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Joan Bauer

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When Hope and her aunt move to small-town Wisconsin to take over the local diner, Hope's not sure what to expect. But what they find is that the owner, G.T., isn't quite ready to give up yet - in fact, he's decided to run for mayor against a corrupt candidate. And as Hope starts to make her place at the diner, she also finds herself caught up in G.T.'s campaign - particularly his visions for the future. After all, as G.T. points out, everyone can use a little hope to help get through the tough times... even Hope herself.

Filled with heart, charm, and good old-fashioned fun, this is Joan Bauer at her best.

Hope Was Here Details

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From Reader Review Hope Was Here for online ebook

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Jocelyn Pearce for TeensReadToo.com

HOPE WAS HERE is a brilliant book by an equally brilliant author, Joan Bauer. When I read this book for the first time (my copy is worn; I've read it so often!), I was an instant fan of the author. HOPE WAS HERE is worth your time, worth your money, and worth anything else that you have to do to get your hands on this book.

Hope is a sixteen-year-old waitress who has lived all across America with her Aunt Addie. Hope's mother (who, upon seeing her tiny baby for the first time, named her Marigold, of all things. Addie's twelfth birthday present to her niece was a name change.) has long been out of the picture, visiting only occasionally with tidbits of advice.

Waitressing at the diner in Brooklyn was great for Hope, but, like all good things, it comes to an end. The owner stole all of the money and ran off, leaving Addie and Hope with nothing. The two of them boarded up the windows, and, just before driving off, Hope left her mark: Hope Was Here, in blue ballpoint pen at the edge of one of the boards.

Addie and Hope are off to a small town in Wisconsin. When they get there, they meet G.T., the owner of the local diner where Addie will be cooking and Hope will be waitressing. G.T. is a man the town loves, and he's going to run for mayor and change things. The current mayor, a scheming, dishonest typical politician, isn't standing for that, though. He's got to bring up how G.T. has leukemia, and is dying. How, he says, can a man who is dying take care of an entire town? He might not be alive in a few months.

G.T. isn't alone, though. Hope, Addie, and countless others are trying to get him elected, so that he can do some good for the town. Even though things are hard, they've still got to have hope.

This novel is amazing. HOPE WAS HERE is a book that you will not read only once, but over and over. It sticks with you. Part of this is due to the well thought-out characters, especially Hope. She is a strong character, but also a strong person. She's been through a lot, and she's still around, serving up food to hungry customers.

Her waitressing jobs have a lot to do with who Hope is. Maybe to some people (you know the type--not good enough unless you've got a diploma from Harvard), waitressing seems like a dead-end job, but this book shows different sides of it.

HOPE WAS HERE is a page-turner that will keep you riveted from the first word (which happens to be "somehow"), to the last ("had"), and when it's over, you'll want more. Luckily for us, Joan Bauer has written several other books for young adults, including BACKWATER, RULES OF THE ROAD, and SQUASHED. They're just as good as HOPE WAS HERE, too, and that's saying something!

m a r y l i z says

W O W.

This book was good.

Don't get me wrong, it had its flaws--it's not an instant favorite of mine. But it was so full of meaning and hope that I can't help liking it.

Lovely Things:

- **The heart.** This book had SO much heart to it. Like...wow. Who would have thought that waitressing/cooking could be so rich in meaning? (P.S. I did cry in the last chapter or two. And here I was thinking I could make it without getting punched in the feels. #soclose)
- **The setting.** ACK YES. It had such a familiar feel to it, even though I've never read this book before. The characters acted like a family, and the town of Mulhoney, Wisconsin, felt like so welcoming and *homey*. I honestly just want to go to the Welcoming Stairs and eat apple pie now. <3
- **The food.** OBVIOUSLY THE FOOD. It's impossible to read this book without getting hungry. If you do read this book (which you SHOULD, you know), make sure you keep a bunch of snacks handy. You'll thank me later.
- **The main character.** Oh yes, Hope. She was awesome. I don't know what else to say about her except that she's the perfect blend of hope, strength, determination, and compassion. I WANT HER AS MY FRIEND, THANKS.

