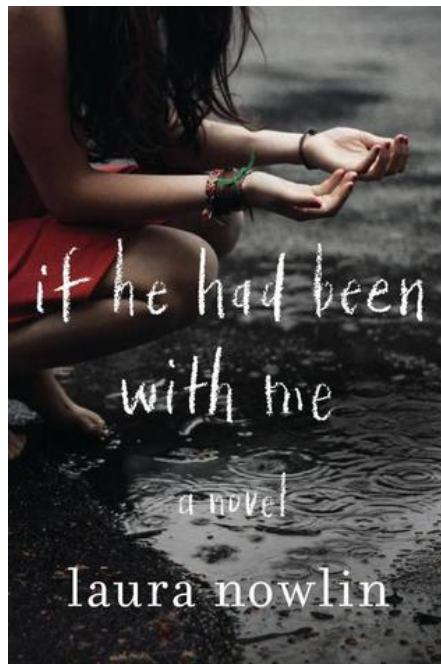




If He Had Been with Me

Laura Nowlin

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If He Had Been with Me Laura Nowlin

If he had been with me everything would have been different...

I wasn't with Finn on that August night. But I should've been. It was raining, of course. And he and Sylvie were arguing as he drove down the slick road. No one ever says what they were arguing about. Other people think it's not important. They do not know there is another story. The story that lurks between the facts. What they do not know—the cause of the argument—is crucial.

So let me tell you...

If He Had Been with Me Details

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Author : Laura Nowlin

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From Reader Review If He Had Been with Me for online ebook

Jennifer Kyle says

This book could have been epic...

The beautiful cover and the description of this book lured me in and I couldn't wait to read this story. I knew from the description, that a tragedy would occur. I was more than prepared to take the journey and meet Autumn and Finny. The part that I wasn't prepared for was the abrupt anticlimactic ending.

The story brings a reader through four years of high school with the back ground of Finn and Autumn's neighbor/best friend/family relationship that has now become strained while both characters find themselves and pursue different friends.

I would rate the majority of the book as a **4 star** read. I loved following Autumn's teenage life, friends, family and boyfriends. Sadly, I would have to give the ending a **1 star** rating.

As a reader the story's slow build up to Autumn and Finny declaring their love which does finally occurs in the last 90% of the book. However, the whole thing falls apart in the last couple of pages with an abrupt weak ending.

There were no surprises found in the ending, no profound moments, nothing, NADA.

Overall, I loved Autumn and Finny and felt deflated not sad by the end of the book. I wanted so much more for our main character.

Joie says

LAURA NOWLIN, WHY WOULD YOU DO THIS TO ME?

WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says

Thanks so much to Paige Bookdragon for the recommendation.

I'm 35yrs old, so I don't think I always mesh well with YA because I'm simply just older. When I was in my early teens I remember reading "Say Goodnight, Gracie" and "Don't Die, My Love", I cried and threw myself into the sadness of it all. Now some of the issues I can't help but be "ugh, get over it", "hahahahha, together in complete love and happiness from freshman year to forever" (I know it happens don't @ me), and just the general over indulgence, and scared of the newness, are kind of missed by me.

This is all first person from the heroine which is also hard for me because I like insight from other characters. I found myself more interested in the grown-ups issues, lol. I also thought some real tough issues were

glossed over, there were two teen pregnancies portrayed as great gifts instead of giving them the levity they deserved, and we had a bit of a boy's love is a cure all and the key to happiness.

The ending was rushed with bombardments of events, events that felt completely contrived and manipulated for emotion; the whole "so tragic its beautiful" syndrome that has some calling Rome and Juliet a romance when it is two early teen kids killing themselves. The writing is captivating at times but manipulated emotion isn't real to me, boys and babies don't cure depression or act as a cure all, and I missed having a pov from Finn. I think I've just passed these types of books on by.

Jasprit says

If He Had Been With Me was a poignant story which I devoured in one sitting. It's a story which deals with issues of friendship, first loves and family in the most raw and intense way I have come across in a long time. It was a story which I knew how would end, but I was utterly mesmerised into reading because of the beautiful heart rendering prose.

The story opens with the most heart breaking chapter, it gives you an insight into how things end. Despite knowing this I continually tried to bury this awful fact at the back of my mind, I kept trying to make myself believe that the author would change the course of the story and that maybe she was just playing with us. So it came as no surprise that when the ending did finally come, I found myself choked up all over again.

If He Had Been With Me deals with the story of what ifs. Autumn and Finn had been best friends forever, they did everything together, until middle school, that they fell apart for some reason or another. Despite their mothers being best friends, and being neighbours, there was always that awkward tension between them when they spent "family time" together. Also they hung out with friends who were on opposite sides of the spectrum to one another, so were seen to never mix or interact with one another. Despite having a great set of friends and boyfriend in Jamie, Autumn's regret over the loss of her friendship with Finn is clearly apparent. At first it's like a niggling at the back of her mind, which she continues to throw away and just focus on the good things happening in her life at the moment, but the further she goes through school and seeing Finn all the time bring several feelings of anger, betrayal, love, and loneliness which are continuously eating away at her until it all becomes too much. What would have happened if Autumn and Finn didn't grow apart? Would things have been different now? It's these constant thoughts that Autumn can't shut away.

