



Change of Heart

Shari Maurer

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Shortly after her sixteenth birthday, popular varisty soccer star Emmi comes down with an ordinary virus. But when she doesnt bounce back as always, she gets the worst possible newsshes had endocarditis that destroyed her heart, putting her into congestive heart failure. This formerly energetic teen can now barely walk across a room without having to stop and rest. And the prognosis is bleak: without a heart transplant, shell die in a matter of months. Her family rallies around, but shes betrayed by her boyfriend and BFF when a crisis sends her to the hospital. Its only her growing friendship with Abe, the funny, smart boy she meets in the cardiac clinic that finally cheers her up. But difficult questions race through her mind while she waits: Will she get a heart in time? Will she even survive the surgery? What if her body rejects the heart? When tragedy strikes close to home, Emmi must rely even more on her inner strength in order to carry on.

Change of Heart Details

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From Reader Review Change of Heart for online ebook

Mundie Moms & Mundie Kids says

3.5 stars

Change of Heart is a book that's been sitting on my shelf longer than I intended it to be. I'm glad I finally picked it up. It's one of those reads that kind of took me by surprise in terms of the story and how I felt about it. I started off really liking Emmi. She's the star soccer player, she's a typical teenager who loves her family, but gets annoyed with them, has great friends, does well at school etc. Then out of the blink of an eye, everything changes for Emmi. Through the course of some testing from her doctors Emmi learns she needs a heart transplant.

I liked the way Shari created Emmi's story. It was very realistic in the way they uncovered the cause of Emmi's health problems. I also liked how Shari incorporated the vast array of emotions that not only Emmi felt and deals with, but her family and friends. Anger, frustration, hope, dread, worry, hopelessness, "why me" and faith that things will work out. In dealing with something on this magnitude it was nice seeing both the support system Emmi had with her family & friends and the way it effected everyone. I admire Emmi for wanting to just get back to her "normal life", being the soccer star, hanging out with her friends, getting to school, and her first love, despite having to deal with a life threatening situation.

The story is at times moving, and it gives a realistic portrayal into the lives of transplant patients. Sometimes the wait is years, sometimes months, and sometimes, sadly it never happens. Like Emmi, sometimes when the call comes and you rush to get to the hospital and start to get prepped, the surgery is canceled because the organ wasn't the right fit. One of the things I really liked about this story was the statistics and the information Shari gives at the end of the story for transplants in the US. This story is powerful in the awareness it gives the reader for organ donations, and at the same time reads like a YA contemporary. There is the mention of underage drinking and a mention of non graphic sex scene.

Brianna (The Book Vixen) says

Why I Read this Book: Since I first heard about this book earlier last year, I've been wanting to read it. I'm one of those people that likes a good emotional read every now and then. Sometimes I just need a good cry. I knew *Change of Heart* would be one of those books.

What I Liked: *Change of Heart* was one of the most emotional, yet heartbreakingly touching stories I've read. It brought me to tears it was so moving. It's one of those books that leaves a huge impact on you long after the last page has been turned. Readers will definitely take something away after reading it – whether it's *live life to its fullest, cherish those around you* or better yet *donate life*. (The author is a huge advocate for the Donate Life organization, as its mission has affected her and her family personally – see her website for more information.)

Change of Heart is told in first person narrative, from Emmi's POV. This was important for me, and I don't think it would have worked any other way, because it enables the reader to truly understand what Emmi was going through. This brought me in as a reader and connected me with Emmi's character while she went on her journey during this hard, painful and scary time. Even though you're not in her shoes, you feel what she

feels and it strikes a cord with you.

Emmi's character develops immensely throughout the book. She's one person in the beginning and comes out a different person at the end. Here's a snippet from the prologue:

Looking back to how it was before everything changed, I think I'd have done things differently. I'd have stopped to enjoy the smell of the cut grass on the soccer field – and been nicer to my brothers. I'd have eaten that hot fudge sundae, even when I felt kind of fat. But it's easy to analyze this stuff when you have the perspective I do now.