Not So Lovely Things:

- **The writing.** Um...so I might be in the minority here, but I actually didn't like the writing style all that much?? It switched between past and present tense *right in the middle of a scene*. Like...why? Maybe to evoke a deeper meaning? Or something?? I AM ALL THE CONFUSED. Thankfully, I didn't notice a TON of that later in the book, but the writing style was still not my favorite. As much as I liked Hope, I didn't care for her as a narrator all that much.
- **The politics.** This is kind of a pro and a con. As a rule, I can't stand politics, and the fact that this story mostly revolves around that was kind of annoying. XD I wasn't a huge fan of a lot of the political things happening in the book, but honestly, it didn't annoy me *that* much. Just a little bit. I still really enjoyed the book despite this so that's saying a lot.

CONTENT:

Not much to mention here, but I was disappointed when they used God's name in vain a couple times. There's also a kiss exchanged, though it's not dwelt on for long.

Overall? This was a really good book. I didn't *totally* click with it, and I probably won't be rushing to reread it, but I'm still glad I picked it up. It made a great summer read. *nods*

3.5 stars

Kelly R says

I love this book a lot. I just picked it up again when I was in a sad mood and immediately remembered how much I had loved it the first time. I adore the way it's written and I love the simple story that it tells. I love the main character, she is not perfect, but she is entirely likable. Her imperfections make her real and wonderful.

One of the main reasons I love this book is because the Main character, Hope, is just like me. She's my age and temperament. I spend over half of my time cooking and I love any story that relates life to food. I understand it so well. The relationships in this book are really sweet too. I am forcing my mom and dad to read this book.

I recommend this book to anyone.

Madeline says

I first read this book in...8th grade, I think. I then went on to re-read it at least five times.

Hope Was Here is about a 16 year old girl who lives with her aunt - the two of them find work at the beginning of the book at a diner in Wisconsin owned by a man with leukemia. Addie is a cook, and Hope is a waitress - a really good one, too, and from the way Bauer describes waitressing, you can tell she's writing from a lot of personal experience.

This book is great for 13-16 year old girls who want to read stories about a real girl (nothing against fantasy books, but it's nice when we can read about a cool heroine who actually lives in our world) who doesn't spend all her time shopping and partying (*coughGossip Girlcough*) or pining after various boys (*coughTwilightcough*).

If nothing else, read this book for the descriptions of the food they serve in the diner, which are nothing short of mouth-watering.

Also by Joan Bauer, and also very good, is Rules of the Road

Sheryl says

I miss you Pa...

Around the Year in 52 books: A book with a first name in the title - 3/52

Karyssa says

I love how this book left me feeling when I finished it. And I'm not talking about warm and fuzzy. Somehow, the story seemed real, in a way. It felt like I was there, sure that the adrenaline rushes were mine, the losses were mine, the victories were *mine*. Part of me wishes that I didn't read the book so that I could experience everything again. Experience everything in the exact same way I did this first time. But, of course, you probably won't know what I'm talking about until you've read it yourself.

Juliana Cortale says

Have you ever had to adapt to a new place in life unexpectedly? In the novel "Hope Was Here" by Joan Bauer, the main character, Hope, has faced this challenge many times in her life, as she is constantly moving around. The main lesson of this book is no matter what challenges come in your way, you can always push through them and succeed.

Hope is a normal teenage girl, but she doesn't have a very normal life. Her father left her when she was born, and her mother leaves her as a toddler. She lives with her aunt Addie, the amazing head chef constantly getting new jobs around the country. Her next place to move is Wisconsin, a big change from New York City, where they used to live. When they get there, Hope has many new challenges to face including making new friends, and helping the owner of the diner win the election. There are minor problems and not everything goes as planned, but Hope is still able to adapt to her new life as usual.

I think that the author, Joan Bauer, successfully portrayed the character traits of each character. I really enjoyed Hope's personality, and how each character was unique in their own way. Hope is described as a not so perfect teen, but the way she pushes through all of her problems maturely is admirable and likeable.

