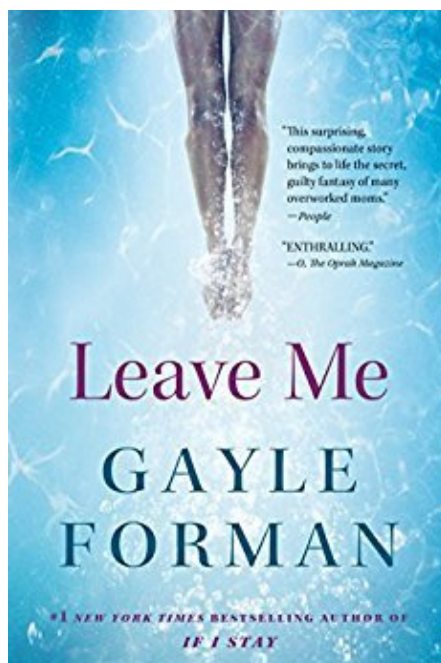




Leave Me

Gayle Forman

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Leave Me Gayle Forman

For every woman who has ever fantasized about driving past her exit on the highway instead of going home to make dinner, for every woman who has ever dreamed of boarding a train to a place where no one needs constant attention--meet Maribeth Klein. A harried working mother who's so busy taking care of her husband and twins, she doesn't even realize she's had a heart attack.

Afterward, surprised to discover that her recuperation seems to be an imposition on those who rely on her, Maribeth does the unthinkable: She packs a bag and leaves. But, as is so often the case, once we get to where we're going, we see our lives from a different perspective. Far from the demands of family and career and with the help of liberating new friendships, Maribeth is finally able to own up to secrets she has been keeping from those she loves and from herself.

Leave Me Details

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From Reader Review Leave Me for online ebook

Maria Espadinha says

Pausa ou Fuga

Se um coração de meia idade, que até à data sempre bateu bem, tem um ataque daqueles que mete cirurgia e tudo, algo de muito errado se está a passar.
E...por razões mais que óbvias, urge investigar!...

No caso de Maribeth, foi fácil:
Com dois gémeos de 4 anos, marido, profissão e uma casa para cuidar, Maribeth tinha:

Trabalho, Trabalho e Trabalho.

Tanto, que o coração achou por bem alertá-la, forçando-a a interromper a vida de trabalhos forçados a que se entregara!...

"Alguém tinha de levar as crianças às aulas de ballet, aos treinos de futebol, às sessões de terapia da fala, aos encontros para brincar, às festas de anos. De as levar às compras para escolher os disfarces para o Halloween, ao pediatra para tomarem a vacina da gripe, ao dentista para fazerem uma limpeza aos dentes. Alguém tinha de planear as refeições, comprar a comida, pagar as contas, verificar os extratos bancários. Alguém tinha de fazer tudo isso e ao mesmo tempo de trabalhar no seu trabalho propriamente dito..."

Uma vez recuperada, esperava-a a habitual rotina. Era suposto reassumir as suas pesadas funções, sem que o marido se prontificasse a ajudá-la um mínimo que fosse!...

Porém, regressar a esse quadro que se revelara fatídico, seria enveredar pelo Caminho do Suicídio. Maribeth estava simplesmente FARTA! Não aguentava mais do mesmo! Era imperioso PARAR! Se fosse borboleta seria fácil - bastava bater asas e voar! Não sendo borboleta, fez algo equivalente - escreveu um bilhete e bazou!...

Maribeth fora vítima duma indigestão de trabalho e responsabilidades. Como a cura de qualquer indigestão passa pelo jejum, largou a carga esmagadora que se lhe colara aos ombros, e partiu!...

"Deixa-me Ir" é uma leitura compulsiva!
Uma vez iniciada, vamos querer saber mais e mais sobre o percurso de Maribeth:
Terá partido para reflectir? Para encontrar uma estratégia que lhe permita coexistir com os seus?
Ou terá simplesmente enveredado por uma nova via?...

E o marido? Como teria ele reagido ao ver-se a braços com os dois gémeos e todo o trabalho da casa?
Entrara em pânico, ou crescera com a situação?...

"Deixa-me Ir" não se destina somente a mães trabalhadoras. É mais abrangente que isso:
Visa todos aqueles que excedem limites entregando-se demasiado a outros - são eles, as grandes vítimas do auto-esquecimento:

Há professores assim!
Há enfermeiras assim!
Há empresários assim!
Há médicos assim!
Há muita gente assim!...