The Story is told with flash backs into Autumn's and Finn's memories when they were younger alongside Autumn's current progression in school, some readers may find confusing. But I thought these alternating changes in the time span worked wonderfully. The stories were timed right as to show their significance into why that memory had a specific impact to why Autumn was the way she was today. It gave a better understanding into Autumn's character, and a connection between her in a deep and meaningful way. Some readers may have got frustrated with Autumn's decisions, but if I were in her shoes I don't think I would have done it any other way. She had to battle through a lot in this story, and I think she dealt with it the best way she could.

Nowlin focused on many dark and tough issues in this story, issues of depression, family problems and loneliness were explored in depth. What made these issues more realistic was that they weren't just touched upon once, but they were followed upon Autumn's progression through school and clearly showed an important part of the type of person Autumn became. I liked how despite their differences Finn was the one who could constantly ground Autumn, the one she could turn to when she needed the most. Her friends were also a supportive bunch, and I enjoyed the fun they had and the time they spent together, but one particular point which I didn't expect at all, blemished my high opinion I held of some of them.

If you're worried about giving this book a try because of the heart breaking story please don't because Nowlin's gorgeous prose is not one to be missed. Her writing was littered with several beautiful passages and was delicate yet purposeful with each word puncturing a hole in my heart. Despite being a complete mess a few days afterwards and constantly asking myself how and why Nowlin would do this to me. I am sure that He Had Been With Me will remain as one of my favourites reads for a long time to come.

My feelings for this book are perfectly summed up by this gorgeous quote from this book:

"This book is a treasure; I did not suspect it would be so good when I picked it up, but now I can feel the printed words seeping through my skin and into my veins, rushing to my heart and marking it forever. I want to savour this wonder, this happening of a loving book and reading it for the first time, because the first time is always the best, and I will never read this book for the first time again"

Joy (joyous reads) says

Whenever I pick up a novel, I dive head first hopeful that the characters will have their happily ever afters. I picture their romance in my head like an endless reel of a silent movie: their first meeting will be perfectly awkward and the relationship to happen in a slow but realistic build-up that would have me anticipating and salivating for their fruition. But when the two characters wasn't really working so good for me, I'd also find myself wishing that they don't get together at all. This book may fall into the latter not because the two characters were an unlikable, unlikely couple but because I wanted to spare them the debilitating heartache that was to come.

The book spans for what seems like a lifetime: two women who'd become friends and had gotten pregnant at the same time. Their kids grew up practically like twins. They can't seem to imagine their lives without one another. But as these stories go sometimes, people just drift apart. Or in their case, they were afraid to address how they really felt. Years go by, relationships falter and die but the one constant thing between these two kids is that big **what if**. Don't fret though, they would be given the chance. Readers would be given a moment or two to savour that sweet, joyful moment when they finally get together. Like rays of sunshine breaking from a persistent dark clouds and kids singing hallelujah in divine concurrence. But just as soon as it starts, the author will yank that little joy from you. All the while ripping your heart from the cavity of your chest with her bare hands.

It's hard to get over something when you didn't understand what happened to begin with. I wasn't given the time to digest, ponder or even savour. And I can't figure out why I'm surprised because I already knew Phineas will die from the beginning. Hours after I closed the book, I'm still shell-shocked. It's not fair. I waited, the length of the entire novel for Finn and Autumn to get together. And then he dies. HE DIES. HE DIES. HE DIES.

I'm so angry at this book. I wished I never read it. Which is stupid because it's one of the best, heart breaking novel I've ever read. So much so that I hugged the living shit out of it afterwards. In my head, I was imagining it was Autumn, doing my part at comforting her in her grief. If I were destroyed, then I can't even imagine the depths of her sorrow; of finally, finally being free to express the love that she's kept an entire lifetime only to drown in an ocean of misery afterwards. I said the exact thing to my husband, to which he replied:

"Honey, you do realize that this is a work of fiction, right?...and that none of those characters were real?"

But he doesn't understand. It's like Autumn when she finished writing her novel and she was overcome with

grief over her characters. It's exactly how I felt. It's like they died and there wasn't a damn thing I can do about it. It's like I've known them my whole life when they've only spent an entire day inside my head. It's the hopelessness I feel and great black hole of knowing what happened was irreversible. I'm so deeply affected and I don't even know why.

I wish y'all would read this book. I'm breathless and achy and I want to say exactly how I'm feeling but I'm a little short on words.

Devyani says

It's a pattern.

