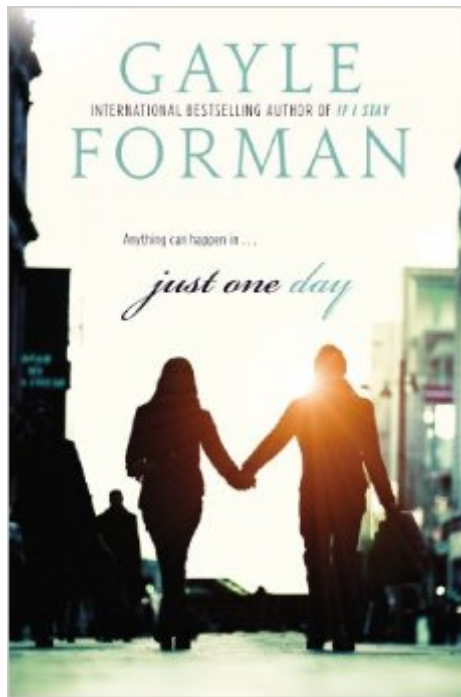


The book was found

Just One Day



Synopsis

From the New York Times bestselling author of *If I Stay* Allyson Healey's life is exactly like her suitcase—packed, planned, ordered. Then on the last day of her three-week post-graduation European tour, she meets Willem. A free-spirited, roving actor, Willem is everything she's not, and when he invites her to abandon her plans and come to Paris with him, Allyson says yes. This uncharacteristic decision leads to a day of risk and romance, liberation and intimacy: 24 hours that will transform Allyson's life. A book about love, heartbreak, travel, identity, and the accidents of fate, *Just One Day* shows us how sometimes in order to get found, you first have to get lost. . . and how often the people we are seeking are much closer than we know. The first in a sweepingly romantic duet of novels. Willem's story "Just One Year" is coming soon!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I received this book from the Early Reviewers Library thing program in exchange for an honest review. *Just One Day* by Gayle Forman is the first book that I've read by this author. Since I've heard a lot of wonderful things about Forman, I knew this was one I wanted to read. This book is about a girl, Allyson (aka Lulu for one day), who is on an abroad program prior to starting college. She meets a boy (a Shakespearean actor of all things) named Willem, who stands for everything she wants to have-- freedom. She has been a coddled only child for her whole life, and primed to become a medical doctor. He spends a glorious day with her in Paris, and then the next morning, vanishes. She ends up in college, in massive depression before she decides to pick up her life and start anew. I wish that everything I told you happened in 30 pages or less. I'm not even giving you spoilers because everything I've said is in the synopsis on the back. But unfortunately for the

reader, this takes up a dragging 3/4 of the book. It's such a stereotypical story-- American girl meets sexy foreign actor, gets dumped, and then is a complete mess, over a guy that she met for ONE DAY. I mean I know the author is trying to branch out and make this out to be how she is finding herself, but it's all geared towards this guy she doesn't even know. Then something changes. I can even tell you exactly where it does-- page 234. Allyson stops feeling sorry for herself (which she does for SO MANY PAGES), and gets her life back together. The rest of the book is pretty darn good. And it makes me sad that it could have been so much more. This book suffers from "build up" syndrome. The first 200+ pages should have been compressed, and the rest would be the meat of the story. As it is, we are left with a cliffhanger, and the promise that a SECOND book, about Willem is coming. Are you freakin' kidding me?! Overall, I found this book to be trite and boring that really only came to life in the last 100 pages. It's too bad. This couplet of books should have been one stand alone book.