Although, I think the novel would have been better if it was less predictable. For example, it was easy to predict that Hope would fall in love with Braverman, and that G.T would eventually end up passing away.

I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a slow, yet meaningful and relatable storyline. This book is perfect to sit down and read on a snow day, because the tone of the book was very calm, which can sometimes be nice. However, if you like books full of suspense and unexpected action, this book is not for you. I believe this book was quite predictable and a little too slow for me personally.

Although this book wasn't horrible, it wasn't really my style. I enjoyed the characters and the theme, but the plot was just too slow moving for me. There wasn't enough action, and I personally believe that the main conflict, the election, wasn't that interesting. This book was also a little too "stereotypical love story" for me, as Hope and Braverman fell in love. Although this book didn't move me, I still think people should give it a chance and read it because if it is your style, it may move you.

Ariana Fitz says

*****Warning***** spoiler alert *****

Have you ever been in a place where you feel that you just don't fit in? Or have you ever moved, and had to start your life all over again? Well this is what happened to the main character of the book. Her name was Hope. Well her real name was Tulip but she didn't like it, so she legally changed it to Hope. The genre of this book is realistic fiction because what happened to Hope can happen to anyone else. Overall, I really liked this book because it had a lot of real life scenarios, it didn't have situations like other books I've read with stuff that barely happens. This book will really make people think.

The story mostly takes place in a dinner located in Wisconsin. Hope has been living with her aunt for her whole life because her mom said her aunt would take better care of her than anyone else because aunt Addie never gives up on anyone. Addie and Hope have lived in many different states since they are waitresses they

move from state to state, finding a place to work and live. Currently they work with G.T, their boss because he needs a lot of help since he has leukemia and struggles a lot. G.T. is also running to be the town's mayor since the current mayor is very unfair and only talks about how G.T. will die soon and that wouldn't be good for the town. This problem is person vs fate because it is not G.T's fault that he is deadly sick and might die soon. Hope, Addie, and the rest of the workers that work at the diner help prove that the current mayor is full of lies and that G.T. would be a better mayor. Unfortunately, G.T. does die at the end but his campaign went viral and he was very successful. The theme of the story is to believe in yourself and of course hope for the better because no matter in what circumstances you are, you need to move on and continue.

A moment that affected the story was when Hope moved because she really changed. Hope is a very strong person but this change was really hard for her because she moved and she left all her friends where she used to live. Although she moves a lot she does not like changes, especially because she really liked where she used to live. The title relates to the book because every time Hope would leave one of her homes she would always leave her mark, she would write Hope was here on anything. It meant a lot to her, and she would always do it to keep it as a marking point. The setting is important to the theme because the story takes place in a place where there is a lot of commotion. This adds to the theme because it was harder for G.T to win because the current mayor was being unfair and said he wouldn't tax people if they voted for him. This was unfair because the people at the town they lived in weren't necessarily rich, so they would do anything for money. But this didn't stop G.T., he kept going because he wanted the best for his community. The narrator is unreliable because Hope is not doing so well at the moment, she scared and confused so she wasn't a very reliable person. I say this because according to the text it says, "Everything seemed like it belonged here, except me," clearly showing she wasn't very well.

I liked the way the author described how the movement affected Hope because honestly I've never moved before so I have no idea how it feels. But after reading this book I see that yes, it is hard to move but its not hard to adapt to the environment and people. I was angry when I found out that G.T. had died because honestly I wanted him to live since he had completed so much and he certainly didn't deserve to die. I can tell that everyone would miss him because according Hope she says, " I felt in my heart a brush of angel's wings, and sensed those angels coming up the welcome stairways, one from the left and one from the right, to guide G.T.'s spirit on the flight up to heaven." I also liked that the author really expressed Hopes feelings a lot, even if they were negative. He would always let the reader know with many details how Hope was feeling sad and sometimes happy. I was satisfied when G.T. was elected mayor because I felt that he really deserved it after his hard work and effort because he had a kind heart and wanted to help everyone. I like Hope's character because she was very tough, she was getting treated and had responsibilities as an adult because she always believed in herself. Hope was 16 when she started working with G.T., and she also went to school but she was a very independent girl, she did mostly everything by herself. I think I was mostly identified with Hope's character. Especially because her name means a lot, she has a lot of hope in herself and in other people.

