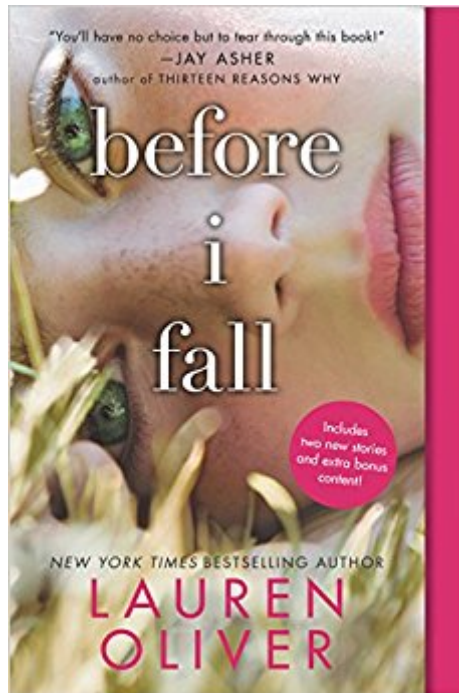




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# Before I Fall Enhanced Edition



## Synopsis

With this stunning debut novel, New York Times bestselling author Lauren Oliver emerged as one of today's foremost authors of young adult fiction. Like Jay Asher's *Thirteen Reasons Why* and Gayle Forman's *If I Stay, Before I Fall* raises thought-provoking questions about love, death, and how one person's life can affect so many others. This special enhanced edition of the New York Times bestselling *Before I Fall* by award-winning author Lauren Oliver includes two brand-new stories set in the world of *Before I Fall*, an essay by the author about the "greatest hits" of her life, and extra behind-the-scenes content on the making of this bestseller. For popular high school senior Samantha Kingston, February 12 "Cupid Day" should be one big party, a day of valentines and roses and the privileges that come with being at the top of the social pyramid. And it is until she dies in a terrible accident that night. However, she still wakes up the next morning. In fact, Sam lives the last day of her life seven times, until she realizes that by making even the slightest changes, she may hold more power than she ever imagined. *Before I Fall* is now a major motion picture. Zoey Deutch, Halston Sage, and Kian Lawley. Named to numerous state reading lists, the novel was also recognized as a Best Book of the Year by *Time* .com, Barnes & Noble, The Daily Beast, NPR, and Publishers Weekly.

## Book Information

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[View larger](#) Lauren Oliver and Lexa Hillyer on Second Chances in Books. ..and in Life. 1)

It's interesting that such close friends and business partners have both written books about second chances! Why do you both think that theme resonates with readers? YA readers especially? L.O. I think the adolescent years are really the first time we begin to confront ideas about consequence and impact. With the increased freedom of growing older comes an increasing sense of responsibility and the potential for regret. And I think in general humans are fascinated by thinking about the divergent possibilities of their lives, the way that subtle changes might have tremendous, seismic effects. L.H. A huge part of being a teen is the struggle to figure out the kind of person you want to become. On the other hand, it's also the first time in life you begin to experience nostalgia for the days when you were "just a kid." You're torn between past, present, and future, realizing the only way you can go is forward. That's a scary realization. Sometimes we just want to hit pause. Sometimes we want to go back. Fiction is a magical place where that's possible, even when in real life it isn't. 2) In *Before I Fall*, Sam gets a second chance in the sense that she is reliving one day (the day she died) over and over until she "gets it right." In *Proof of Forever*, a group of estranged friends time-travel back to the summer they were fifteen and have to reconcile themselves with the choices they made. ...or decide to make new ones, and potentially alter their present. What writing challenges did each of these scenarios present you with? How did you overcome them during the creative process? L.O. One of the greatest challenges of *Before I Fall* is that the book is, by definition, structurally repetitive, meaning it had the potential to be incredibly redundant. At the same time, I had to confront enormous continuity issues--I had to make sure that certain things happened the same way every day, and other things changed depending on Sam's behavior. I spent a long time outlining and re-outlining the project before I even began writing. L.H. I also outlined extensively! It was tough juggling all four girls' plotlines--you have to keep in mind what's happening to all of them in every chapter, even if you're not always seeing all of them on the page at once. Also, part of the pleasure and point of the book, was allowing the girls to have more perspective on their choices this time around, more awareness not just of themselves but of each other and the world. More curiosity. This meant that as a writer I needed to pay attention to the tiny things--the details that you might not pick up on in life the first time, but that you would notice and care about the second time. 3) If you could each have a second chance at a moment in your life--one epic do-over--what would it be and why? L.O. I don't believe in do-overs! If Sam has taught me anything, it's that the simplest change can affect the world in ways unplanned and unforeseen, and I'm very

happy with how my life is unfolding. L.H. I agree—sometimes as tempting as a do-over sounds, it's also scary because you don't know what else would change if that one moment changed. Still, I think there are probably a few times when I was a teen that I let fear make my choices for me. If I could go back, I'd ask the boy out, I'd submit the embarrassing poems to more journals, I'd tell people what I really thought. I would take more risks, because I've learned that facing fear helps you grow stronger and faster, into the happier, more fully-realized person you want to be. 4) When talking about second chances, it's also important to remember something you got right the first time around.