I love the cover and how it and the title of the book ties into the story. I like how there's more than one meaning behind the title.

What I Didn't Like: Emmi was a little irrational at times but I suppose that's to be expected, especially with someone who just found out that they have a life-threatening heart condition.

Overall Impression: *Change of Heart* was an emotionally charged read. Once you read this book, you'll have a different outlook on life and what really matters. I recommend this book to teenagers and adults alike. This book carries a strong message of love, courage, hope, and friendship. Read this one when you're ready for a good cry and have the tissues ready.

Logan Byers says

Change Of Heart is a very different kind of novel, but yet the same as something anyone would read about in today's society. Sophomore, Emmi Miller is very athletic and plays soccer. During a tournament, Emmi collapsed and no one knew why. Emmi recently had heart failure and this novel expresses her journey to make it through everyday life while dealing with something as major as heart failure.

The plot of this novel was a little slow towards the middle because it seemed to drag on and repeat itself. Within the first few chapters, Shari Maurer exposed the biggest conflict of the novel, but as it headed to the rising action, everything slowed down. The ending was not expected, but oddly something everyone could probably see coming too. Emmi became friends with another teenager who experienced heart failure. He came down with a virus and was not able to come out of the hospital ever again. This was the resolution of the novel because after that, Emmi went back to school and what was left of her old life. Maurer followed an exceptional story line through the whole novel even if it ended in a way some people would not like.

I can connect this book to society today because so many people are writing about something tragic happening that ends up turning out well. One example of this is *The Fault in Our Stars*, Augustus Waters and Hazel Grace Lancaster both had cancer. Only Hazel Grace survived this dreaded disease. Hazel learns about who she really is after "Gus" passes away. Emmi learned that she had to move on and try to go back to having a normal life even though Abe, one of the only people she connected with through the heart failure, had died. Emmi had to learn to be happy again just like Hazel Grace had to do the same after "Gus's" death. Overall, I really liked this novel. I liked how Shari Maurer developed this story line. I would recommend this book to anyone likes to read "tragedies gone good". This book is a tragedy, but something good happened in the end. Also, if you liked *The Fault in Our Stars*, *If I Stay*, or *Where She Went*, this book is a great book to read.

Yelania Nightwalker says

Pienso que cuando tienes 16 años, crees que eres invencible. O inmortal. Quizá ambos...

Esta frase, escrita en el prólogo, me llamó mucho la atención. Si ya de por sí, la sinopsis me atraía, encontrarme con esto, me hizo seguir adelante hasta terminar el libro casi de una sentada.

Emmi es una chica deportista, que como toda adolescente, puede llegar a sentirse dueña del universo, se me hacía un poco egoísta, no sé. Ella sentía que su vida era perfecta, y hasta cierto punto, así era, solo que entonces, una miocarditis (inflamación en el miocardio, que es la parte muscular del corazón y que se da generalmente por una infección bacteriana o viral como en éste caso) llega a estropearle sus sueños. Si Emmi no conseguía que alguien le donara un corazón, lo más pronto posible, moriría.

Este es un libro muy crudo, muy real, narrado con una destreza increíble. Shari hizo de Emmi un personaje fuerte aunque un poco insegura, que atraviesa por muchas situaciones dolorosas y muy difíciles, que me hacían enojar y a la vez estar muy triste por ella. Me hizo llorar en algunos momentos por todo lo que sucedía, por que es verdad que muchas veces vivimos la vida sin detenernos a pensar si de verdad la estamos disfrutando, si estamos haciendo todo lo que queremos hacer. Esta es una historia de amor, de sufrimiento... a veces sentía que Emmi se portaba de mala manera con sus seres queridos, aunque tal vez, en un caso como el que ella vivía, no es posible juzgarle mal.