Every time around this time of the year, I find myself drifting away from my reading and reviewing obsession. It's not because I want to. It's because circumstances around me eventually make me. It's the start of summer here. And there are SO MANY things to do! There are those annual fests and functions to be part of. Lots of camping to do. Lots of catching up to do with my family and there is lots of travelling. Amidst it all, my reading just falls behind and then I don't even feel like reviewing. BUT THIS BOOK.

It makes me stay up late at night and just type, type, type and type.

Let me just warn you all. This review is pathetically nonsensical because it was written right after I finished reading this book. And the initial reaction to a book is pure emotion and it *always* does not make sense. So you're free to run away and totally ignore this review.

I'm just happy. I'm just so so happy. I could almost cry happy tears. And no, it's not because of something that happened in the book but it's because of the effect it had on me. I love those moments of gut wrenching metaphorical pain where you just want to punch something so bad and just howl and wail and cry and jhinga-la-la-la dance around a bonfire like a mad man in the middle of a ritual and throw yourself into that burning bonfire because after what happened in the book, you are never going to be the same. I love those moments of earthquakes that rock my heart because as sadist authors intended, you as a reader know what exactly the end is going to be and you just don't want to read the damn end as much you truly need to because you know it's going to tear you apart even though you already know what happens from the very beginning of the damn book.

I've read better books. I think.

And there will be times when books written by great minds will appear at my doorstep or just my laptop or kindle and would make me want to die of ecstasy or just ecstatic pain. If that makes sense. Among those many books will be a few that even after being replaced by another set of books, will never truly leave your mind and will always linger. This book is one of those.

If he had been with me by Laura Nowlin is a very simple book with a very simple yet captivating writing style. The pace is perfect and so is every angle and every mood.

It was heart breaking, stomach bursting, mind blasting, ground shaking, sky tearing and just about every term of destruction with an '-ing' at the end of it.

Maybe I'm just overreacting. But guess what? I don't care. Because I'm a very very very VERY happy person. I'm heartbroken but I'm very satisfied.

I got what I wanted from this book. To be honest, I was expecting a moreI don't know how to say it...but er, a more dramatic end?

I mean hey, it was by all means pure awesomeness but I just wanted something more. But like I said earlier, I'm a satisfied reader and now when I rationally think about it, I feel that it's good that the things ended the way they did.

I'm in no position to talk about the characters. I can only just tell you this. I hate the reality that were both, Autumn and Finn.

I hate how real situation was. I hate the damn title. 'I he had been with me' : I'm going to punch somebody. I just...I was so frustrated at times. And then I was sad. And then I was happy and then I was sad again. Then I was happy and it just went on and on and on. I hate the last line of this damn book.

Come to think of it?

I HATE THIS BOOK.

Shoo. I don't want to think about Finn. Especially Finny. Because he was something every girl dreams of . Not because he was a total hottaaay (which btw he was.) and not because he was a champion at wooing a girl. No. Nada. Niet.

He was awkward. And I loved how he loved people. He wasn't perfect but he was something. His character was so real! Not every guy is a cocky I-know-you-want-me-and-you-know-I-want-you kind of a guy who has that sexy half smirk always on his face. And who has a Adonis like body and is totally badass. Not every guy is sensitive. Nobody is perfect. And Finn is not perfect. But when you read about him you know that there is something absolutely right about this beautiful boy.

Autumn?

Insecure ? Dreamer? Teenager? Confused? Afraid? Needy? Loved? Alone?

I still can't find the right words to explain how I feel about her . I just know that she was a good narrator. And that I enjoyed the ride.

Okay. I love this book.

Bye you all.

I'm sure you know what to do.

You can make me happy by reading this book. And be happy yourself.

*** Sylvia * says**

I don't know where to start....

I knew this book would bring me to tears and that it has, but only the last couple of chapters.

I enjoyed this book, getting to know the characters inside and out, but with a book like this you know the end isn't going to end well, mainly cause the first chapter tells you so...

I was..... am heartbroken as I write this, still swiping tears away.

If you are a fan of the "love me with lies" series then you will love this book, it has the same edge to it and flow, it will lift you up but break you down before you know what's hit you. The ending is bitter sweet. I don't want to give away anything but I just feel I'm not saying enough about this book, it truly is a great read and be warned you will be in tears so keep tissue close at hand and lock yourself up in a room far from an audience, I wailed like a new born babe :(

the cover and the blurb alone make me want to break down and cry! I have a horrible feeling this book is going to haunt me for the rest of my days

Paige Bookdragon says

IF:

The saddest word in the English dictionary.

Okay...

No, wait. I'm not okay.

If there's one thing that I can proudly say about If He Had Been with Me, it's that it can make you sad. I wouldn't normally like this book because "*bestfriends, highschool, drama and first love*" are the key words that let me know that I will soon be frustrated with what I am reading.

But that was not the case with this book.

I love this. I devoured it in one sitting and though it didn't shatter my already cynical heart, it did cracked it. I think that the most powerful thing that this book can give you is the feeling of regret and God knows though I never had a lot of things in my life that I regretted , it still makes me fucking sad.