What's one choice you've each made that led to your success as writers and collaborators? L.O. Starting a business is very scary. There is huge potential for failure and very few people even support the idea initially, especially if you have no business experience (which I did not). I'm very proud of simply making the decision to jump in headfirst. L.H. Yeah, team! I agree that starting Paper Lantern Lit with Lauren was a great call, even though it was terrifying at the time and there was nothing proving we'd be able to pull it off. For me, writing this book—writing a novel at all—was also a huge leap of faith. Ironically, working with other writers for a long time made me more intimidated to try my own hand at it, and I'm so glad I finally did. It feels like a whole other side of me and my creativity has opened up as a result. 5)

Proof of Forever takes place at a summer camp. Lexa, why was that setting appealing to you? L.H.

There's something about summer camp that feels so contained and separate from the rest of life. It's a magic bubble. Those summer memories tend to seem sort of frozen in time forever, perfectly preserved. In that sense, it felt like a good symbol of childhood and the past in general, the parts that feel crystalized and perfect just as they were. What if we could go back and see them with clear eyes, though? What would we think now? Besides, so much fun stuff happens at summer camp—kisses, camp fires, hilarious bikini-related disasters, and of course, most importantly, intense bonding with other girls, and often-surprising self-discovery. 6) Lauren, it's been 5 years since Before I Fall was published but there is still a ton of debate online as to whether Sam actually got her do-over or not. Why do you think that question has endured? Do you think she did? L.O. I do, yes. I absolutely do. But I'm thrilled that so much debate endures—I love books that provoke conversation and dialogue. 7) Flashback: you both are fifteen again, just like the characters in Proof of Forever. What's the one thing you had then you want to bring back with you to the present? (And what's the one trend you wish would stay buried in the past?) L.O. This is so unutterably inane, but I wish I could bring back several awesome sweatshirts I lost over the years. Or my skin tone, minus sun damage, minus fifteen +

years of living. Pretty much everything else, including pleather pants, jeans secured with safety pins, and lots of waffle shirts, I am happy to leave safely buried in the 90s. L.H. I really miss those super short cut-off shorts and the ability to wear them with absolutely no shame! I'm not sure I'd bring them back though, unless I could also bring back the scrawny legs and free spirit that went along with them! Oh also, my hair used to reach down to my butt, and I would weave scarves into my braids. It would be fun to bring that back. 8) Finally, many authors have been participating in the #DearYAMe campaign recently. If you both could share some words of wisdom with your younger selves, what would they be? L.O. You're doing just fine. It's all going to be okay. In fact, it will be even better than okay. L.H. Let go. There's no such thing as perfect. There's only the moment, and you're either in it, or it's passing you by.

In this Groundhog Day meets Mean Girls teen hybrid, Sam Kingston is pretty, popular, and has a seemingly perfect boyfriend. But after a late-night party everything goes terribly wrong, and the life that she lived is gone forever. Or is it? At the start of *Before I Fall*, Sam is self-consumed and oblivious about the impact of her actions on others. But as she repeatedly experiences slightly altered versions of the hours leading up to her death and her relationships with friends, family, and formerly overlooked classmates bloom, end, or shift, it's impossible not to feel for the girl whose life ends too soon. Oliver's adept teen dialogue and lively prose make for a fast, page-turning story in which the reader is every bit as emotionally invested as Sam. --Jessica Schein  
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Grade 9 Up Samantha Kingston has worked her way up the popularity ladder; now a senior, she and her three best friends rule their school. On Cupid Day, Sam expects to receive Valentine roses, to party with her friends, and to finally (maybe) have sex with her equally popular boyfriend. The last thing she expects is that she will die, but in the final moments of her life, as she hears "a horrible, screeching sound" metal on metal, glass shattering, a car folding in two," everything turns to nothing. Only, it is not the end for Sam. She wakes up to start the same day over again, and again; in fact, she relives it seven times. At first, being dead has its advantages, as she realizes that nothing worse can happen to her. She first conducts herself with reckless abandon, seducing her math teacher and smoking marijuana. It is difficult to feel pity for Sam; she is snobbish, obnoxious, a cheater, and just plain mean. However, her gradual and complete transformation is so convincing that when she finally puts others before herself in order to save another life, it is moving and

cathartic. The deepening relationship between Sam and Kent, her childhood friend, is sensitively described and the most complex and compelling relationship in the story. Although somewhat predictable, the plot drives forward and teens will want to see where Sam's choices lead. Fans of Gabrielle Zevin's *Elsewhere* (Farrar, 2005) will enjoy this almost-afterlife imagining.â "Amy J. Chow, The Brearley School, New York City (c) Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I TORE THROUGH THIS ONE! Not kidding, picked it up Friday night, finished Saturday night. I loved this story, I was worried it'd be the typical teenage drama stuff but no, this is very complex and jaw-dropping. With every page I'd be more and more interested in what happens next. Plus! The ending, holy crap the ending had me in tears but also amazed and proud at the same time. A personal emotional roller coaster for me. 100% recommend!