In conclusion, I would give this book four stars because it has been one of the best books I've ever read. I say because it was very emotional and made you think about your future a lot too. I would recommend this book to people that like sad books or life teaching books because this book had a handful of life lessons as well as sad moments. So if any time in your life span you end up moving to a different place, just think about Hope, and have hope for yourself.

Abigayle Claire says

Oh my word <3 This book had been recommended to me by several friends so I purchased it through Thriftbooks and I am so glad that I own a copy! The themes of hope and inner strength under pressure and in

new circumstances were inspiring and laced well. I loved the entire thread of Hope trying to pinpoint her own identity and find out the true meaning of family. The setting of a new town, local diner, and small town politics were cute and realistic. It's an easy read, very refreshing, and worthwhile!

Linda Lipko says

This 2001 Newbery Honor award winning book is so breathtakingly poignant that I struggle to write a review that would do it justice.

It is filled with genuinely real people, real pain and honestly portrayed real-life situations.

Sixteen year old Hope Yancey has many reasons to give up hope. Life is difficult. As a tiny baby she was abandoned by her mother. Raised by her wonderfully sensitive and kind Aunt Audie, she learns to persevere.

Aunt Audie is a restaurant cook and manager; Hope is a waitress. When a colorful co-worker steals their money and their hope, they move from Brooklyn to Mulhoney Wisconsin to manage the Welcome Stairway Diner.

There they find rotten politics, a corrupt corporation and a tainted policeman. Balanced with this is the owner of the Welcome diner, a honest, open, sincere man who runs for Mayor to displace the long-term incompetent, dishonest incumbent.

In Mulhoney Wisconsin the good people find love, renewed hope and they learn that where the heart breaks it also heals.

Highly recommended and destined to be my #1 read of 2010.

Ana Ovejero says

Hope is a teenager that lives with her aunt Addie as her mother has left her to continue her waitressing career. When we find Hope at the beginning of the novel, she is leaving Brooklyn as her aunt, who is a cook, has to find a new job. Her partner stole their money and went away with one of the waitress.

As they move on the road, Hope thinks about the times she has to leave her friends and change school. When they get to their new destination, they meet G.T. Stoop, the owner of Stairways Diner. At the front of the diner, you can see a phrase that says 'welcome'. G.T. explains to Hope and Addie that his Quaker ancestors built the two-sides stairways to welcome people wherever they were coming from. His hospitality remains the same.

The diner is not only where Hope puts her energy. G.T. is running for mayor of the town and his campaigning leads the teenagers of the nearby school to fully become involved. The cooker assistant, Braverman, is a young boy who soon attracts Hope's attention as he expresses his passion for the possibility to change things.

When the numbers present T. G. as the winner, things become darker and darker. However, T.G.'s illness is what really worries the town. He has cancer and some believe that he is not going to live by the time of the

elections.

A story full of heart and ideas, it displays the power the citizens have when they decide to make use of it. It is a useful narration to make teenagers ask themselves their roles in society and how even the tiniest movement can influence people's lives.

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Faith Rice-Mills says

Hope is used to moving from town to town, finding a new job, and new set of friends. But , she never really seems to find a new home. When she and her aunt arrive in Wisconsin to run a diner, they find themselves in the midst of a controversial mayoral race and a lot of small-town drama. Will Hope find her place in this new town? Will she and her aunt stick around long enough for Hope to make friends? Will she ever discover where it is that she truly belongs?

This was one of my least favorite reads out of all the young adult literature I've read lately. As someone who was a teenager at the same time that Hope was supposedly a teenager, I felt that she was a rather unconvincing character. Even as a fairly squeaky-clean seventeen-year-old, I definitely never used the phrases "buzz off" or "geez!" That just was not the slang of teenagers in the early part of this century. Also, in all of the years I've worked with teenagers, I have never heard one say that they had any ambition of being a waitress. (Even those that, in the back of their mind, know that they will end up as waitresses, do not make this a life goal.) Hope loves being a waitress and has wanted to have a job as one since she was thirteen. Again, this is very unrealistic and highly unlikely description of a modern teenager.