Livros destes têm uma função dupla - entreter, e ajudar quem deles precisa! Eu cá preciso ;)
São 5 estrelas bem merecidas :)

Elyse says

Update: Kindle special ebook today: is \$1.13 (funny price) --- --but great deal!!!

Audible Daily Deal today --\$2.95 I read the physical book --and liked it. Lots to think about.
I'd buy this in a second for \$2.95 if I had not already read it --and own it!

"Ma'am, are you in a crisis?"

"She was 44 years old and had suffered a heart attack and undergone bypass surgery. She'd run away from home and neither her husband nor her best friend had tried to contact her. And she couldn't swim. Yes, she was in motherfucking crisis!"

In "Leave Me"

deep down Maribeth was scared she was going to die. It wasn't death itself she feared - but the fear of what would happen to her twins - being too young- to not have a mother. Maribeth figured out "the ugly secret of a mother's love: you protect them, to protect yourself". WHAT DOES THAT MEAN???

Any thoughts? I thought about that sentence a few times!!!!

Mother's do give and give and give --- zillions of hours of her time for her children - her husband - her extended family - her job- cooking - cleaning -laundry - driver - nurse - errand girl - yard maintenance - toolgirl - bath time - homework -community participation (schools, church, sports, music,), dentist and doctor appt', food shopping, shoe shopping for those growing 'feet' on kids, etc. etc.

So,

Do we judge a mother for 'walking out'? Going off grid? Not leaving a note of where she is going?

Can we forgive her? Do we justify her actions 'because' SHE SUFFERED A LIFE THREATENING HEART ATTACK!

I THINK WHAT SHE DID WAS WRONG....[NOT FOR LEAVING]... but for going out of communication!

Why can't a wife go to her husband and say.... "I'm desperate....I can't get well in this environment. I need a month - maybe two-- to be alone. I need alone time ...to practice living a healthy lifestyle.....cooking....eating a healthy heart diet-- exercise -- removing chaotic stress. Why can't she ASK for a RUN-a-WAY emergency self-connection retreat?" Why not???

Why DON'T couples with small children consider designing well-being individual get-a-ways? Rather than wait for the breakdowns to design their life?

I think this book is a terrific discussion book - especially for those people in the HOT SEAT of parenting little kids.

This is a likable book. An engaging easy read.

If you 'want' to look deeper... it's available. The topic of a young 44 year old having a heart attack - itself - is worthy of discussion. It happens!!!

My dad died of a heart attack at age 34. - no notice -In 15 minutes he was dead.

Other conversations:

The children. How were they doing?

What happens to Maribeth's new friends? Is she supposed to drop all contact with her new friends once she returns to her family?

The cast of characters Maribeth meets when she dashes off to Pittsburgh are likable and interesting!!! --- The story is engrossing-- but we are still worried about the kids and her husband back home.

The ending is predictable from the start... but I'm not so sure a damn thing gets resolved. This family still has a mountain to climb!

3.5- 3-7 enjoyable - fast easy reading - not a perfect book -yet because it leaves the reader wanting to discuss and debate issues - I'd recommend it!

Not a 'must' read.... but it's engaging.

Definitely 'extra' valuable to young parents.

Trina (Between Chapters) says

Although the protagonist did many unlikable things, this story had me compelled to keep reading and it gave me a lot to think about. Maybe because I had so recently had an unexpected surgery, but I became so emotionally invested in Maribeth right away. When she was trying to recover from her heart attack, I wanted to scream at her family for not helping her. I was rooting for her to escape, although I had such mixed feelings about her doing so because this is a mother and wife leaving her family. How do you process that? How does SHE process that? I was fascinated by it, even though many times I was mad at her. This book showed me how messy our lives can be, and how we are not the only one going through things.

I've read all of Gayle's previous books, although I haven't always liked them. As a lukewarm fan, I really enjoyed this as her adult debut.