Loved, loved, loved this book! Couldn't put it down! There are some great lessons to be learned here and also a beautifully written, captivating storyline. And for reference, I am a married, 35 year old mom of two. However, having said that, I NEED a sequel... Or a continuing novella... Short story... SOMETHING! The story's finish left me with a bit of whiplash at how quickly it just 'dropped off' and was over. I was so involved in Sam Kingston's world, so invested in her character and her personal growth and her ever-changing perspective of her life and the people in it (which is the mark of a great author, if you ask me) and then it was done in an instant with no wrap up. For me, this did not take away from the story... Even knowing the ending, I would definitely still have read the book. But I do want to see Sam and all her friends and family in a more 'settled' place... And then I would feel better about putting this book down and leaving Sam's world behind.

It takes you back to high school where the most important thing was to be popular and you didn't think about consequences. Who hasn't been mean to someone and the regrets you have in your life. Sometimes I was the mean girl and then there was my nemesis who made fun of me and made my life miserable. Either way everyone can relate to this book. But what I love about it is she got the chance to learn from her mistakes. She learned to accept people and understand them including herself. Very good writing. I loved it.

Sam has it all but on February 12 her charmed life turns out to be her last when she was in a horrific

car accident except she wakes up day after day for 1 week so she can figure out the day and night of her death, and gets the chance to change things if she chooses to. I enjoyed this book, it shows a lot of heartbreaking details about how she ended up there and what she could do to fix past mistakes.

I purchased this book on my Kindle more than 5 and a half years ago. I know I read the first few pages, but I don't really remember why I didn't read it. I think maybe I was turned off by the attitudes of the characters in the beginning of the book. Then recently I heard they were making it into a movie, which compelled me to finally read it all the way through. Wow. I don't want to say much, but I will say that this book has given me a new appreciation for life. I'm glad I read it now, because I think I needed this book more now than at any other point in my life.

What an interesting premise. There are as many questions as mornings she wakes back up in her own bed, some very deep and thoughtful. What would we do if we had to relive the same day over and over? Would we ultimately be the good we hadn't the first time around? Well done. I even had to see the movie after, and was pleasantly surprised there, too.

This novel is breathtaking! Absolutely perfect. I haven't been this emotionally wrapped up in a story in a very long time. The story in a nutshell: Groundhog Day for a popular and selfish teenage girl. On the first day, Sam dies. For the next six days, Sam replays her last day until she gets it right. The story sounds simple, and maybe kind of corny, but it isn't. I've been trying to put my finger on what makes good writing. What is it that makes one story pick me up and pull me in and then when it's over, I feel like I'm leaving a world behind--like I'll never be the same again? And other stories leave me feeling cold--flat, and dissatisfied. There's a certain indistinguishable essence in good story-telling. It's hard to define. However, I KNOW that part of it is a writer's ability to create multi-dimensional characters and dynamic relationships. There is no black and white in the real world. Everything, simply EVERY person, experience, place, relationship, lesson, ideal.... is made up of multiple hues and textures. When a writer can imbue that life and texture into her characters and plot....well, THAT is what makes good storytelling. Sam isn't nice. She's a shallow, self-centered teenager. But we find out that it's not that simple. She isn't uniformly the evil popular girl. She's just a girl that doesn't even realize how all of her actions affect others. She doesn't notice that her thoughtless, minute actions have consequences. It takes a dissection of herself, her relationships, the people around her for her to finally slow down and SEE herself honestly. What transpires is finely

wrought, and altogether heart-wrenching. But the writing is never overly sappy or emotionally manipulative. The author has a light and honest touch. THIS is a story I want my teenage daughters to read. THIS is a story that is important.

What happens to everyone else?The build up to the end result made me push through, and I was disappointed at the last page. I understand the progression into discovering purpose and self-realization, but the whole story felt one-sided, and I couldn't get past it. Even in the end, Sam's only thinking of how each action corresponds to her own life. And that was probably Ms. Oliver's intent. It just fell flat for me. I needed resolution for everyone else. I wanted her friends to learn a lesson from tragedy. And I wanted closure for everyone close to Sam and even the secondaries that floated on her outskirts. In death, things rarely tie in neat little bows, but insight can be found in final goodbyes. That's not what I felt here.

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