The other characters also fell quite flat. Hope's aunt, who has essentially raised the protagonist, is never featured much more than to complain about other people trying to run her kitchen. Braverman, Hope's love interest, spouts off a lot of political opinions, but doesn't go much deeper than that. G.T. Stoop, the candidate for mayor and owner of the diner where Hope and her aunt work, is basically a perfect man. He never raises his voice, never makes any kind of mistake, and wants to save the town.

There are a many other unrealistic scenarios in *Hope Was Here*, but I will not go into detail. Since a large part of my job includes knowing what teenagers like to read, I do not think that, in 2013, this book would resonate with teenagers. Hope is a Hallmark version of a teenager with whom most of teenagers would not be able to identify. For a novel classified as contemporary realism, it is not very realistic at all.

Sarah Grace says

Wowza, this book! So amazing! Definitely check it out! (and grab a box of tissues too.)

John says

Okay, as I write this review, please note that I am a 29-year old male. I would have been approximately 26 at

the time I read this book. This was a book that my wife and I picked up at a Scholastic Warehouse sale and so I eventually got around to picking it up and giving it a try.

There, that's the background about me...someone who I would not necessarily expect to love Joan Bauer books, but I do!!

This was my first book of Joan Bauer and I thought it was great.

1) The main character. I've read plenty of books and I've read a variety of female characters. When I read this book, I had a 1-year old daughter (who is now almost 5) and I can't help but say how much I like the character, Hope. For one thing, she's a very real girl written in a very real setting in a very real situation. Furthermore, her greatest assets are not her looks or her athleticism; not some magical power and not even her brains. She is a great, young female character because of the way she cares about her family, cares about her friends, and is willing to work hard to make her community a better place. She has very real weaknesses, but in the end she doesn't let them get in the way of making good decisions. This is the type of female character that I am excited to have my little girl read some day. (Bonus note: I've now read 2 more of Joan's books and she continuously writes great female characters)

2) Teen Activism/Education. In this book, there is an election coming up in Hope's town. She and her friends feel strongly that change is needed and that one of the nominees is definitely the man to support. Hope and most of her friends, though, aren't even old enough to vote...but I love that their inability to vote does not dampen their ability to share their stories and thoughts and influence the community. Ever since I've read this book, I've wanted to take copies of this book and put them into the hands of Junior High/High School social studies teachers. It is one thing to learn about the election process and discuss local politics, but this is a great book that can help young students understand just what kind of a role they can play even before they turn 18.

3) Content. No need to entice readers with sexual innuendos. No need to sneak in course language. And furthermore, a very compelling story based on the real-world and not fantasy...something that today's writers seem to struggle to accomplish.

Just a great book that I would recommend to anyone.

Lila Kims says

3.75 stars!

Wow, this was a GOOD book. It left me feeling strong and hopeful.

At first it was just interesting. Then it became super cute. *Then* it got emotional. Despite its very fast (almost rushed?) pace and the writing style that wasn't my favorite (though still good), I have to say that I really love beautiful Hope and the whole supporting cast. Their story is one I'm very glad I read. <3

Anniesa says

Hope Was Here was such a moving book. It taught many lessons like no matter who or what you are you can

always be a leader, have confidence, faith, and hope in yourself and you will succeed, live life to the fullest because you never know when your day to die has come. This book was about a girl that moves from city to city based on how long her and her aunt can keep a diner job. She moves to Wisconsin where she meets her boss G.T. Stoop who has leukemia. He is tired of all the lies the mayor in his town says so he runs for mayor. The chance of him dying did not make him very popular at first but his team of supporters, teenagers of the town like Hope, Braverman (the co-cook in the Welcome Stairs, the diner Hope works in, Adam (a very young strong spin doctor), and Sid Vole he becomes hope for the town. After hard work G.T. is put on the election board. Through lies, challenges, and obstacles everyone hoped that G.T. is the new mayor. Hope and her aunt have lived together since she could remember and this was because her mother wasn't ready to be a mother so she gave her to her aunt, Addie. Every few years Hope's mother would come to visit her and she would always write Christmas letters. Hope was glad that she had Addie and grateful her mother wasn't her guardian but the one thing she longed for was a real father. This book was magnificent.

