

POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *WHERE SHE WENT* (continued)

- When the story opens, Adam's band is famous, but he struggles internally on account of his breakup with Mia. In what ways did this breakup change his life? Was any of it for the positive?
- Adam and Mia's breakup was a very quiet affair. Why was this so devastating to Adam? Discuss any signs of an impending breakup you saw in the flashbacks. Do you understand why Mia acted that way?
- Do you think she could have broken up with Adam face-to-face? Show how the intensity of their relationship in combination with the accident might have prevented her from doing this.
- Were you shocked to discover Mia and Adam had broken up at the beginning of the novel? It could be argued the breakup was necessary for both to completely heal. Do you believe this? Explain your reasons.
- Compare and contrast Adam's and Mia's current lives. Does Mia seem happy with her life in New York? Is there anything in her story that would make you think otherwise?
- Consider the way Adam treats the people in his life: Bryn, his band mates, his manager, his parents, and even Kim. Were there different choices he could have made to end up on a different path? Would you have stuck by a friend going through the same thing or moved on?
- Did Mia have a right to be angry with Adam? What did you think of her revelation to him? Do you agree with her anger?
- Mia says, "For my first recital ever, they gave me a cello. And for this one, they gave me you." How do you feel about the way Mia discusses her family? What is Adam's reaction?
- Explain the significance of Adam's guitar and the circumstances surrounding it.
- *If I Stay* had themes of sacrifice and choice. What are the main themes of *Where She Went*? Can you identify the way they play out for both characters?
- Do you consider Mia and Adam's relationship stronger on account of their history? Why or why not? What does the future hold for Adam and Mia? Do you think Adam will leave his band?

What would you do if you had to choose?



If I Stay

by Gayle Forman

978-0-525-42103-0 (HC) • \$16.99

978-0-14-241543-6 (PB) • \$8.99

Ages 14 up • Grades 9 up

★ **"Laced with insight, good humor, and wonder."**

— *Booklist*, starred review

★ **"Forman's characters are smart and solid."**

— *VOYA*, highlighted review

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— *School Library Journal*, starred review

- An ALA Best Book for Young Adults
- An ALA Quick Pick for Reluctant Young Adult Readers
- A Chicago Public Library Best of the Best Book
- A *Kirkus Reviews* Best YA Book
- A Virginia Readers' Choice Award Master List Selection
- A Texas Tayshas High School Reading List Selection
- A *New York Times* Bestseller

Can one night make a difference?



Where She Went

by Gayle Forman

978-0-525-42294-5 (HC) • \$16.99

Ages 14 up • Grades 9 up

★ **"Equally if not more powerful."**

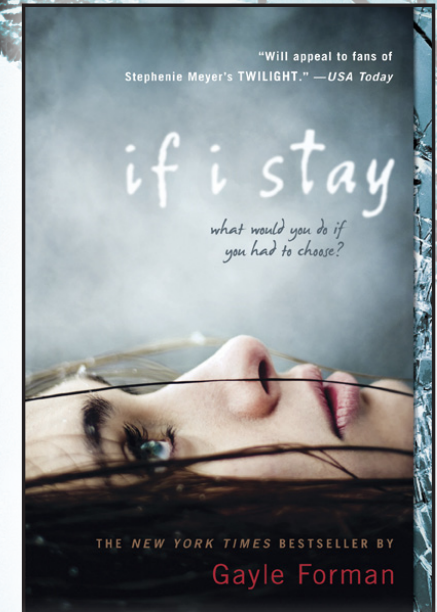
— *Publishers Weekly*, starred review



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DISCUSSION GUIDE

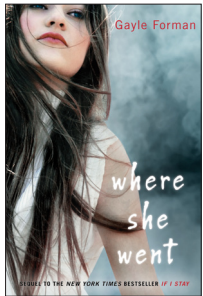


Gayle Forman

ABOUT THE BOOK



- ★ *Booklist*, starred review
- ★ *VOYA*, highlighted review
- ★ *Publishers Weekly*, starred review
- ★ *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review
- ★ *School Library Journal*, starred review



Seventeen-year-old Mia has no memory of the accident; but in a blink, she finds herself watching as her own damaged body is taken from the wreck . . .