El libro está dividido en dos partes, pero la segunda parte es la más bonita, la más desgarradora y la que me hizo llorar un poco más T-T

El trío (no piensen mal) Sam-Emmi-Abe, fue muy intenso, no podía decidir con quién quería que ella se quedara. Había estado interesada por Sam, y ciertamente es el tipo adecuado para ella, pero Abe, fue quien le dio más apoyo y eso me confundía. No sé decir si de verdad Maurer terminó esto de la manera correcta, por que fue muy emotivo para mí, aunque creo que siempre queda un poco de esperanza al final...

Una lectura altamente recomendable para personas de todas las edades. Debemos de aprender a vivir nuestra vida al máximo, para no arrepentirnos cuando ya sea demasiado tarde.

Damon Lee says

Change of Heart was an odyssey of emotions. This book was filled with fears, anxieties, and love throughout the story. The fact that this story was written by a cardiologists wife made it more than genuine. I felt as if I was getting to know the character very well. This story did more than just a good read but to bring awareness to a big issue. Many people have to go through situations like this daily but no one likes to think about it. The best part of the story is that while You're fixated on knowing one person you get to learn a group of people going through the same thing.

I think the fact that this story wasn't only filled with happy endings brings the sense of how real and serious this issue really is. Really rough things happened to Emmi even though she was already going through this

sickness. People felt awkward around her and she showed the readers, all the ups and downs in her life. It wasn't meant to have a happy ending but it was perfect the way it is.

The part of the story that I enjoyed reading the most was when Emmi met Abe. They both went through the same thing and at some point are going through the same thing. It really makes you realize how horrible situations can bring you closer to other people. Someone who is a stranger quickly becomes a friend. It also teaches you how you can't take life for granted.

Katelyn says

Shari Maurer really knows how to draw the most dramatic feelings out of her readers. I was a mess while reading this book and was just so sad, I left feeling the same way. The main character Emmi really got to me (so did just about everything else) and I connected with her right away. I was instantly protective of her and each time she hit another obstacle I felt like it was a personal attack or something. I was way too invested in this story at times, like I said, this book had me super emotional.

Readers will see Emmi's life turned upside down with her new heart condition and it's a terrible thing to even think about. She was dealing with so much and I felt like for a lot of it she was on her own. Maurer gives us a great character addition in Abe and I fell in love. He was able to understand Emmi when not many others could and he's hard to resist. Maurer also introduces us to Sam and Becca and honestly I'll let you make your own decisions about them. Apparently my dance card was all filled up because Emmi and Abe were all I cared about in this one.

Now as much as I enjoyed Maurer's writing, her ending did not sit well with me. I can understand why she wrote it the way she wrote it, but come on! I was not happy, but that's the way it goes sometimes I guess. All in all I am really glad I got the chance to pick this one up and I can't wait to read more of Maurer's work. I've got my tissues on hand and I'm ready for more.

Karen says

Change of Heart is an interesting story. It takes a very serious subject matter (heart failure), but treats it in a way that isn't overly saccharin or manipulative. In fact some readers may have difficulty relating to Emmi – a girl who is suffering from congestive heart failure and is awaiting a heart transplant. Emmi doesn't react like most MC's would in this situation. She isn't sweet and reflective. She was a popular, athletic teenager and she wants her life back damn it! And she's mad that her friends get to go on living theirs, doing all the things she should be doing. She sometimes acts like a brat and I liked her for it. I felt this was a more realistic portrayal of a teenager going through something like this. It must be frustrating to see life moving on without you while you can't even walk to the car without getting winded. Life moves on – friends move on. She does have her best friend, Becca and boyfriend, Sam by her side through the ordeal and she meets Abe, a fellow transplant survivor and one of the few people that she can share her true fears and feelings to.

This story also shows how it is for those supporting the patient. It's not always easy for the parent, the sibling, the boyfriend, the best friend. I appreciated how Maurer touched on all those issues.

My one complaint would be that there are a few events that take place, that while understandable, are so sudden that they took me by surprise. I think maybe an added conversation or two to show there were issues

brewing between certain characters would have helped it make more sense to me. It's hard to get into specifics without a spoiler but I will say that it isn't anything that affects the overall story and Change of Heart is still a worthwhile read. However, this one plot point left me frustrated. Since this is Emmi's story, I couldn't get into the other characters heads to find out what happened and it was resolved a little too quickly and neatly for my tastes.