And to quote what Autumn said, "**Being sad is beautiful.**"

And so is this book. Read it.

Laura Nowlin says

Yes. I'm rating my own book five stars. All mothers think their babies are perfect.

*P*u*r*p*l*e* Masochist says

Dear Book,

you broke my heart. I hate you and adore you at the same time and I definitely won't forget you for a long time...Review to come...

Hannah ?Reader in the Rough? says

"Perhaps he would ask me what books mean to me. I would tell him that it means living another life."

This book was so uncomfortable to read. The metamorphosis of Autumn runs parallel to my own teen years.

This book didn't feel like another life, **it felt like an alternate universe of my own**. Not because I had a boyfriend I didn't appreciate, or a boy that I loved and didn't deserve. Because I asked the same questions, showered until I was numb, craved books because I couldn't stand my own actions in a blurry and unforgiving world, and feared I was on the path to being trapped in my own mind like my couch-ridden mother.

"I can see some of the roses still blooming in my mother's garden. Brown on the edges and bright in other colors, their petals drooping downward, dying just as their lives have begun."

You know where the story will end with the never-ending sense of dread in Autumn's narrative; it's no surprise. But what may surprise you is that **part of you goes down this rabbit hole, welling up newfound regret, breathing in anger at the fucked-up world that honestly doesn't get better as you get older. You learn to cope and to harden, to get over it and care less. The past is over and you can't do anything about it, so just keep moving.** Right?

Autumn doesn't. That is mental illness: **the constant rewind and fast forward of feeling too much and not enough, the past being as palpable as the present.**

This is one of the most real and painfully beautiful teen contemporaries I have read.

"I can feel the printed words seeping through my skin and into my veins, rushing to my heart and marking it forever."

Lay your fingers on this thorny rose of a book.

Ceecee says

It's almost 3AM and I am reeling from my reading experience. *How to even begin?*

Last I left the book I was more than halfway through. I thought I could definitely finish this "tomorrow", but I meant like tomorrow afternoon. Well it literally is "tomorrow" since it's the 13th of April. 3AM.

So since it's apparently hard to put down (it's really easy to read), why do I only want to rate this 2 stars? Well, 2.5 stars. 2 stars means it was okay. I had such good hopes for this. I actually felt like I could like this, and now I feel bad for not.

Like most books I've read, the final impression it leaves me determines my overall impression of the book. *Sigh* **Now I must warn you that there may be spoilers ahead.** Most likely. Obviously I can't write properly since it's 3AM and I'm running on adrenaline here, and a famous writer once said:

I believe that words uttered in passion contain a greater living truth than do those words which express thoughts rationally conceived. -Natsume Soseki, Kokoro

So here goes nothing:

I really liked how this novel was realistic, and made you care about the story despite its simplicity. I may not have had the same experiences as Autumn had in highschool, but **the novel rings true**. Not everyone can be perfect, nor make the choices that an outsider [read: reader] would choose, nor do things that we all expect. Autumn and Finny, from the outset, **you knew that they belonged together**. You're reading it to know why and how they are not.

And then the book was an almost detailed account of their high school life. Autumn started dating this guy and Finn dates this girl in their freshman year. It wasn't like old times, and they seem to have grown apart. But you see, Autumn is such an unreliable narrator, even though she says Finn and her are no longer friends, you can read between the lines: that they have sexual tension, and Autumn is an idiot.

What I cannot like is how the story seemed so stagnant. A lot has happened, but not much essential to the story. I loved getting frustrated when I realize what Finny really felt in this scene and that, and I liked Autumn sometimes. Who doesn't often feel like they're dreams and reality can't coincide? So what if Autumn chooses to have a stable life with James instead of pursuing her love with Finn? We're all idiots. And I'm okay with that.

What I'm not okay with is how there didn't seem to be character development. Especially with that ending. **Is this frigging City of Angels?** The two protagonists spend **one bloody day** together after confessing and consummating their great love, and are separated forever the next day? Why would Laura Nowlin do this to me? And Autumn's reaction? She'll think Finny would forgive her for that? I never really took her seriously when she said Romeo and Juliet was romantic, because hell I liked Romeo and Juliet and sure it was romantic, but **there's fiction and there's reality**. So when Autumn decided to follow Finny into the dark, I think that was poor character development. What's more, she decides to do it again until she succeeds. *facepalm* Is it really nice to present in a novel that a girl is so devastated in love she wants to kill herself, because there's nothing else to live for? But oh wait, she's pregnant, and she thinks about aborting it, but the thought of Finny stops her. It would have been so nice if she had made a decision because that's what *she* stands up for, and not merely for the sake of a departed love.

***2.5 stars**

Scarlet says

Reading this book was like listening most hauntingly beautiful and sad song. You know it will make you sad and leave you heartbroken, but you can't stop even if it hurts.

