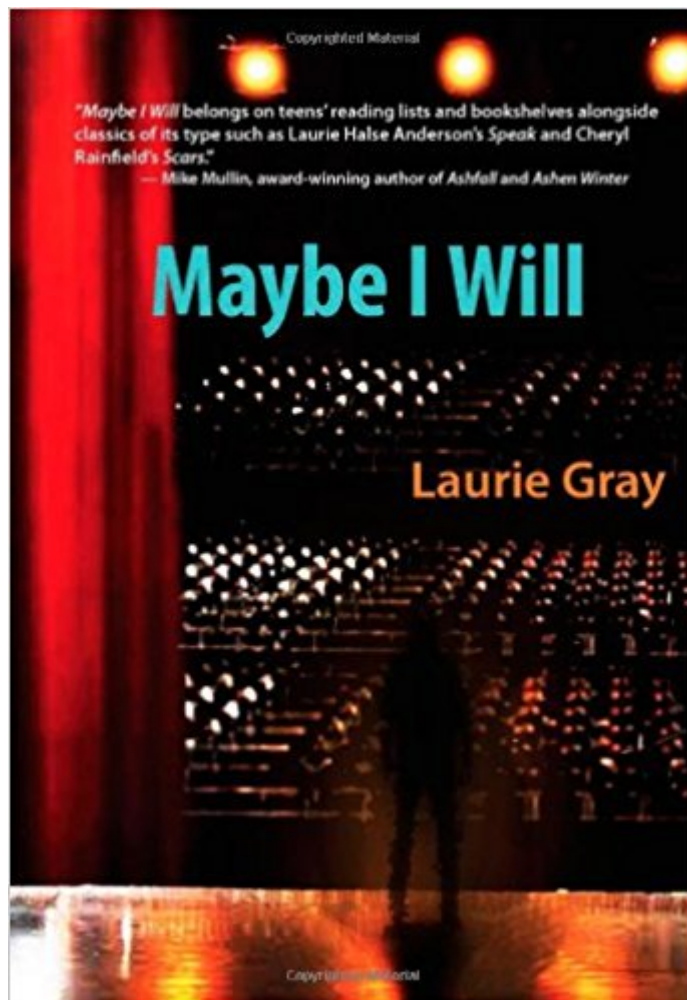


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# Maybe I Will



## Synopsis

Luminis Books presents this heart-breaking tale of innocence, abuse, and keeping secrets that are far too heavy to carry alone. It's not about sex. It's about how one secret act of violence changes everything--how best friends can desert you when you need them most, how nobody understands. It's about the drinking and stealing and lying and wondering who you can trust. It's about parents and teachers, police officers and counselors--all the people who are supposed to help you, but who may not even believe you. It's about how suddenly all of your hopes and dreams can vanish, and you can find yourself all alone, with nothing and no one. Your only choice is to end it all or to start over... and all you can think is *Maybe I Will*. Author Laurie Gray presents a compelling picture of the realities of sexual assault in *Maybe I Will*, drawing on her years of experience as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, dealing with crimes against children. The twist in the story is that we never know for sure if the victim is a boy or a girl, and we realize that it doesn't matter, because it's not about sex.

YOUNG ADULT / SOCIAL ISSUES / CHILD ABUSE / SEXUAL ABUSE / GENDER IDENTITY / BOOKS THAT MAKE YOU THINK

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up-Sandy plans to audition for the school's production of Peter Pan. Never identified as male or female, the aspiring actor loves performing and intends to go to Juilliard for a degree in drama. Sandy has two close friends: Cassie and Troy. When Cassie's boyfriend, Aaron, sexually assaults

Sandy, the teen becomes depressed, turns to alcohol, begins to shoplift, and pulls away from Cassie and Troy. Sandy develops a new friendship with Shanika and is introduced to tae kwon do, which helps a little, but it is not until the teen's parents eventually learn of the troubles and become involved that recovery is possible. The author intentionally does not identify Sandy's gender to demonstrate that neither sex is immune to trauma, but this device hinders readers' ability to fully connect with the character. The narrative never truly resonates with readers because of their inability to empathize with Sandy.-Melissa Stock, Arapahoe Library District, Englewood, CO (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