Aimee (Getting Your Read On) says

(From the book jacket) Shortly after her sixteenth birthday, popular varsity soccer star Emmi gets the worst possible news- she's had myocarditis that's destroyed her heart, putting her into congestive heart failure. Now she can barely walk across a room without stopping to rest. Without a heart transplant, she'll die in a matter of months. It's only her growing friendship with Abe, the funny, smart teen she meets in the cardiac clinic, that cheers her up. But difficult questions race through her mind while she waits: Will she get a heart in time? Will she even survive the surgery? What if her body rejects the heart? When tragedy strikes close to home, Emmi must rely even more on her inner strength in order to carry on.

Without a question, this was an engaging read. Shari Maurer does an excellent job bringing the emotions, frustrations and fear of transplant patients to life in her characters. For most of us, organ donation isn't something we put a lot of time and effort into thinking about. I've never really given a lot of in depth thought as to how people waiting for a new heart might feel, how scared and how frustrating it must be for your whole life to be out of control, dependant on someone else. There were so many emotions! I finished reading this book with a new perspective on being an organ donor. And that is what I liked about this book. It raises awareness and helps you emotionally connect to the message it is delivering.

My conservative nature must admit that the language and sexual content in this book were very distracting from the message and emotion I was feeling. I realize that I'm in a minority when it comes to my views on such things, but that's how it was for me.

At the end of her book, Maurer gives some insightful statistics. Each day, approximately 18 people die in the U.S. because of the shortness of organ donors. Every 11 minutes a new name is added to the waiting list. You can enroll in the organ donor registry in your state but you must be 18 to do so. For more information you can visit www.donatelife.net .

You can read my full review for content on The Literate Mother <http://www.theliteratemother.org>

My thanks to Shari Maurer for sending me this book to read and review. My congratulations to her on her first YA novel.

Cindy says

When I read the description of this book I knew what it was going to be about and I expected some heart-wrenching moments, drama, and possibly a sad ending. And I was right, it contained all that, but I liked that there was so much more to it than that as well.

I think my favorite part of this book were the actual characters. From Emmi to the minor characters like the doctors and nurses, I liked how each one was individually portrayed. I have to admit that Emmi frustrated me because of her attitude sometimes but I completely got where she was coming from. I loved the support her family gave her and the little things that were added to the story about her parents and siblings made it more real. Her friends and boyfriend were, well supportive but their actions sometimes were questionable.

I think that the book was okay and then a little more than half way it gets so much better. so maybe at the beginning you'll have a hard time sticking with it but when then the story takes a few unexpected turns and you can't put it down, and always hoping for the best. I must admit that the ending is a sad one, but it was truly touching and it brought some tears to my eyes.

I recommend this book to everyone who enjoys this kind of book. I must warn readers that if you are used to books by authors like Jodi Picoult or even Lurlene McDaniel, this one might not meet your expectations but it is a great book though and I am sure many out there will enjoy it.

Amber ~ The Reading Addict says

Actual rating was 4.5

This was a very emotional read for me. Maurer approached a sticky subject and handled it extremely well. Change of Heart is a heart-wrenching story of family, strength, love, and self-discovery. Something about it touched my heart.

The main focus of the story is Emmi and how she deals with her heart problems. Still, Maurer doesn't neglect the other elements in Emmi's life. As the reader, I was with Emmi through heart-break and loneliness. I was also there when she was surrounded by friends and family. I really appreciated how the author incorporated other parts of Emmi's life as an insecure teenager into the plot instead of focusing solely on the medical side of the story.

To be honest, I didn't particularly like the character Emmi. She seemed a little too witchy and selfish. When her family tried to support her, she lashed out at them. Emmi also whined about her treatments and medications throughout the book. I guess I can't really blame her though. She went through a lot. I don't know how I would act if I were in her place.

