



Where She Went (If I Stay, Book 2)

By Gayle Forman

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The highly anticipated sequel to the *New York Times* bestselling and critically acclaimed *If I Stay*

Picking up several years after the dramatic conclusion of *If I Stay*, *Where She Went* continues the story of Adam and Mia, from Adam's point of view. Ever since Mia's decision to stay - but not with him - Adam's career has been on a wonderful trajectory. His album, borne from the anguish and pain of their breakup, has made him a bona fide star. And Mia herself has become a top-rate cellist, playing in some of the finest venues in the world. When their respective paths put them both in New York City at the same time, the result is a single night in which the two reunite - with wholly satisfying results.

And don't miss Gayle's newest novel, JUST ONE DAY and the forthcoming companion, JUST ONE YEAR.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of the Month, April 2011: In the three years since the tragic accident Mia barely survived in *If I Stay*, she and high school ex-boyfriend Adam have lived separate lives on opposite coasts. But then Adam, now the dissatisfied front man of popular LA-based band Collateral Damage, stops over in New York City for one night before kicking off the European leg of his tour. It happens to be the same evening that Mia, now well on her way to becoming a renowned cellist, is performing at Carnegie Hall. Adam buys a ticket, planning to slip in and out, but Mia spots him and for the first time in years they're face-to-face with each other and their shared past. Over the course of one evening, as Adam and Mia traverse the city's streets, they relive the four days Mia spent in the intensive care unit as well as her departure to Juilliard and from the life she knew. Emotionally raw and incredibly moving, Gayle Forman again showcases her considerable talent for drawing complex characters who face impossible decisions and then bear the consequences. Equally as compelling as *If I Stay*, *Where She Went* is powerful, heartbreakin, and everything fans of Mia, Adam, and Forman could hope for. --*Jessica Schein*

Lauren Oliver and Gayle Forman: Author One-on-One

Lauren Oliver is the author of *Delirium* and *Before I Fall*. A graduate of the University of Chicago and the MFA program at New York University, Lauren is a full-time writer and lives in Brooklyn, New York. Recently she sat down with Gayle Forman to discuss their work. Read the resulting interview below, or turn the tables to see what happened when Gayle interviewed Lauren.

From Lauren Oliver: I've had a writer's crush on Gayle Forman ever since I read an early copy of *If I Stay*. It's a shattering and ultimately life-affirming book, and I was completely transported by the lyricism of Gayle's prose. Like the music it often references, her writing seems to float gracefully over and around its themes of life and choice and love—always love. We've been trying to grab coffee in our neighborhood for over a year (and have even run into each other on the street outside the local grocery store). Finally, on the eve of the publication of *Where She Went* (April 5, 2011), the gorgeous follow-up to *If I Stay*, we found time to grab lunch and gab.

Lauren: Had you always intended to write a sequel to *If I Stay*?



Gayle: No. I had no intention of writing a sequel, in fact. But in the way that characters sometimes behave, Adam and Mia had different ideas. I'd started on a totally different book, actually, but they kept banging on

the drum in my head. And I felt I had left them in a difficult place. At the end of *If I Stay*, I knew they both they had a rough couple of years ahead of them.

Lauren: How hard was it to switch POV and enter Adam's mind? To write from a boy's perspective?

Gayle: It wasn't very hard, actually. I knew the characters so well. I knew him so well. It was actually strange to know a character so well without actually having seen through his eyes. But in some ways, I could understand Adam even more than I could understand Mia when I started writing her. Mia was so different from me. One thing that was hard: Adam was so angry at Mia, and so I was angry at Mia, and that was disconcerting.

Lauren: Is there transference of emotions when you write? Do you feel you become your characters in some way?

Gayle: Totally. I let my sister read a draft of *Where She Went* and she said, "I forgive you for being such a brat." Because I'd been totally channeling that anger. *If I Stay* actually was kind of a beautiful place to be, because Mia was surrounded by so much love. *Where She Went* was a lot harder, even though nobody dies.

Lauren: So Mia is quite different from you, then?



Gayle: Completely. When I first started writing her, and even though she inhabited me, I was like, *where are you coming from?* I feel like when I talk, I sound like a teenage valley girl. She seems so wise to me, like such an old soul. I certainly can see elements of me, but she definitely feels quite different and other. But I loved her and felt very protective of her and I knew her very well.

Lauren: How did you know that so much time would have to elapse between books?

Gayle: I just knew that it had to be several years later. The same that I knew that it couldn't be from Mia's perspective. If we were in Mia's head again it would be another exploration of her grief. And it had to be several years later for Adam and Mia to be ready for change.

Lauren: What's your writing process?

Gayle: My process is sort of similar to yours. I don't start by writing the ending of the books, but I know what the ending will be. Although with *If I Stay*, I didn't know what Mia's choice would be, though I knew the book would end by her choosing.

I totally get ideas in the shower too! I'm a firm believer that the muse visits when you are working—sitting at the computer—but the moments when things have clicked have so often been in the shower. And then I'll be sitting at my computer in a towel, and my apartment is freezing. We don't have one of those hot New York apartments. I should really invest in a bathrobe.

Lauren: But you don't outline?

Gayle: I do not outline. I love exploring the twists and turns to get me to that ending, the unexpected places.

Lauren: I really love what you said about the muse visiting when you are working. So you're pretty much always working on a book?

Gayle: Yes. Momentum breeds momentum and inertia breeds inertia. Even if something's not working, I'll keep working, just to have something to work on, if that makes sense. And sometimes one failed project leads to another project that works. But you can't get to 60 mph from a full stop. It never happens that something springs to life from nothing.

Lauren: Music is so important in both *If I Stay* and *Where She Went*. So it begs the question: do you listen to music when you write?

Gayle: When I wrote *If I Stay*, I listened to music the whole time...There was this one song, *Falling Slowly*, which I listened to every time I began writing. It was a Pavlovian thing. I'd listen to it, it would make me cry, and then I would start working. I wrote *Where She Went* in dead silence until about 3/4 of the way through. The switch coincided with a point at which *Adam* stops being estranged from music. He borrows an ipod and after that moment, I started listening to music again while I was writing.

Lauren: What are the themes that interest you as a writer?

Gayle: Love, I think, in all of its dimensions. The cost of unconditional love...what happens in the absence of love. Love is what we all live and breathe for.

Lauren: What was the proportion of fiction versus real life in *If I Stay*? What about *Where She Went*? I know that *If I Stay* was actually based off a real-life event.

Gayle: In *If I Stay* some of the characters were based on people I knew and the premise was based on a real-life event. *Where She Went* passed fully into the realm of fiction. There's a certain transcendence in the aftermath of tragedy...you find something deeper in yourself. But eventually all that passes, and you have to simply get on with it. That was the germ of reality in *Where She Went*. The gritty reality of grieving and getting on with life.

Lauren: What's the best and worst part about publishing a follow-up novel to a super successful book?

Gayle: I worry about letting people down, of course. But mostly, I put the pressure on myself. I want every book to be better than the one before.

Lauren: What about the best?

Gayle: I'm just so glad that we write YA because we have such a broad and vocal readership.

Review

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Users Review

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