When a young person changes, suddenly and dramatically, for no apparent reason, there may be a reason that is not immediately apparent. In *MAYBE I WILL*, Laurie Gray insightfully explores such a situation. You will want to read this story twice. -- Helen Frost, Printz Honor Award-winning author of *KEESHA'S HOUSE* and *DIAMOND WILLOW*In *MAYBE I WILL*, author Laurie Gray deals with a difficult topic in a thoughtful, nuanced, and realistic way. A pinch of humor and dash of Shakespeare add flavor to what otherwise might be an overly heavy stew. *MAYBE I WILL* belongs on teens' reading lists and bookshelves alongside classics of its type such as Laurie Halse Anderson's *SPEAK* and Cheryl Rainfield's *SCARS*.. -- Mike Mullin, award winning author of *ASHFALL* and *ASHEN WINTERS*Sandy is written so as to be readable as either male or female...the book's portrayal is largely successful and the note it hits at the end is hopeful without being unrealistic. A careful treatment of a difficult topic. -- Kirkus Reviews*MAYBE I WILL* is a fantastic story that stirs reader emotions and shares a meaningful story. I would recommend it to teenagers who enjoy realistic fiction and books like *SPEAK*. -- LitPik*MAYBE I WILL* sets the stage for serious discussion about sexual assault and the complications that arise from coming clean. -- VOYAM*MAYBE I WILL* finds a new way to explore how sexual assault can affect anyone, not just a boy or a girl. The ending is sweet and somewhat unexpected. I liked how things didn't get all wrapped up. Life leaves a few loose strings, and Gray did get that right. -- The Young FolksGray's background as Deputy Prosecuting Attorney and her talent as a writer enabled [her] to craft characters whose emotions, motivations, and reactions seem realistic and utterly believable. I would definitely recommend *MAYBE I WILL* for high school aged readers, but I think it's important that parents or teachers read it with the students. Kids will probably have questions about what they read and will benefit from discussing this topic with a trusted adult. -- Ross Brand, *THE TRADES*[Our teacher] told us the big twist when she asked, Is Sandy a boy or a girl? We were both shocked. I think, if the gender

question was kept from readers until after reading, this book would make a really thoughtful classroom/book discussion choice. -- Katie ~ Top Ten Recommendation YALSA Galley Reviews  
OMG! This book blew my mind! -- Sarah ~ Top Ten Recommendation YALSA Galley Reviews  
This book was great. I would recommend it to anyone looking for a different read. -- Victoria ~ Top Ten Recommendation YALSA Galley Reviews

No, it's not about sex. Nor--to this reader's mind--is it primarily about how everything seems to change after that terrible moment of helplessness. Rather, it's about the temptation to choose an equally damaging--in some ways--form of self-medication. I was struck by how quickly Sandy decides that booze is the answer to the pain and quickly becomes dependent on it. If *MAYBE I WILL* can help young readers to be more aware of this practical danger, it will have served a critical purpose. But this novel has unusual literary significance as well. On one level, the daring choice the author makes in creating a non-gendered main character can be seen as a way of warning that *ANYONE* can become the victim of cruel and perverse violence. On a deeper level, reactions to the basic question--"Is Sandy male or female?"--may say more about the reader than about the fictional character. Regardless of how one feels about the literary effectiveness of an "every-person" character, it does indeed force readers to ask questions about some of their basic assumptions. Laurie Gray has brought a valuable experience into her readers' lives by writing this authentic, important, and affecting novel.

*Maybe I Will, or Maybe I Won't*. Either way, it's not about sex. Ever. I'm live blogging again as my time today is short, and very precious. You see, I've started another year of teaching piano and voice and Kindermusik. This book is a big chunk to bite off, and an even bigger piece of steak to chew and review. It's going to take me a few 'kicks at the cat' to get it finished, but it will be up by the end of the night. There's just so much to talk about. So let's start at the beginning. I don't know if it was on purpose, but I do know it worked very well. I find most teenagers annoying. This book made me very annoyed at the character (we never find out boy or girl, and it doesn't matter). Is it a bad thing I was so annoyed at teen speak and complaining? *HELL NO*. It made me that much more attached, and made my feelings so much more intense when we got to the act of violence. I was sad at myself for feeling annoyed, I identified with the character, and I had to think twice about how people looked at me when I was a teenager. As my heart clenches, and I can feel all the old anxiety bubble up, I'll leave you there. I need a break. (Also I have to teach a few lessons.) Lessons aren't the point though, the anxiety, fear, loathing and hatred all loom beneath the surface. Today though,

