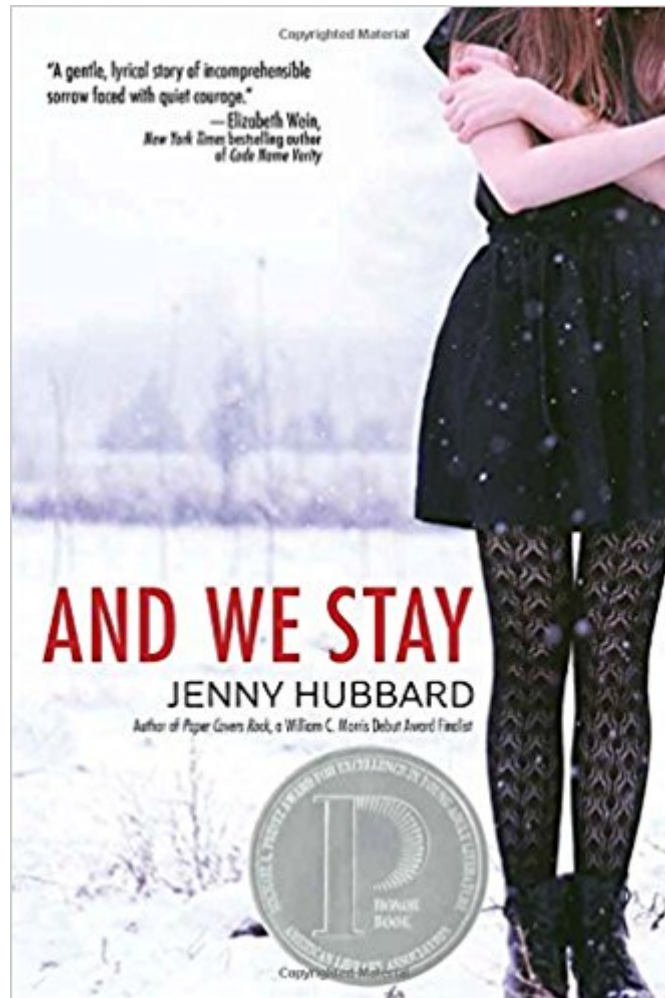




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And We Stay



Synopsis

A Michael L. Printz Honor Award Winner – “A gentle, lyrical story of incomprehensible sorrow faced with quiet courage.” – •ELIZABETH WEIN, *NY Times* bestselling author – “Hubbard treats tragedy and new beginnings with a skilled, delicate hand.” – •JOHN COREY WHALEY, author of *Where Things Come Back*, winner of the Michael L. Printz Award Senior Paul Wagoner walks into his school with a stolen gun, threatens his girlfriend, Emily Beam, and then takes his own life. Soon after, angry and guilt-ridden Emily is sent to a boarding school in Amherst, Massachusetts, where two quirky fellow students and the spirit of Emily Dickinson offer helping hands. But it is up to Emily Beam to heal her own damaged self, to find the good behind the bad, hope inside the despair, and springtime under the snow. *NY Times* Boston Globe Best YA Novel of the Year *Kirkus Reviews* Best Book of the Year A Tayshas High School Reading List Selection A North Carolina Young Adult book Award Nominee * “As graceful as a feather drifting down, this lyrical story delivers a deep journey of healing on a tragic theme.” – *Kirkus Reviews*, *Starred* “And We Stay” is a little gem of a book. . . . there is certainly something for anyone looking for a good read with a strong, believable female lead who is working her hardest to overcome tragedy.” – *School Library Journal*, *Starred* “Hubbard’s writing is elegant and emotional.” – *Publisher’s Weekly* “This novel is accomplished, polished, and mixes prose and poetry to a stunning effect.” – *Booklist* “Hubbard . . . captures perfectly the turbulence of young love, the bonds of friendship, and the push-and-pull dynamic between teens and adults.” – *VOYA* From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up—Emily Beam is a new student at Amherst School for Girls. There are rumors, of course, about why she has entered the school in January of her junior year, but none of them come close to reality. The truth remains only for Emily to replay over and over, each time revealing a bit more about the circumstances leading up to the day when her boyfriend entered the school library where she was working with her class, lured her into the stacks to talk, and then shot himself in the head. (By the way, If you're wondering why no one simply Googled Emily's mysterious past, her story is set in 1995, perhaps for that very reason.) As the teen acclimates to boarding-school life, she keeps her story close to her chest, but reveals herself little by little through the poems she writes and ultimately shares. Emily feels an affinity for her namesake, Emily Dickinson, who lived and wrote just down the street from ASG, and draws on her spirit to pour her emotions onto paper. *And We Stay* is a little gem of a book. Readers learn as much about Dickinson's beliefs and poetry as they do about friendship, first love, teen suicide, and even abortion-not an easy balancing act. Yet despite the heavy topics, the book feels sweet and poetic and never gratuitous. Budding poets may particularly appreciate Emily's story, but there is certainly something for anyone looking for a good read with a strong, believable female lead who is working her hardest to overcome tragedy.—Jill Heritage Maza, Montclair Kimberley Academy, Montclair, NJ --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Starred Review Like *Paper Covers Rock* (2011), Hubbard's sophomore novel has a boarding-school setting and a main character who writes poetry and draws inspiration from a famous writer. And also like *Paper Covers Rock*, this novel is accomplished, polished, and mixes prose and poetry to stunning effect. After Emily Beam discovers that she is pregnant and breaks up with her boyfriend, he walks into the school library, threatens Emily, and then shoots himself. After an abortion, Emily is sent away to the Amherst School for Girls, in Amherst, Massachusetts, which is located in the hometown of Emily's idol, Emily Dickinson. The spirit of Dickinson is everywhere—even her voice echoes in Emily's head—and as Emily immerses herself in Dickinson's 1,775 poems, she writes her anguish into poems of her own, which flood her brain constantly. Emily's path to healing involves moving back and