We, masochistic readers, we know it, we understand it... and still, we do it. All we can do is suffer the pain, and tell ourselves it was well worth it. Sad things can be beautiful. That's exactly what Autumn said and noone understood her.

Well, Autumn and Ms Nowlin, we understand you and we appreciate the pain.
It was well worth it...

Well, there was one weird girl...

...and she fell in love with her best friend but she didn't notice him like that.

...And then there was one big misunderstanding and they grew apart. They grew apart for four long years even though they saw each other on a daily basis.

"I've loved him my whole life, and somewhere along the way, that love didn't change but grew. It grew to fill the parts of me that I did not have when I was a child. It grew with every new longing of my body and desire until there was not a piece of me that did not love him. And when I look at him, there is no other feeling in me."

...And just when life finally brought them together, this star-crossed lovers were separated by cruel fate.

I can see some of the roses still blooming in my mother's garden. Brown on the edges and bright in other colors, their petals drooping downward, dying just as their lives have begun.

They stayed past their time, and I've realized that I have too.

Do you want to know how they were separated? Just read this book!
I promise you, you won't regret it!

Sarah {Literary Meanderings} says

♥ Find my reviews here: [Literary Meanderings](#)

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If He Had Been With Me opens up to Autumn, our protagonist, thinking back to the fateful August night when her best friend Finny was involved in a tragic accident.

“They were arguing. No one ever says what they were arguing about. It is, in other people's opinions, not important to the story. What they do not know is that there is another story. The story lurking underneath and in between the facts of the one they can see. What they do not know, the cause of the argument, is crucial to the story of me.”

Then we backtrack to learn the story of Autumn and Phineas (aka Finny) from the very beginning.

Their mothers (aka “The Mothers”) have been best friends for a very long time. They were pregnant at the same time and had their children within a week of each other. Naturally, Autumn and Finny grew up together. The two were inseparable. Autumn was always the oddball at school, but she always had Finny to watch over her and defend her honor.

Until middle school. The two best friends grow apart after a misunderstanding that neither of them see (at the time) as a misunderstanding. While still in each others lives via family get-togethers with The Mothers, the two are merely cordial and polite—if anything, it's now an awkward not-quite-friendship. This continues through high school. Both teens are happily dating and have their separate social groups, etc.

But Autumn has never stopped thinking of the “what ifs”... After battling with herself over it for some time, the question that remains is this: *Is it too late?*

Can what's been done be *undone*? Can friendship be like riding a bicycle? Can these two make their lives fit together after all these years?

- - -

First of all, I have to stick with my very first thought after reading this book: **Can I give this book a million stars?** Because it SO deserves that and more! Where do I even *begin*? How can I even *express* how much this book touched me; effected me? It has been a very very very long time since a book has made me cry so hard. It's something that I *crave* in a book. I want to *feel* the words in my mind, heart, and soul. Laura Nowlin has created a story that did this and *more*. It left me a complete freaking wreck! I had to sit on this review for over two weeks. I couldn't put it into words, and frankly, I'm still having trouble. I just want to scream it from the rooftops. **THIS BOOK IS AMAZING! IT WILL TAKE HOLD OF YOU FROM BEGINNING TO END!**

Autumn and Finny. Oh, these two touched my heart so much! From the very start, their connection was tangible. Even when the two of them weren't really friends and didn't speak much, save perfunctory formalities. Through Autumn's first-person POV, we can see and feel their connection; their bond—a bond that transcends time.

Autumn is one of the best protagonists I've ever met. I adored her personality and adored reading through her. She is quirky and artistic. She thinks things that you'd never quite expect of a high school girl. She doesn't care that she's different; she embraces it. She takes it and makes it her own. I am also thoroughly impressed with the very *REFRESHING* fact that Nowlin made this girl confident! She knows she is pretty and *says* so. She doesn't constantly doubt what she has to give or what she looks like. She doesn't have to. She is an inspiration! I think *everyone* who reads this book will just fall madly in love with her.

Finny is someone we sort of see from afar. Through Autumn, we learn that he is slightly bashful, but has definite bold streak that rears its head when needed. He's blonde, gorgeous, and a complete gentleman. He's also passionate, patient, and completely lovable. And love him I *soooo* did. Sigh.

Nowlin's top-notch character development didn't stop with just Autumn and Finny. Their family was fully developed as were their friends. This book had *no* disposable or pointless characters. Each one was distinctly part of the story, and I'm finding this to be a rarity these days. It almost seems too *easy* to whip up a Young Adult novel and get it published. Throw in a vampire or a werewolf, a stupid girl who doesn't care about her own safety, and whammo! You're in like Flynn. This book, this author, seem the opposite to me. You can tell that she poured her heart and soul; pieces of herself, into this novel. Her writing is spectacular. Her words are poetic. This book will become a part of you.