Through real-time narration and flashbacks, readers will come to know Mia and the people in her life. More than a love story, more than a story about living or dying, *If I Stay* is a story about how we transform our lives.

It's been three years since the devastating accident . . . three years since Mia walked out of Adam's life forever.

Now living on opposite coasts, Mia is Juilliard's rising star and Adam is L.A. tabloid fodder, thanks to his new rock star status and celebrity girlfriend. When Adam gets stuck in New York by himself, chance brings the couple together again, for one last night. As they explore the city that has become Mia's home, Adam and Mia revisit the past and open their hearts to the future—and each other. Told from Adam's point of view, *Where She Went* explores the devastation of grief, the promise of new hope, and the flame of rekindled romance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



GAYLE FORMAN is an award-winning author and journalist whose articles have appeared in numerous publications, including *Seventeen*, *Cosmopolitan*, *The Nation*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Elle*. She lives in Brooklyn with her family. Visit her at www.gayleforman.com.

PRE-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Compare and contrast a point in your life when you felt in control of your future with a time when you felt powerless.
- Describe a situation when you gave up something in your life. Why did you do it? How did giving it up make you feel?
- How much control do we have over our own destiny?
- Is it possible to love someone, yet walk away from a relationship?
- What coping skills help us deal with personal tragedy?

POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *IF I STAY*

- The story opens with school being closed because of inclement weather and Mia's family deciding to take a trip to visit friends and relatives. Describe the mood of the morning. What role does this scene play when tragedy hits?
- After the initial tragedy, the reader learns more about Mia's parents. What does Mia have in common with her father? Her mother? What type of role does Mia's grandparents play in her life?
- Mia has two important peer relationships in the story—with her best friend, Kim, and her boyfriend, Adam. Kim and Adam are distant with one another. Is Mia's reaction to their coolness toward one another natural?
- Mia and Adam have different musical interests. Mia loves classical music and plays the cello. Adam plays guitar in a popular rock band. What draws them together?
- Mia struggles to fit in with Adam's group. For Halloween Mia surprises him by dressing as a rocker chick. What is Adam's reaction? Explain.
- Discuss the meanings of "sacrifice" and "choice." How are they different? How are they similar?
- The themes of sacrifice and choice occur throughout the story and play out in several relationships. Is Mia's father giving up his own music because of his children a sacrifice or a choice?
- Mia is pulled between wanting to die and wanting to live, so much so that she wishes for a "death proxy." What effect does Gramps's visit have on Mia?

- How is Mia's father a symbol for one person transforming his or her life for another? How does Gramps view his decision? Do Henry and Willow understand why Mia's father wants to change? What decisions must Adam and Mia consider? Are these choices or sacrifices?
- Kim says to Mia, "You still have a family." What does this mean to you? What is a family?
- Adam goes to desperate measures to see Mia for the first time after the accident and then stays only a few minutes before racing out. He returns later with some classical music and a headset he puts on Mia. What does this act suggest about his relationship with Mia? Using examples from the story, make a case for Adam's unconditional love for Mia. Is it possible to make the opposite case?
- How would your response to the story be different if Mia had died?
- Music plays an important role in the story. Cite examples and explain.
- Forman makes extended use of flashback to tell the story. Explain how the flashback scenes help us understand Mia's thoughts about living or dying.
- *If I Stay* is a strong example of internal conflict. Cite passages from the story that speak the strongest to Mia's struggle.
- Could the story have been titled *If I Leave*? Why or why not?

POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *WHERE SHE WENT*

- Discuss the use of point of view in both novels. In *If I Stay* the writer has Mia narrate the story in an unusual way. Why might the author have chosen this technique instead of writing the entire story from third person point of view? *Where She Went* was told in Adam's point of view. Why do you think this point of view was necessary?
- *Where She Went* picks up three years after Mia decided to stay. Do you think this time lapse matters? Would the story have worked if it took place one or even two years later? Why or why not?
- The chapters in this novel alternate between Adam's current life and his relationship with Mia both pre- and post-accident. How did this storytelling tactic enhance your understanding of their breakup?