There's too much stupid in this book for me to like it. And the funny thing is, it's aware of all its stupid. It points its stupid out. And I don't like, does that make all the stupid okay? No. No it doesn't. You could argue that knowing something's incredibly stupid is far worse because that means you had the power to stop the stupid, and you didn't. Girls like Allyson are the reason why most fresh-faced, doe-eyed college kids all eager to study abroad get the don't-get-pregnant/don't-get-engaged/don't-run-away speech from study abroad organizers. They're all sitting there, weathering the ridiculousness of that speech, thinking, "what wacko goes and gets pregnant/engaged/runs away in a breezy three month period? Hahahahaha" What's even worse about it is the author paints our main idiot here, Allyson, like a sensible good girl. I think if you want to write a book about stupid, go all out. Make the main character as effed up as possible. Give us a downward spiral and then maybe redeem her in the end. Because then the shenanigans would make sense. I mean, really, am I supposed to applaud her for not going out drinking with her friends, and then cheer her on when she takes up with a complete stranger and surrenders all of her belongings to more strangers so she can run around doing nothing particularly noteworthy in a country she doesn't speak a lick of the language in? Really Allyson? You couldn't just go to a damn pub with your friends? I feel like I read a lot of books about women who are "good" that are tired of being "good" and just want to be a more exciting version of themselves. And okay, I get that. Who doesn't. But it becomes problematic when "good" is translated to

and adventurous becomes stupid. AND SOMEHOW ADVENTUROUS IS STILL PREFERRED. You could say the subtext of this book is, women just need to be a big hunk of stupid more often, because accidents are fun! Which feels like an exaggeration, but the more I think about this, the more I realize how much of a crusade this is against sense. Jane Austen would be horrified. I hate that trope - and it's not just YA because stupid knows no age! - that all a sensible good girl needs to do is loosen up a little bit. And not only does she need to loosen up but of course a guy must be the one to show her how. A hot guy. Sorry all ugly men: Girls won't go stupid for you. Because that's why Allyson takes up with Willem. He's a blond, 6'3", Dutch guy. They hardly know a thing about each other, but he's got sparkly eyes and a playful smile so, "Okay I'll go with you to Paris. Oh, you like my watch? It's SUPER expensive!" *giggle giggle* She didn't even bring a friend. Buddy system anyone? That's Not Dying in Europe 101 right there. Given the fact that there's a sequel in Willem's POV, I'm sure there's a lovely explanation for the way things ended (I'm guessing kidnapped by skinheads). Whatever it is, it still doesn't forgive the fact that Allyson did everything you're not supposed to do in Europe as a woman. Because that's the other part of this. Traveling is different for women. A guy saying "Accidents are fun, throw caution to the wind!" is saying that with an advantage. That's unfortunately the world we live in. And, no, joking about being sold into the sex trade doesn't mean it won't happen, Allyson. I can't even believe I just typed that sentence. There's a part of me that thinks authors are afraid to write about truly messed up girls. Maybe they think it's not YA appropriate? I read *The Panopticon* recently, which isn't in fact a YA novel but centers around a 15 year old, and it's an excellent example of how an author can depict a lost, confused, stupid girl that I have sympathy for. My issue with this book isn't that Allyson was incredibly dumb, but that she was incredibly dumb in spite of her sense. There are people who have no sense because they had terrible upbringings, because no one cares for them, because no one taught them, whatever the reasons may be, and as a reader I root for those types of characters to find themselves, to rise above their circumstances and be better people. And I'm sad for them if they don't. I had no emotional journey with Allyson. I can sympathize with a person having an identity crisis, especially at her age, but I can't sympathize with someone who thinks doing legitimately dangerous things because oh-god-my-life-is-so-safe-and-boring-woe-is-me is the way to self discovery. The first part of the book that revolves around the one day in Paris kind of killed the rest of the book for me. Which is too bad because her freshman year of college was a nice section of the

book. It was relatable, and there aren't as many books about college as there are high school so it's refreshing too. I think college is when most people grow into who they're going to become and that's a story in itself. But the book drags to its cliffhanger conclusion. And in between, Forman seriously manhandles Shakespeare. Like, okay, we get it, people wear masks and pretend to be who they're not, but maybe they are a bit like that, or at least they want to be. The theme was played out at the halfway point; but like a baby you're trying to take your car keys away from, that theme had an iron grip on this story. In the end, it was too long. And while a cliffhanger ending in theory should spur people to read the next book, there were too many turn offs for me to care.

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