Noel Nunez says

SPOILER FREE REVIEW

Picture this: a man wakes up one day with a toothache. He ignores it for a while, but soon the pain becomes so unbearable that he decides to pack his bags and go on a spiritual quest to find the Dalai Llama. On the journey, he meets a kind Sherpa who guides him up the perilous slopes of Tibet. Things go well for a while until disaster strikes: they are beset by a vicious snowstorm and end up stranded. After days of starvation, the Sherpa sacrifices his body as sustenance for the man so that he could make it to the end of his crossing. When he finally collapses outside the Dalai Llama's monastery, a group of monks find him and take him to

meet His Holiness himself. Over the next few years, the man learns about the true nature of suffering. Once he has accepted that pain and happiness are two sides of the same coin, the tooth, now rotted to the core, falls off on its own, and the man knows that he has come full circle not only with his maxillary problems, but with life itself.

What's wrong with the story? Nothing. Except that if it ever gets turned into a movie, the audience would be practically screaming "Just go to a f@#king dentist, you moron!"

The concept of Gayle Forman's novel *Leave Me* is just like the story above. It takes the protagonist on a completely unexpected and highly unnecessary journey to solve a problem that could have been settled at home. But I'm getting ahead of myself. First, let me state upfront the positives.

This novel is about internal struggle, a topic that only the best writers should attempt. Unlike a zombie apocalypse or an alien invasion, inner conflict is so difficult to pace that you need significant talent to pull it off. Thankfully, Gayle Forman has that talent. She already has quite a few published novels under her belt, and it shows. Gayle uses a writing style called free indirect discourse (quite popular among modern authors), which combines third person perspective with a character's own thoughts:

"So it's okay if I go back to the office?"

No. It wasn't okay. She hurt all over. She wasn't ready to be left alone with her mother, with the kids. She was scared.

"Of course it is," she said.

This style is highly effective for this particular tale because it lets us view the protagonist from a detached perspective, allowing us enough space so that we can reflect on our own lives. However, it can also zoom in as close as possible when it's necessary to create intimacy:

Selfish! She was being selfish? All she did was take care of everyone else. For the first time in her life, she needed to be taken care of, and this was what she got? She felt tears of rage come to her eyes and then shame because damn him if she was going to cry.

Selfish?

Jason. Elizabeth. Her mother. They could all go to hell.

The plot itself is commonplace: Maribeth Klein is an editor for a posh magazine. She has two kids and a working husband. The only problem is that, aside from being the main breadwinner of the family, she's also effectively the housekeeper. Being both a mother and a provider means working long hours, at home and in the office, and working long hours means health problems. One day, everything comes to a head as Maribeth suffers a massive heart attack. She recovers well, but her family is so used to being taken care of that they essentially blame her for the piling dishes, the unpaid bills, and the...uh...lack of midnight action:

She was tired. The twins were getting angry at her for not healing fast enough, for not doing bedtime often enough, for not walking them to school. She could feel Jason's impatience, too, in every which way. He'd been spooning her tight in the mornings, so she could feel his hard-on pressed right into the small of her back. It reminded her of after her C-section, when he'd been so full of pent-up desire it had felt like a threat.

Maribeth snaps, packs up a suitcase, and leaves. The rest of the novel details her new life as a runaway mom in another city, meeting new friends, changing old habits, and maybe, maybe even finding out something about herself that she never knew before.

Now for the bad part. Seriously, ALL of this is unnecessary. The main conflict in the story is Maribeth's inability to say "No" and the perceived ingratitude of her family. She could have just went to a therapist for help. She could have just had a heart-to-heart conversation with her husband who, even though irresponsible, loves her genuinely. She could have just laid out some strict rules for her bratty kids to follow. While these choices require some courage, they're the most sensible paths to take.

But, no, a solitary, spiritual quest to Pittsburgh is obviously the natural course.

I don't deny that frustrated moms walk out in real life. In fact, it recently happened to a high school friend of mine; his attractive wife fell for Mister Moneybags and decided to exchange her broke husband and three kids for some high-flying good time. In other words, a genuine bitch. But the protagonist of Leave Me is none of these things, which makes her decisions all the more confusing.

No matter. Despite my misgivings with the plot, I would be lying if I said I hated the story. Gayle Forman paints the character in such a compassionate light that I didn't mind reading through the plodding drama just so I could find out if it all turned out well for Maribeth in the end. Speaking of the ending, it felt rushed and...well...you'll find out what I mean.

I would recommend this book mainly for married men because of the insight it gives about appreciating the small sacrifices in life. I don't have a wife, but at the conclusion of the novel I wished I had one just so I could kiss her and tell her how much I love her.

I must be going senile!

