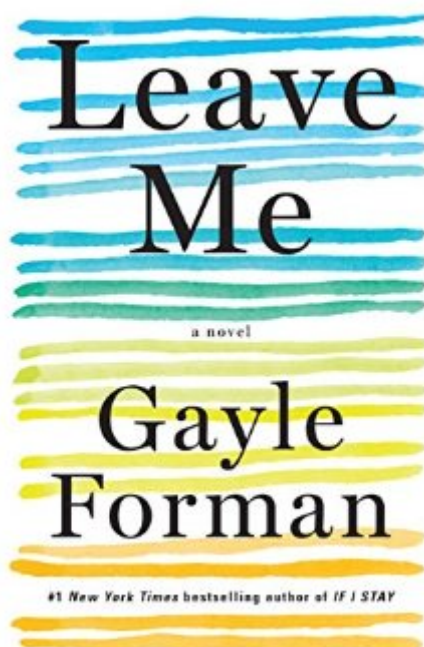


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# Leave Me: A Novel



## Synopsis

A #1 September LibraryReads Selection A September Indie Next Pick An Best Book of the Month A People Pick Every woman who has ever fantasized about driving past her exit on the highway instead of going home to make dinner, and 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. 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 often the case, once we get 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 able to own up to secrets she has been keeping from herself and those she loves. With bighearted characters--husbands, wives, friends, and lovers--who stumble and trip, grow and forgive, *Leave Me* is about facing the fears we're all running from. Gayle Forman is a dazzling observer of human nature. She has written an irresistible novel that confronts the ambivalence of modern motherhood head on and asks, what happens when a grown woman runs away from home? Â

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Maribeth Klein was a multi-tasker. She had to be, juggling her very fast-paced job as an editor at a Manhattan celebrity lifestyle magazine, with her wife and mothering duties. The twins, Liv and Oliver, were four years old, and their preschool demanded a lot of her attention, too. So when the pain hit Maribeth on a busy afternoon, she rationalized it away. It had to be something like indigestion, or the anger she was feeling toward her husband over something-or-other, or some other possibility. If she hadn't already had an appointment with her OB/GYN for a mammogram, who knows what would have happened? They sent her to the ER, where she was told she'd had a heart attack and would need a stent. But somehow, that procedure failed, due to a nick in an artery, and she had to have a double bypass. Home again a few days later, Maribeth is struggling. Those who were supposed to help her are somehow failing in that task, and her frustration leads to an action she could never have imagined she would take. She packed, withdrew cash from her account, the one with her inheritance in it, and took a train. To Pittsburgh. Her anonymous journey and life in a strange city, in the subsequent weeks, would become a time of reflection, trying out her wings, and exploring the past. And trying to find her birth mother, because Maribeth had been adopted. Suddenly the need for some genetic history seemed necessary. I loved *Leave Me: A Novel*, which I could not put down. When I enjoy the characters in a novel, with their flaws, secrets, and unexplained behaviors, I find it almost impossible to stop reading.

Forty-four year old Maribeth Klein is an editor for a celebrity lifestyle magazine, has a caring husband, and is the mother of lively four-year-old twins. In addition to holding down a full-time job, she schedules her children's activities, prepares nourishing meals, and makes every effort to keep her household running smoothly. Maribeth is perpetually exhausted and overwhelmed by her professional and personal responsibilities. In addition, she has unresolved emotional issues that she has carefully swept under the rug. Suddenly, a serious health crisis drives her over the edge, propelling her to make a decision that could derail her marriage and career. In *Leave Me*, Gayle Forman breathes new life into what could have been a trite tale of a burned-out woman who is fed up with being pulled in so many directions. Maribeth is an unconventional heroine--complex, tightly wound, and, at times, obnoxious. It takes a while to warm up to this slightly unhinged individual. When she embarks on a journey of self-discovery, she is fortunate to encounter generous men and women who are struggling with their own challenges. Forman raises such provocative questions as: How can an overburdened working mother learn to lower her expectations? In addition, what price does she pay when she buries her feelings instead of facing

them head-on? Although certain aspects of this story are too contrived to be believed, we are happy to go along for the ride. Forman entertains us with understated and deft prose, witty dialogue, intriguing revelations, and a nicely executed finale. "Leave Me" emphasizes life's unpredictability. Maribeth wonders, "With the ground always shifting under her, how could she ever hope to regain her footing?"

If you are mother, could you ever imagine leaving your kids? No matter what the reason? What if you had a heart attack and when trying to recuperate, it was clear that you were a burden on your family, so you went back to the same old habits? And at some point, it became the straw that broke the camel's back? Maribeth Klein, (the main character in Leave Me by Gayle Forman) is one of those women. After her heart attack, she can't take the stress of having to take over all of the old parenting and household duties, so she writes a note to her husband, Jason and then she just leaves. Takes money out of their joint account and gets on a train. Leaving them. Her family, to fend for themselves. And for the first month, she doesn't even attempt to contact her family. Some days, her kids barely register a thought, while on others, she is consumed with guilt for abandoning them and at having left her husband to care of them all by himself. I must admit that I could not understand Maribeth's actions, but then I am not a mother. For a good portion the book I found myself furious with her, for her actions, her thoughts and her complete disregard for a family that she claims to love. Her husband Jason, at first seemed cold and uninterested in their lives and in her. Somewhere along the lines, Gayle Forman was expertly able to change my view on both Maribeth and Jason. While I never ended up loving Maribeth, I began to feel sympathetic towards her. With Jason, you saw him trying to work through his problems, pick up the slack in his family and be a real dad, and most of all, be there for his wife. Ms.

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