forth in time, to memories of Paul, and sharing her poems with empathetic roommate, K. T. The third-person, present-tense voice is compelling. Sounding almost like stage directions (‘Emily Beam is sighing all the time’), Hubbard’s narrative tone will only make readers want to lean in closer. The poems themselves are insightful and poignant, illuminating the dark corners of Emily’s psyche. And though Emily may be damaged and the winter of 1994 is long, happier times and spring seem on the horizon. Grades 9-12. --Ann Kelley --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

As a book reviewer, I have a list of books that have been sent to me by the author or a publishing house AS WELL AS a HUGE (and I mean ginormous people) stack of books that I have already purchased on my own or plan to. And *We Stay* was one of the books that I purchased on my own, and I wasn’t entirely sure I would enjoy it. I always read reviews before I purchase anything (which is probably what lead me to reviewing) and I was getting a lot of mixed feedback about this book. Some reviews praised the beautiful writing and poetry, while others expressed disappointment for a book that they couldn’t even finish. For someone who has a weird fascination with books on suicide, I decided to go ahead and buy this book. After FINISHING the book, I have concluded that I LIKE this book but I don’t love it. This is probably the only book I won’t be giving an extended plot summary for, because frankly I feel that it is already very straightforward. I will be honest, I was expecting more out of this book, and it is probably only because it was given an award (OH, the irony). I have been having a hell of a time writing this review, typing and deleting. Typing and deleting. So I am just going to start with my favorite topic, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT. *sigh* I feel like a broken record for saying this in so many reviews, but it’s a big part of a book! I think that is the biggest aspect of this story that is lacking, the fact that I don’t emotionally feel for Emily’s tragedy and her sorrow. I can understand it and grasp the sadness, but I don’t feel anything for her. I read while she put her grief into her poems and saw how her memories made her feel, but even that doesn’t seem very realistic to me. The memories of Paul did not do his character justice either, that would have been a great time to show the reader exactly what kind of person he was. I felt like I got bits and pieces of him, but not enough to build my own idea of him. I wanted to see the creative writing aspect in this story more as well. The poems were beautiful and haunting all in their own, but I think more description in the emotions Emily felt would have been positive. For example: how Paul killing himself could have made Emily feel as if her heart had exploded into so much tainted blood that it overflowed from

