obsession that Cody develops with finding out more details of Meg's suicide. Overall, I gave this book 3/5 STARS--I don't know what was missing exactly, just that I wasn't blown away. It didn't even give me the emotional rawness, and good cry that Forman's other books have.

Let me first say that I am an avid fan of Ms. Forman. I have used her novels If I Stay and Where She Went in my eighth grade class and the students adore her descriptive writing and ability to pull you into the story and characters. That being said, I was a bit disappointed in this book. The main character, Cody, was very well described and the story had substance. I also was impressed with the way Ms. Forman tackled the subject of suicide. However, I am disappointed because most of the story dragged. It told the story of Cody but didn't give much insight into the true Meg. I wouldn't use this story with my class, not because of a rough story, but trying to analyze and evaluate a mediocre storyline and plot. Also, I would caution teachers against using this in class because it may give students ideas. It is an okay read. I will continue reading books by Ms. Forman. This just

didn't really cut it for me.

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