Now, from the blurb and the prologue of the novel, you already know a tragedy looms in the future. It's not something that surprises you. You know it's going to happen. Don't go into this book expecting your run-of-the-mill happy ending, because you won't get it. This book is *real* and it's *raw*. This isn't a paranormal tale where someone's beloved comes back from the dead, or even from the brink of death. It's inevitable, and you know this from the beginning. That being said, Nowlin was still able to stun me with the ending. I was still completely heartbroken and distraught when *it* happened. The whole book is meant to make you grow to love these characters, to become a part of their life, and it worked 100%. I was fully invested in the outcome of this book, and the events hit me hard. I bawled through the last bit of chapters. I was a snotty, teary mess. I'm sort of glad my husband wasn't home. Although I did call him immediately after I finished to blab about the book for a good thirty minutes. About how much it touched me and how much I loved it. He dutifully gave me consolation over the phone. :) Anyway, I can promise you that this book will stay with you for the *rest of your life*.

"I think we're supposed to experience as much beauty as we can."

"[...] because sometimes sad things are beautiful," I say. "Like when someone dies."

All in all, I suppose it's needless to say that this book floored me. Heck, I'll say it anyway... *IF HE HAD BEEN WITH ME* FLOORED ME! Nowlin has staggering characterization skills, and a true talent for creating unique characters for readers to fall in love with. The plot is paced to perfection and you'll be turning the pages 'til the wee hours of the morning. This is definitely one of those "Just one more chapter!" books. The author soundly explores the relationship dynamics between childhood friends going through the transition of dealing with hormones and feelings they've never experienced, to the delicate beginnings of love. She gives us an ending that surprises even though it was foretold. Clever plot twists were woven into the story from the very beginning, making the ending one that packs a whole lot of punch. It's beautiful. It's sad. It's heart-wrenching.

If you're looking for an emotionally-charged teen read, this is your book—hands down. Fans of YA Contemporary Romance, New Adult, or Coming of Age will also enjoy this book. It does touch on some rough subjects: teen pregnancy, underage drinking, suicide, sex, etc. It's done tastefully and with respect. Just do yourself a favor and go out and buy this book or pick it up at the library. Autumn and Finny's story is one that will stay with you forever and ever. Be warned, though! This book requires a bit of recovery time after you finish up. :)

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Publisher: Sourcebooks Fire/Sourcebooks

Sofii? (A Book. A Thought.) says

Omg my heart!

This has been a roller coaster of emotions for me, I mean, literally.

At one point it was fine and then angry, then frustrated, then sad and happy and nfjdsnfkj, I could not with my temperament on several occasions, especially with the decision of Autumn and their behavior I did not understand why she was taking it.

But besides that and I have cast me angry sometimes lol, I really liked this book, the story is good quality and keeps you trapped all the time, I'm not a contemporary person and I imagined something more mysterious but I've loved and that I surprised for good

I love love and love how the relationship between Autumn and Finny feels, is like a love beyond the love between two people is more like... even more real more crude, firm and for ever .. do not know how to explain it with appropriate words, just I felt it throughout the book, right through flashbacks and thoughts. It was the best of the book without doubt.

“I've loved him my whole life, and somewhere along the way, that love didn't change but grew. It grew to fill the parts of me that I did not have when I was a child. It grew with every new longing of my body and desire until there was not a piece of me that did not love him. And when I look at him, there is no other feeling in me.”

This love kept me smiling all the time , is beautiful when you can feel on the skin of literary relationships: 3

Maybe it was not what I expected but I am delighted with what has inflicted this book on me. It has so many moments and experiences that I have had to live and that's one of the reason which I find so real and appealing.

“Just because something seems impossible doesn't mean that you shouldn't try.”

And THAT END , Just I can not explain what I feel, at first lets you know what is gonna happen and as I thought knew what was coming but was no less hard know it at all.

My heart stopped for a second and then more and more and I almost die (Yes ,I'm dramatic) is so sad and certainly as Autumn says, there is something beautiful in the tragedy also, and this book shows it, is tragic, strong and gives you that dose of hope when everything goes wrong has been just beautiful

Now I understand the cover and it's like, my feelings !! .

You should reading it without doubt if not by because the love in it , read it by friendship, for learning, for dysfunctional families, because teaching, thoughts and feelings that leave are unique

Circe says

“—Es demasiado malo que no tuviéramos celulares antes —digo—. Entonces no tendríamos que haber necesitado los vasos y las cuerdas.
—Sí —dice, y luego—: Espera, ¿estás en tu habitación?
—Sí —digo, y luego recuerdo que se suponía que estaba leyendo, y mi ventana está oscura—. Acabo de entrar.
—¿Puedes verme? —Saluda. Y me río.
—Sí —digo—. Estoy saludando de vuelta.
—Hola —dice.
—Hola —digo.”

Todo esto fue **demasiado** para mí, demasiado doloroso, demasiado atónita, demasiadas cosas como para procesar todo lo que sucedió.

Toda la historia me sorprendió, pero más aún todo el inicio. Cree una y mil teorías de lo que podría pasar pero aún así la que menos esperaba era la verdadera.