The ending was the most beautiful part. The first half of the book was pretty good, but about three quarters of the way through, things got even better. This part of the novel was the tear-jerker. I won't spoil anything, but it was very emotional.

It brought tears to my eyes.

Overall, I definitely recommend this to any teen or adult reader. The story taught me that I need to embrace every moment. You never know when your whole life can change.

Jordann Willis says

The characters really relate to teenagers in this time with the drama. Emmi has the best friend in the world

and while she is in the hospital. Emmi goes through a lot for a 16 year-old. And for someone so athletic its hard to believe that that could happen. The ending will make you cry the most even if you cry throughout the book. It's a must read type of book.

Kari says

A refreshing and new premise for YA but a tragically real situation for some, Change of Heart throws into question the value of life as a teenager. The natural mindset is invincibility but what happens when a teen goes from running across a soccer field to being high on a heart transplant list less than a month later? Though there have been other heart transplant books, this one is unique both in premise and execution.

Emmi is a well balanced character at the start, having some teenage moments but overall, motivated and determined. Her relationship with her parents is good more often than not and her love of soccer apparent. She is a strong athlete, a good friend, and has a bright future. But when she falls sick and the infection infiltrates her heart, things change. Her reactions, though irritating on the surface with her fits and tantrums, is understandable and heartbreakingly honest. Her struggle to comprehend what is happening and her resistance to both the prospect of death and a long rather than short recovery lend reason to her responses. Each time she lashes out, it is clear she is lashing out at the situation more than the person. Throughout the entire book, she grows tremendously as a result of the dire situation she has faced. While some aspects take longer than others, Emmi comes to face things in her own time and manner. Even after her transplant, when her friends and boyfriend don't often come, Emmi is able to understand their side of it- no matter how much it hurts her.

Sam is a loveable character to start, spending time with Emmi and distracting her from her current state. Though driven by hormones at times, the way he cares for Emmi is clear. He also adds an intriguing element to the story because although he does care for Emmi and fell for her after she became so ill, he is still a teenage boy who is now having to potentially face death on account of her. Maurer does a splendid job painting him across the pages, giving reason to his actions in the same way she does Emmi. Though it isn't necessarily the best, the reader can understand his motivations.

Abe adds another element, a teenage boy who has already had a heart transplant. He offers something to Emmi no one else can and is a highly likable, swoon worthy character. He's easy going and laid back, and fully appreciative of his life. He understands Emmi's fears and pain and adds plenty of comedic relief once he makes his first appearance. Though Emmi had been dating Sam, after her transplant and his sudden distance, she finds herself paying more attention to Abe. The teenage love triangle aspect of this book makes it a steady read, still keeping a young spark in a rough situation with no promise of final mortality.

As the plot progresses, it shifts between sickness and potential death and teenage love and feeling. Maurer blends and transitions amidst them seamlessly, keeping the pacing and flow smooth. Her writing is strong and compassionate, bringing Emmi to life. Some of the events and decisions are shocking and ones people could at first disagree with, the situation and personal realizations Emmi has come to help drive them. This book is a very perfect example of situational decisions, and the way her entire outlook and way of thinking changes comes across boldly. Also notable is Emmi's struggle with the knowledge that for her to live, someone has to die. This is a very hard concept for anyone to wrap their head around but also brings up how important organ donors are.

With several twists and a few very emotional, intense scenes, Change of Heart is a stunning debut.

Wrenching but memorable, stunning and remarkable, this book is one that will make a reader appreciate their own life and health as well as give the reminder no one is invincible, regardless of age. Big events can drastically change a person and Maurer has portrayed that fantastically. Two fold with meaning, Change of Heart also stresses the importance of organ donation and making those wishes clear in advance. It is simple to sign up to donate, many states even asking on driver's license applications/renewals. Without donors, someone like Emmi could be left waiting- sometimes too long- and this urgency also comes across as boldly as everything else Maurer has incorporated into this book.