Bianca says

This was my first Gayle Forman novel. I'd been seeing her name pop up frequently, so when this became available on the library overdrive, I picked it up, not knowing much about it.

Hmm, talk about relating to a character - in this case, it almost felt like too much, especially since Maribeth, the protagonist of this short novel, and I are of a similar vintage.

There were many things I liked about this novel, besides its relatability. I appreciated Forman daring to write about a mother - "the saintest (not a word) of saints" - who just packs her bags and leaves - husband, kids(!) and job. I hear the outcry - who could she? After all, she was middle class, living in New York, with twins, after several IVF rounds, good job, a decent husband whom she still loved but also hated for always taking "the easy way out" - she had it so much better than many. Well, that makes me appreciate Forman's guts much more than if she wrote about a battered woman. Oh, I forgot the mention it: the woman, mother, wife had a heart attack at 44 and a double bypass. So much fun!

The middle and the later part got better, more characters are added, new friends are made, a nice doctor appears on the scene. I quite liked that part, although, now and then, the cynic in me would pop its head but only for a few moments now and then.

The ending made Ms Cynic raise her metaphorical eyebrow, while Ms Mooshy-Feely found it satisfactory.

Lisa says

I wont say too much about this book but I just thought it was too slow The characters were okay, but it just plodded along this wasn't for me although I loved I Was Here in her YA category 3stars.

Lala BooksandLala says

I mean, I appreciated the sentiment and all that, there was just nothing particularly compelling or interesting about this for me.

Karen says

Leave Me by Gayle Foreman

This is a story about a woman named Maribeth Klein who is a mother of twins who are four years old. She is married to her husband Jason who earns less money than Maribeth earns at her highstress job working with her best friend Elizabeth, who is an executive Editor at a magazine in New York City. Maribeth is forty four years old when she has two heart attacks.

After double bypass surgery, Maribeth returns home after only a week of recuperating in the hospital and it is if she is expected to step back into her busy life, taking the two kids to all of their activities. And they are involved in a lot of extracurricular places to go. Maribeth is adopted and her mother is there to help. Maribeth finds an extension to their tax return in the bottom of a heap of mail that has piled up on a table neglected. She faces loads of laundry and a sink full of dishes.

Maribeth is overwhelmed with responsibilities.

She packs a bag with about three days worth of clothes, draws out a huge sum of money and hops on a train at Penn Station and leaves her life behind. No cell phone. No computer. No cardiologist. No insurance card. Maribeth is living completely off the grid.

The reading goes by fast because the book is written in short little chapters. The character development is done well. I devoured this book in one reading. The sentences flow. This is a story for anybody who ever thought what their life might be like to start over some place different. I was thoroughly engaged in this story. Everything I have written is already on the dust jacket. There are no spoilers here.

Five stars! Very entertaining read

Suzanne Leopold says

Maribeth Klein, forty-four years old, works as an editor for a magazine in New York City. She and her husband Jason are parents of twins who are four years old. They have a busy stressful life juggling two careers, marriage, meals, etc. which mostly falls upon Maribeth.

Maribeth wakes up one morning not feeling well. Believing it to be indigestion from dinner from the night before, she continues with her daily routine. Luckily, she seeks medical care because she has had a heart attack that requires surgery. Her recuperation at home after being released from hospital is a disaster. Her needs are not being met as her family has not adjusted to her new limitations. Her family would like her to continue in her previous role as if she were never sick. Maribeth makes a drastic decision and decides to leave her family in hopes to heal physically and emotionally.

The book is well paced and a quick read. It has relatable feelings for any woman who is trying to manage it all while raising young children. What woman hasn't thought of escaping responsibility for the day? This novel intertwines themes of marriage, friendship, and responsibilities as we grow older.

This is the author's first novel into women's fiction from young adult books.

Giveaway on my blog until 11/2 <http://www.facebook.com/suzyapproved>

Emer says

Gayle Forman writes such emotional books. And for the first two thirds of this novel I really liked it. It follows the story of Maribeth Klein and how she suddenly leaves her life one day. What I like is that Maribeth feels like such a real character. I completely understand her reasons for leaving her family. I found myself supporting them all as the story developed. This book really shines the spotlight on women who are somehow expected to do it all. She has the family, the career.. All these commitments. A husband, Jason Brinkley, who takes her for granted. A best friend Elizabeth who has slipped away, two young children whom she loves but who are ultimately her responsibility alone... She is expected to take care of everyone else without having someone to take care of her and with all this crazy rushing and constant pressure she certainly doesn't have time for a heart attack and doesn't even realise she has had one as she puts it down to tiredness, stress, being overworked, overwrought, overwhelmed.... It paints a sad and lonely picture and one that no woman would want to live in day in and day out.