«—Creo que es sólo para amar verdaderamente a alguien antes de morir.»

Todo esto inicia desde la niñez de Autumn y Phineas -Finny- contada desde vista de Autumn todo lo que pasa a través de su niñez y toda su vida con Finny.

No encuentro palabras lo tanto que me dolió este libro, fue realmente **inesperado** todo, una de las cosas que más me gusto de todo fue la narración que cada detalle pequeño era el más importante, cada pieza del libro era una pieza que si faltaba no podría encajar en el lugar.

“—Entonces —Finny dice, pero no continúa.
—¿Qué? —le digo.
—Tú y yo, ¿no?
—Phineas Smith, ¿me estás pidiendo que sea tu novia? —No puedo dejar de reír.”

Las formas en las que Autumn se imaginaba las cosas son las que más duelen porque así mismo en algunas partes las había imaginado. Realmente no tengo muchas palabras para describir todo lo que sentí al leer este

libro, solamente que fue demasiado como para decir algo sobre todo él.

«Este libro es un tesoro; no sospechaba que sería tan bueno cuando lo tomé, pero ahora puedo sentir las palabras impresas que se filtran a través de mi piel y en mi venas, corriendo hacia mi corazón y marcándolo para siempre. **Quiero disfrutar de esta maravilla, lo que ocurre cuando amas un libro y lo lees por primera vez, porque la primera vez siempre es la mejor, y nunca voy a leer este libro por primera vez de nuevo.**»

BookOwl BookOwl says

Heartbroken.

Sad.

Depressed.

Inconsolable.

Melancholic.

Unhappy.

Grief-stricken.

Forlorn.

Gutted.

Torn.

Devastated.

If you're wondering, I didn't cry. But it's not because I'm a callous, unemotional bitch. I'm just so over that now and crying doesn't even come close to what I want to do.

I want to hit someone, burn/throw something, scream, go lock myself in a very dark room and just confine myself to that space for a very very long time.

Don't you get it, this book has totally KILLED me. My chest hurts, and my heart is racing and I don't feel right.

Maybe I do need to cry. Because this.....

SUCKS!!!!!!!

SEVEN YEARS! That's how long it took for them to finally admit to each other how they felt for one another.

AND WITHIN A COUPLE OF HOURS ... It was all gone.

That's, that's some real heartbreak right there! Even mine is broken.

Damn..... I need a minute. Or a drink.

And I don't even drink....

Heartbroken.

Sad.

Depressed.
Inconsolable.
Melancholic.
Unhappy.
Grief-stricken.
Forlorn.
Gutted.
Torn.
Devastated.
....

Marga says

Actual Rating: 2.5/5 stars

I was actually enjoying this book despite it's not very unique storyline. I cared about the characters. The romance was SO good that this book could've been a new favorite of mine but..

The ending just ruined everything, really. For me, anyway. I wished I didn't read that part.

The plot:

Autumn and Finny are best friends since birth, literally. "The Mothers", as they call them, are also best friends so they were with each other before they're even born. As they grew up, they drift apart though.

Who doesn't like best friends who became more than that? **That is the best kind of love story.** For me, anyway. Having someone you already trusts to take care of you is comforting. And even after all romance is gone, friendship is all you have.

Autumn and Finny were both in a relationship with other people. But throughout the entire story, I just wished that they should be together. The author made me feel that they belonged together like it's a universal accepted truth.

There are parts that had me completely bored though. Some scenes just does not fit like they should not be there at all. And this was just so loooooong.

The Characters:

Autumn. I liked her. She was weird and she knows it AND embraces it. She is so geeky and I liked that she reads a lot. I like that there's actually school activities going on here. She's pretty active in recitation.

I just don't liked what she did at the end. It was seriously infuriating and sad at the same time.

Finny. I adore him. He blushed so easily when he's embarassed which I found cute. What are you, blind Autumn? It was so obvious that he liked her! This MC is just ao dense sometimes I want to strangle her.

I wished I knew what Finny thinks most of the time. It would be good to read something from his POV. The thing that happened before that horrible ending is perfect. I was genuinely happy for them. I mean, finally!!

The Ending:

Are you kidding me??? *I am completely and utterly furious!* My heart aches at the same time though. I feel like being punched in the gut after what happened in the end but the author made me so angry shortly after that.

The book just ended suddenly. I don't like this kind of ending! I have so many questions but this book just left more questions unanswered. I was definitely not okay with it. I know that a tragedy would happen as the blurb says and I was prepared! But that ending? Gaaah.

Overall, an okay contemporary romance with a bad ending. I don't know if I recommend it. Maybe not.

Nomes says

It has been a long time since I have fallen so hard for a contemporary YA novel. I have barely heard of any buzz surrounding Laura Nowlin's debut. I ordered it on a whim, not really sure what to expect. I liked the cover, the premise sounded like my kind of thing and I always like the chase of finding a YA book free of preconceived hopes and praise.