inside her body and started bleeding from her eyes (over the top I know, but you get it). Where is the overwhelming description of her pain and guilt?! If I was Emily Beam and had experienced something so tragic at that age, I would have been a mess. Trust me when I say that this really is NOT a bad book, it is a great YA story about a girl dealing with tragedy. The poems are placed throughout the book, but it isn't necessary to the reader that they are read. The idea of working Emily Dickinson into the plot was clever and different, there was a definite tie between the late Emily Dickinson and the main character Emily Beam. I even found myself doing some research on Emily Dickinson after reading this story. The relationship between Paul and Emily proved to be an innocent first love turned into sorrow and rejection. Emily gives the reader memories of their time together as well as the day of Paul's suicide. Reading as Emily felt forced to end her relationship with Paul and to say whatever was necessary to save herself, gave this character a complicated outlook. Not only was she guilty for possibly being the reason for Paul's death, but also quite possible the cause. I can only imagine how it must feel to have that weight thrown onto your shoulders at such a young age. Overall, you should give *And We Stay* a chance if it sounds interesting to you. I think that anyone who appreciates a YA book about suicide, acceptance of past mistakes, and letting go of guilt can connect with it. Don't let negative reviews sway your own opinion of it, after all, reviews are just personal opinions ;)

Emily's boyfriend approached her in the school library, threatened her with a gun, and then ended his own life. What happens next is the subject matter of "*And We Stay*." We follow Emily as her parents send her off to an all girl's boarding school in Amherst. The school, in close proximity to poet Emily Dickinson's historical home, is a great place for Emily to reflect and write her own poems. Writing is her catharsis, her way of dealing with Paul's death and her perceived betrayal of him. She is not very social, but is finally prodded into friendships of two of the other girls. Grief is a hard subject to write about. I felt that there wasn't much forward motion in this novel, so instead we are trapped in Emily's head, circling through the events leading to Paul's death. This isn't such a bad thing, but at the end of the novel I just didn't feel very engaged. More than anything, I was angry at Emily's parents, because I felt they handled things very poorly, and this wasn't addressed.

And We Stay written by Jenny Hubbard is a book unlike anything I have ever read. She writes in third person about a girl who goes through a significant trauma in her life. Hubbard does a fantastic job of just giving the reader the story bit by bit. This parallels to the girl, Emily, who tells the girls at her

new school, Amherst School for Girls, none of the story, but they soon find out bit by bit of what happened to Emily before she had arrived. Readers see that Emily is going through something and go through the pain with her as she is able to come to terms with and accept the harsh reality. Soon after Emily gets to Amherst School for Girls, she finds an outlet in writing poems. She parallels her life to Emily Dickinson's life as she reads Dickinson's poems. Emily even finds it fascinating that they have the same name. Dickinson even attended the Amherst School for Girls and lived right down the street. A fact that is very important in the progression of the book. Hubbard's compelling novel *And We Stay* is something very different for everyday YA literature and can be sad at parts, but is something everyone should read and is written in a tasteful way that is not upsetting. I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a real story.

To cope with the trauma caused by witnessing her boyfriend's suicide after she ends their relationship, Emily Beam transfers to a boarding school in Massachusetts to start afresh. With the support of a new circle of quirky friends, a few empathic teachers, and the spirit of her favorite poet and namesake, Emily Dickinson, Emily learns how to manage the internal pangs of anger and guilt that have been haunting her. Sprinkled throughout the novel are samples of Emily's poignant and deeply lyrical poems about her relationship, her suffering, and the bubbles of healing that start to cushion her pain. "This is how she will go: on./ The light almost speaking,/ and March halfway gone,/ the green fields beyond,/ and the staying." Hubbard writes the prose of *AND WE STAY* with the same poetic delicacy she does Emily's poetry, and while some of the poems feel too sophisticated (in both insight and technique) for a high school student, she captures perfectly the turbulence of young love, the bonds of friendship, and the push-and-pull dynamic between teens and adults. The integration of fun facts about Emily Dickinson also serves to enrich the prose and Emily's growth throughout. Definitely recommend this book to your introspective patrons who relish romantic tragedy, poetry, and intricate relationships among girls and their boyfriends, friends, and teachers.

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