Maribeth's journey of self discovery is delicately crafted and draws the reader in. And I very much enjoyed it. She was trying to remember who she was, who she wanted to be. She was adopted and had all these issues surrounding that and began the journey to learn more about the why her birth mother chose to give her up for adoption. Was she too a "leaver"? There were wonderful questions raised and beautiful moments of self reflection that I found very emotional and thought provoking.

some minor thematic spoilers ahead

But what I didn't like was that final third. When just suddenly the story all clicked together. (view spoiler) It was too easy. Too neat. What was interesting to note is that Maribeth's worked in a magazine and made reference to a particular real life column that they ran. All about real women triumphing over some negative even and in the end coming out for the better. *"it wasn't that the stories were made up - they were true, or, at least, truthy - but their rictus need to skim coat a happy ending onto every shitty situation ... she couldn't stand that. It was the magazine's version of Jason's 'everything will be fine.'"* So ultimately when this novel tied things up with a shiny bow at the end I could not but think back on this passage about the need to have a happy ending. It felt disingenuous to real life to me. Life is messier. Maribeth's life certainly was. I think a more conflicted ending would have been more suited to this book.

For the most part I very much enjoyed this read but it could have been so much more
three stars

Jessica says

Friends:

I have been here. I have tried to do this.

Almost twelve years ago, I had my first baby. And two months later, in the throes of postpartum depression, I got my purse and my keys and started to get in my car to leave. My baby was upstairs in his bassinet. My husband was at work. And my plan was to go and not come back for a few years, because I couldn't handle it. Life. Motherhood. Personhood. Anything.

I was checked by a phone call from my mom. I got on medication. I got better, though I have had depression since I was a teenager and that will never completely go away. The leaving it all behind, starting over in a new place, sitting in a bare apartment and reading all day fantasy is one that I've had as long as I could remember.

So this book was very, very personal to me.

From the moment I started it, with only the vaguest sense of what it was about (I picked it up because I've loved all her other books), I could not stop. I had to know that Maribeth would be all right. I also had to know why she left, and how she left. (Not that I am currently planning anything. I was just curious.) And I was, of course, curious about how Forman would handle her first grown up book. The why and how, the ending, all perfectly plotted and handled with grace and humanity. And, as with her YA, Forman's dialogue rolls off the tongues of her very real characters. I loved them all, and I cared for them all. (Except for that one lady, who was useless. You'll know who she is.)

And yes, I read the ending on the recumbent bike at the gym and bawled. I think my fellow morning workout peeps are used to that by now, though.

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

3.5 Stars

Okay I'm pissed at myself for being a big fat pile and refusing to log on to the computer in order to yack out a review before this thing expired from the library because I **KNOW** Maribeth provided some pretty quotable quotes that made me laugh. Oh well

Let me start this half-assery by telling you that Maribeth is not for everyone. Different strokes for different folks and all that jazz so I won't judge you if you aren't able to enjoy her, but for me???? At this point I think she may be related to me

Well, except she's more put together.

In case you need two hands and a map to find your own butt and haven't figured it out yet, this is Maribeth's story. Overworked, underappreciated, stressed out mom of (kind of awful) twins and a pretty incompetent husband, Maribeth not only brings home the bacon, but also fries it up in a pan and then cleans the entire house, runs kids to neverending extracurriculars, organizes horrible things like parents club (shudder) and strokes her hubby's fragile ego to the point where she has a coronary. Literally. Thinking she might finally get some much needed R&R (at least for a few weeks), Maribeth is thrown for yet another loop when she gets home from the hospital and pretty much is expected to do everything except go to work after only a couple of days' rest. The solution????

Maribeth pulls a wad of moolah she received as an inheritance out of the bank and gets the eff outta Dodge. That'll teach 'em, right? Well, eventually. First, everyone has to learn that valuable lesson that . . .