I was unprepared for just *how good* this book is, easily my favourite YA book of the year so far and it now sits on my favourites shelf.

Nowlin is a born storyteller. And this book differs from other YA books as it spans over three years of Autumn's life (told in the present, but it also encapsulated much more than that with memories and flashbacks). I love the time span of this novel, it stretched ahead of me and wrapped itself around me and I was entirely absorbed into Autumn's world.

This is a YA coming-of-age love story, but not in that swoony, predictable way. It hit me harder than a just the regular dreamy smile for the hot guy next door (and Finny is a hot boy living next door): I felt it right through to my stomach and to my chest constricting as I watched August and Finny together. The things left unsaid, the memories swirling around them, hope's dashed, future's uncertain.

Nowlin so perfectly captures that teen voice: the misunderstandings between teenagers, the things unsaid, the dreams, the doubts, the wildly good times and also snatches of depression. I love Autumn as she felt so real. no aspect of her was gimmicky. She was fully nuanced, so gorgeous and bold and different without ever falling into a YA cliché and I loved seeing the world from her eyes. She was the perfect blend of confident and unsure. Nothing was black and white: I loved all the shades of grey in her feelings and everything that was going on in her world. I loved her for her fairytale hopes all mashed up with trying to face reality. For her love of reading and her uncompromising stance on who she was, even as she was trying to figure out the very same thing.

And, oh, how I love the history of her relationship with Finny. There are a lot of flashbacks and memories and I never grew tired of it. I felt included in their lives. Finny himself is now one of my most favourite YA boys, not just as a gorgeous love interest, but for who he was.

If He Had Been With Me has it's own unique vibe. The prose sometimes has it's own jaunty little rhythm, other times passages are so so poignant and heartfelt that my chest constricted. The writing was deeply personal, holding nothing back.

With such a lush scope of three years plus, Nowlin explores so many experiences: friendships, cliques, first love, divorce, mental health, sex, all those gorgeous moments caught between the mystery and promise of adulthood looming ahead while thinking back on childhood.

The thing about this book is it just kept getting better and better. For me, it was like meeting a new friend, and liking them, and then getting to know them until they become one of those lifelong besties that you cannot imagine life without. I liked Autumn so much from the outset, but she grew on me, exponentially so, as did her friends, her mum (and aunty) and, of course, Finny and now I just have this love for them and I know I won't ever be forgetting this gorgeous, beautiful and achey story.

For discussion: I would have preferred the book without the prologue chapter. The writing itself pulled me into the story, that and the promise of what was to come - I did not need such a dramatic hook. I also am not a fan of the blurb that's on GR. I think it changes the reading experience (luckily, I did not read the blurb on that site - which is also used on most bloggers review posts, amazon, etc - and only read the back cover of the book). The ending felt rushed, then abrupt. I think I needed a tiny bit longer to linger in the story, to make sense of it all, but I understand what Nowlin was trying to do.

I can't stop thinking about this story. I am crazily excited to fall this hard for a debut author and cannot wait to read more of Nowlin's work (understatement). I have a new absolute favourite book, so much passages bookmarked. I have so much love for this book and hope it falls into many hands. I envy those readers their first time reading experience waiting before them. LOVE

(Confession: I stayed up until 4.30am to finish this one. My only regret is it's already over...)

Perfect theme song: the Special Two by the ever lush Missy Higgins

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJA92W...>

Zemira (Kylo Ren fangirl) Warner says

Wow. I did not expected it to be this good. Damn you Laura Nowlin! I will stalk you till you give me a new book!

If He Had Been With Me was on my 'can't wait' list for months and I couldn't resist and read it the moment I got my hands on it. I started reading in the morning and didn't put it down until I was done crying because I had a feeling someone stabbed me in the heart even though the book started with the most unpleasant thing than can happen. I chose to ignore it. There was just no way the story would go there. Well, I cried for a long time.

Autumn used to be friends with her first door neighbor, Finn but after middle school she becomes very popular and they grow apart. Now in high school, Autumn is a part of a gang who are different from other students. They dress differently, listen to cool music, change their hair colors, well you get the picture. Finn is hangin with the popular crowd-cheerleaders and football players and they ignore each other all the time except it's hard since their mothers are really close friends and they even eat together.

Even though Finn and Autumn are not friends any more she can help but think about the time they spent together so we get to read about their childhood memories. Finn is such a sweet guy and is a devoted friend so I couldn't help but cheer for him to end up with Autumn even though they were both dating other people. Autumn is also battling with depression which she ignores as a winter blues. Her boyfriend is not really helpful in that department so Finn is there to make it all better. Finn's dad is also never around but he tries to buy his affection with expensive gifts. Both characters need each other to move on from their issues but disaster strikes and everything changes.

I love to read heartbreaking stories because they make me feel alive. Make me see life in another light. I will bore my friends to pick this book up until they block me. I urge you to buy it. It's worth the money. Yes! I know you want to read it. So what are you waiting for?