Lola says

HOPE WAS HERE is a story of new beginnings and positivism.

Hope and her aunt have lost everything, and yet, they are both set on staying positive and making the best out of the little they have now, especially Hope, who feels as though she needs to live up to her new name.

New town, new job, new people, new challenges, Hope and Addie are ready to face it all. They are strong, independent women who do not back down at the first sign of a problem.

On the contrary, they want to help the owner of the new restaurant they work at make it more atmospheric. Hope was thinking she might find her father in the process, and she just might... in the most unexpected of places.

A very theme-filled novel. Joan Bauer weaves into the storyline politics in a small town, the definition of family and the importance of letting new people in our lives.

On the not-so-great-side, it has an uneven pacing: sometimes it's slow, other times fast. The romance is never developed in a lyrical, heartfelt way. It has such a middle grade vibe. And, well, it's too short!

But it's pleasant and the kind of book I would read on the bus on my way to school. It has a calming effect on the reader.

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Nadia says

I don't know exactly why, but Joan Bauer books are just, I don't know, I don't exactly know why I love them so much, but I just do. I think how I feel about her books is you can devour an entire book of her's because it's suspenseful with new plots, fast moving plots that keep you interested, and then you don't realize until the end that it wasn't the most fantastic book ever. But, they are still extremely fun to read, and I think I'm now in the middle of a new Joan Bauer phase. She writes books that are just automatically appealing to teens,

well more like teen girls. Anyways, I liked it. Hope was just a fiesty, strong character. She was so independent and strong, which is probably another reason why I love Bauer's books, I absolutely can not stand in books like Twilight where the female protagonist is weak and needs everyone's help for everything, it just bothers me, it's a terrible role model; and in all of Bauer's books I've read, the female protagonist is strong. So, it's a good read, a very fun read actually.

Lucy says

I feel like the big grown up bully attacking the cute, freckled face kid on the playground with this review. However, as a Newberry Medal Honor Book, the playground kind of turns more into a raquetball court and the kid has to be good to play in it. Consider me goggled, racquet in hand, and donning my wrist sweat bands for serious play.

I really don't understand how this is a Newberry Medal Honor Book. The characters were flat and one-dimensional, the plot predictable and the message was dangerously simplified. I'm left to guess what age group Bauer wrote this for. The abandonment issues the protagonist, Hope, experiences are too mature for young elementary age and older, middle school and high school aged adolescents certainly can grasp the concept of a flawed character or even impure motives. She most certainly didn't write it for a 32 year-old moderate who found the obvious bias of kind-hearted liberal vs. heartless, evil conservative over-the-top and unhelpful for any honest discussion about politics.

I didn't hate it. How can you hate G.T. and his good-guy-leukemia-fighter-town-fixer-upper-cook self? I couldn't. I couldn't even hate Hope, and her far-older-than-actual-sixteen-year-old-mentality even though I never understood her, or her motivation to become so politically involved (because the author never let us know that. She just wrote Hope that way).

I'll take off my goggles now and lob poor freckled face a few serves. It was a nice story. The boy got the girl. The good guy wins. The food was good and hot. The end.

Vicki says

I loved this book about a 16 year old girl named Hope and her close friend Addie. Hope is a waitress at a diner, but things came to a halt at her diner when someone you'd least expect committed a horrible act against the store and the employees. Consequently, Hope and Addie take off for a small town in Wisconsin.

Through a man they meet and the circumstances of their life, they learn a great deal about growing up. Hope is a very strong character and a good role model for young girls.

I recommend this book for middle school and high school young adults. I will be recommending this book to my freshman students, girls especially. I think adults will like this book as well if they enjoy a quick and easy read.
