



2008

If I Stay

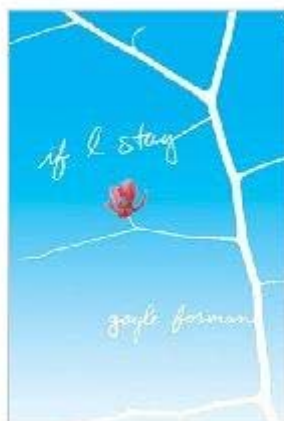
Alison Canar

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Forman, Gayle. *If I Stay*. Dutton, 2009. ISBN 9780525421030. \$16.99.
196 p.

Reviewer: Alison Canar

Reading Level: Young Adult

Rating: Dependable

Genre: Fiction;

Subject: Coma--Juvenile fiction; Death--Juvenile fiction; Violoncellists--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

When Mia finds herself disconnected from her comatose body, she realizes that she is the only one who can determine her fate. After setting off for a drive with her family, Mia awakens to the scene of her parents lying dead on the roadside. She also sees her own body, but for her there is still time. She follows her body as it is rushed to the hospital and observes as her loved ones gather and hope for her recovery. Meanwhile, Mia revisits key memories from her life through flashbacks. She debates whether to join her immediate family on the other side or stay behind with her friends and her plans of attending Julliard. Just as she has decided to let go of life, her boyfriend uses the power of the music she loves to bring her back to the physical world.

This novel is full of highs and lows. At times, it is moving and beautifully written. Unfortunately, there are also distracting elements which throw off the mood. Early on, Mia's best friend Kim comes to visit her. Later, when Adam, Mia's boyfriend, wants to see her, he is told only family is allowed. Thus, Adam and his bandmates must come up with an elaborate and unbelievable scheme to get him into the ICU. In addition, Forman emphasizes the close relationship between Mia and her little brother, Teddy, yet Mia wastes hours before seeking conclusive evidence that he is gone. Despite these inconsistencies, interest in what Mia will choose and stronger passages from the flashbacks maintain the reader's interest.

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