

Books by the Stack



If I Stay by Gayle Forman

Mia Hall, a talented young cellist, thought the most difficult decision she would ever have to make would be whether to pursue her musical dreams at prestigious Juilliard or follow her heart to be with the love of her life, Adam, a rock singer/guitarist. However, a car wreck changes everything in an instant, and now Mia's life hangs in the balance. Suspended between life and death, Mia faces a choice that will decide her future.

Why you'll like it: Heart-felt. Thought-provoking. Beautifully written.

About the Author: Gayle Forman is an award-winning, young adult author, who was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1970. Forman began her career as a journalist, writing for Seventeen magazine. Her first YA fiction was her novel, *Sisters in Sanity*, which was published in 2007 and based on one of her articles for Seventeen. Her other YA titles include: *If I Stay* and its companion, *Where She Went*; *Just One Day*, and its sequels, *Just One Year* and *Just One Night*. In 2015 she made *The New York Times* Best Seller List with her titles *I Was Here* and *Where She Went*. (Bowker Author Biography)

Questions for Discussion

1. 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 in the morning. What role does this scene play when tragedy hits?
2. 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?
3. 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 towards one another natural.?
4. 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?
5. 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.
6. Discuss the meanings of "sacrifice" and "choice". How are they different? How are they similar?
7. 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?
8. Mia is pulled between wanting to die and wanting to live, so much so that she wishes for a "death proxy." What effect does Gramp's visit have on Mia?
9. 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?
10. Kim says to Mia, "You still have a family." What does this mean to you? What is a family?

11. Adam goes to desperate measures to see 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?

11. How would your response to the story be different if Mia died?

12. Music plays an important role in the story. Cite examples and explain.

13. 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.

14. *If I Stay* is a strong example of internal conflict. Cite passages from the story that speak the strongest to Mia's struggle.

15 Could the story have been titled *If I Leave*? Why or why not?

(Questions provided by the publisher)



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