maybe I will go teach those lessons, and I will walk out the door and go do what I love. No one can take that from me. I'll be back, to continue the review, the discussion, and leave you with this: "It's really not about sex." It never was, never is, and never will be. Maybe I Will should be read by every teenager and required reading in schools. It's as important as reading *April Raintree* was for me when I went to school. The nature of the book, and the discussions it can bring up are really, truly important for a young audience to understand. Laurie Gray clearly has the expertise to write this book, and not only that, she's a great story teller as well. When I wasn't VERY annoyed at teen-speak, I was sobbing and crying right along with the characters. It was poignant, and disturbing, but a great read. Read this book with a warning, you will cry, and it will affect you. I still think it's a very important book to read, and that it should be read by everyone, boys and girls alike. Make sure you read the summary below, and if you haven't got time, this is the really great bit: "It's about how one secret act of violence changes everything-how best friends can desert you when you need them most, how nobody understands. It's about the drinking and stealing and lying and wondering who you can trust. It's about parents and teachers, police officers and counselors-all the people who are supposed to help you, but who may not even believe you." It is a sad fact that an act of violence can change and alter who we are. It changes EVERYTHING, from the way we interact with people to the way we perceive those around us. If you have ever been through an event like the one in the book, whether it's a sexual assault, bullying, or emotional abuse, please know that you aren't alone. Every decision can seem like an obstacle, and even managing to walk out the door is sometimes like climbing a mountain. Just know that there are others out there, and maybe, just maybe you should pick up this book. In those moment of torment, when you want to end it all, or just give up, pick up this book. Say "Maybe I Will", and turn the first page. By the end of the book, I promise, you'll be thinking "Maybe I Won't \*give up, get out, end it all\*." About the book: It's not about sex. It's about how one secret act of violence changes everything-how best friends can desert you when you need them most, how nobody understands. It's about the drinking and stealing and lying and wondering who you can trust. It's about parents and teachers, police officers and counselors-all the people who are supposed to help you, but who may not even believe you. It's about how suddenly all of your hopes and dreams can vanish, and you can find yourself all alone, with nothing and no one. Your only choice is to end it all or to start over... and all you can think is Maybe I Will. Author Laurie Gray presents a compelling picture of the realities of sexual assault in *Maybe I Will*, drawing on her years of experience as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, dealing with crimes against children. The twist in the story is that we never know for sure if the victim is a boy or a girl, and we realize that it doesn't matter, because it's not about sex.

I found myself thinking about this six-word paragraph I read in *Anthem*: "I am. I think. I will." The words were so powerful, but they kept turning into questions in my mind. I am. Who am I? I think. What do I think? I will. I will what? Maybe I will, but maybe I won't. Maybe I will, but maybe I don't. Maybe I don't will anything. Maybe it all happens regardless of my will. In case you didn't get the drift from the above quote alone, *Maybe I Will* is powerful. It's intense and devastating, in part, because of the tragedy that befalls the protagonist and for the most part, because of the way it is written itself. We do not know much about Sandy in the beginning. We do not know his(/her) gender, for instance. Sandy's parents intended to name the main character Sandy, short for Sandford or Sandra. What was it finally short for? We do not know. At the same time, we know that Sandy is a powerhouse of amazing on stage. That Sandy is a sophomore who takes high school seriously... seriously enough to think hard over his/her assignments anyway. We also know that Sandy really hits it off with a co-actor in the *Peter Pan* play; Shanika Washington. That Sandy loves the Bard, quotes Shakespeare in a way that is infectious and watches *Hamlet* for fun. That Sandy seems to have loving and caring parents and good enough friends. That Sandy is incredibly, inspiringly and realistically resilient. So. Do we know Sandy after all? Despite not knowing Sandy's sex or sexual orientation... constructs that seem to be enough to characterise most Young Adult protagonists these days... don't we know Sandy? Irrespective of the exclusion of Sandy's gender from the story which would've probably influenced our thoughts of Sandy as either "sensitive" or "angsty" depending on whether Sandy was male or female... or as gay or straight... we know Sandy. In fact, we know more of Sandy, now that the labels have been tucked away from our line of vision. Then, at the central point of the story comes the act of violence that you anticipate and yet barely see coming... the consequences on Sandy's esteem, health and social life shock you. Sandy is sexually assaulted... there is no other word for it... or is there? Because just like the other carefully label-excluded aspects of the story, the incident, despite being crude and aggressive and violating, is clearly not about sex. The assault makes Sandy feel violated and vulnerable and friendless... reduced to a shell. Redefining Sandy; as he/she questions things that were once taken for granted. *Maybe I Will* blew me away. It figuratively shattered me into tiny pieces as I felt like I was witness to a shock, slow breakdown and at the same time, incredible efforts to regain sense of self in the wake of a nightmare. It made me question our natural tendency to gender type due to the total absence of gender typing in the book. It made me reevaluate my feelings towards sexual assault... making me realise that it wasn't about how far the perpetrator got or how physically bruised the person was at all because it's not about sex. It never was. In case you're wondering, I started off

picturing Sandy as a girl (it must have something to do with the abundance of female protagonists in Young Adult fiction) and then, when I realised the sex was never mentioned, tried imagining Sandy as a boy... and gradually, after switching back and forth a few times, I ended up reading Sandy as... Sandy. That made for a very liberating and different experience! Maybe I Will has been compared to Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson and while it is definitely recommended for those who read and loved Speak, I think this novel stands on its own in terms of the barriers it breaks and the way it picks apart the assault; zeroing in on the core of what it really was.

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