Leave Me earns 3.5 Stars, but gets rounded down due to the fact that the first 1/3 of the story had a very *Where'd You Go, Bernadette?* type of OTT vibe/humor which kind of diminished a bit as the book progressed. There was also a (view spoiler) that I thought cheapened things. I wasn't put off by it, it just made it harder to remain committed to Team Maribeth. All in all, though, this was a **very** relatable story and one that I'm sure many of us harried moms have dreamed about a time or twelve. Lucky for me, my family just ran away for a few days so I was able to stay in the comfort of my own home in order to reboot. If only everyone I work for would do the same . . .

Emily May says

*She felt so caught out. She'd thought she'd done everything right. She'd spent her entire life making lists, following through, keeping everything in check, all to make sure this kind of thing would never happen.
And look where it had gotten her. Just fucking look.*

Looking back over seven years of Forman's work, I'm starting to see that her downfall may be her romanticism; her penchant for happy ever afters. It seems she has a romantic streak that - with one exception - weakens her otherwise strong works.

Her characters feel **real, flawed and human**. Even when we don't really like them, they demand our sympathy and we find ourselves needing to know what happens to them. Too often, though, I think these powerful stories are dampened by a sweetness that hasn't been earned. *I Was Here* takes an informative and sad story about suicide and turns it into a romance. *Sisters in Sanity* ends a book of girl power, female friendships and strong characterization with a forgiveness that was undeserved. *Just One Day* turns an emotional teen fling into a globetrotting obsession to reunite the starcrossed lovers.

If *I Stay* and *Where She Went* follow the same pattern - an intense, sad, character-defining decision is made,

but Forman couldn't leave it there - but they're the exception because, IMO, it actually works. In Leave Me, it doesn't work.

Don't get me wrong, it's not a bad book. In fact, I enjoyed all the things that seem to be the main criticisms of Forman's first adult novel. It sounds like a bland story - tired, overworked mommy has a heart attack and STILL can't get any help or sympathy from her husband, mother or kids. So she leaves. This wasn't a problem for me.

Maribeth was a **likable, complex character** and she drew my sympathy instantly. Her life pulled me in, no matter how dull it may seem. And though it's obviously a selfish act to just up and leave your kids, it didn't bother me like it did some readers because I think the author portrayed the push to breaking point very well. I didn't like what Maribeth did, but I understood it.

It's an **understated feminist novel**, showing how even in today's world where career and motherhood are not mutually exclusive, women are still drawing the short straw. There's still the assumption that it's Maribeth's duty to come home and manage the household and kids, despite both her and her husband working full time jobs. The pressure is all too much and she finally cracks.

Striking out on her own, Maribeth meets lots of great new friends and embraces the pleasures and challenges of her newfound freedom. Obviously a character-driven novel, we observe the changes in Maribeth, as she figures her life out and faces her fears. The blurb calls Forman "a dazzling observer of human nature" and that couldn't be more true.

But again, all this character development is weakened by the mending and retying of broken threads. Issues that are present early in the novel are conveniently forgotten. In short, Maribeth runs away from her problems and her husband, (view spoiler).

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Tabby says

THE REVIEW

Why this book?

I usually love Gayle Forman books

What I thought

You are supposed to want to root for the lead character but I just can't root for Maribeth. I can't root for somebody who abandon their family and cheats on their husband. That's all I got to say.

Diane S ? says

3.5 Immensely readable and entirely easy to relate. How many times when all my seven children were

growing up, when I was ferrying them back and forth to school, outside activities, trying to keep up with housework, cooking, laundry, did I feel like getting in my car and running away? Way too many to count and I bet many other feel or have felt the same. In this book a 44 year old woman, suffers a heart attack, has bypass surgery and on release from the hospital finds her life with three year old twins and a husband who is always working, simply exhausting. She does the unthinkable and leaves.

This is her story, her time away, people she meets and her search for her biological mom. What she learns about herself and how she works her way forward. Was quite fascinated with the intrepid Marybeth, but was she? On the surface tough but oh so vulnerable, all the insecurities and fears of years, why I liked her despite the sorrow I felt for her little ones. If near the end it got a bit smaltzy, a little too, too, I could go with that. She had maybe earned it.

One of those books that could easily be rated a 3 or 4, depending not on the writing which was fine but on how the reader relates to the message. Sometimes we just have to learn to take care of ourselves first, easier said than done I know, before we can fully take care of others. So for this message and the fact that I quite enjoyed this one, I have gone with the four. Can't help feeling this will appeal to many women and their stressed out lives.

ARC from publisher.