Jill says

I am so incredibly conflicted about this book. On the one hand, I wholeheartedly agree with Emmi that just because you are young and sick, you don't have to put on this happy, brave face for the world. You should be allowed to be sick and grumpy and cranky. But boring and horrible? Maybe real people are allowed to be that way, but not in books. I just wanted to slap Emmi upside her head and tell her to shut up. Maurer told it honestly, but I wanted something a little more redeeming - I wanted to like Emmi despite her whining and boy-craziness, and I wanted her to learn something that stuck. It didn't feel that way to me, in the end.

The cover says "when tragedy strikes close to home, blah blah" and (minor spoiler) I thought for sure that when her friends get all weird on her that meant they found out her heart was from some kid from her school who died... which isn't what happens, but honestly, I thought would have made a better plot twist.

The medical stuff sounded about right, but if you want something more realistic (because it is real), read Sick Girl, which is about a woman's actual heart transplant in her twenties. It might be too much for younger teens (seriousness of subject, some adult language), but older teens and adults might enjoy it better.

Mariana says

At 16 all you have to worry is about decent grades, a good haircut, make up, boys... right? You shouldn't be worried with death or life, but Emmi does.

Her life was great, I mean of course she did not think it was perfect, her mother was irritating sometimes, Sam, the baseball star didn't notice her the way she liked, but she was a kick-ass soccer player, she had good friends, she was healthy, or so she thought.

Then she gets sick and suddenly the most terrible news arrive to her: she might die. What happens to her normal teenager life? Why is this happening to her?

Emmi starts a journey that will change everything... will she survive?

Change of Heart is a gripping story about a girl waiting for a healthy heart, the only way to survive. She's confused, sad, angry, because her life has changed, and not only hers. You will experience along with Emmi all her frustration, excitement and the way she starts to understand that life is something to enjoy, and that things happen, but mostly that life goes on.

Is a book easy to read, even when manages themes not that light, but is great because you understand what happens and you actually learn about heart failure and you get to be able to understand people with this condition. I think it is a great book, it definitely teaches you something. The characters are very well developed, and so is the story, although in some point gets slow and it seems like it is nothing that special, but then comes the twist and things get interesting, and the ending is kind of heart breaking but also inspiring.

A very recommendable book, especially if you want to read something to make you think a little and enjoy a nice story.

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Lauren says

Summary: Emmi's life is going perfectly, when all of a sudden she is diagnosed with heart failure. The former soccer star is now barely able to walk five feet without becoming winded. Emmi must learn to overcome her anxiety as she waits for a heart transplant, and along the way discovers that life really means a lot more than she thought it did.

My thoughts: I guess I should preface this review by saying that this book really hit close to home. When I was sixteen, I went through an enormous amount of health issues, like Emmi, and missed my entire junior year of high school. Even now, I can only attend one class per day, and am otherwise homeschooled. I completely identified with Emmi's struggles and uncertainties, and went through a similar scenario (though my health problems were not quite as serious, thankfully).

Shari Maurer does a perfect job of showing the reader the many stages that one who becomes ill goes through. Everything is taken away from you, and eventually you begin to see how lucky you were before you were sick; there are so many things you wish you could do that you now can't, and it makes you incredibly sad. Emmi demonstrated these feelings wonderfully, and I really felt her sadness and regret. Though Emmi was a bit of an annoying character (she treated her parents horribly, and was selfish), some of her flaws made her seem very realistic, and I liked seeing her finally put the pieces of her life back together.

Change of Heart focuses quite a bit on romance. I liked this because it gave some relief from all the sad, scary stuff (like, y'know, DEATH). Though Emmi's romantic endeavors weren't always successful, I really liked the two boys she came to have feelings for, and their relationships seemed believable and well-developed.

Overall, I'd say *Change of Heart* is a good look into the life of a sick teen. It's a very emotional read, so be sure to have tissues handy. Shari Maurer does not hold back with her descriptions of Emmi's disease and grief. I would especially recommend the book to anyone who knows a teen with an illness—*Change of Heart* really helps clarify what people in this kind of situation are going through.
