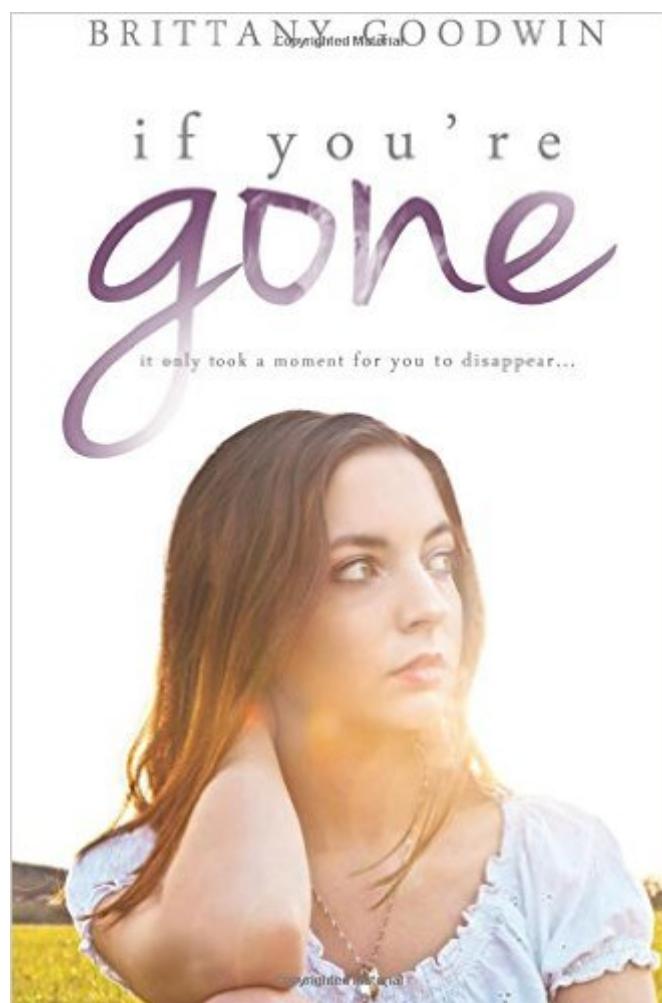


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If You're Gone



Synopsis

Lillian White was planning for the perfect summer- spending every waking minute at the lake with her heartthrob boyfriend, Brad Lee. But her world is shattered when Brad mysteriously disappears the night of his graduation ceremony- the same night he tells her he loves her for the first time. After law enforcement dismisses the case, classifying Brad as voluntarily missing, Lillian becomes desperate to prove that he couldn't have just walked away. Not from his family. Not from his friends. Not from her. Heartbroken but determined to find answers, Lillian begins to uncover secrets from Brad's past that force her to question everything she thought she knew about him and their relationship, as well as her own faith. Will the truth lead her to him? Or are Brad's lies just the beginning of the mystery?

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Customer Reviews

Lillian and her boyfriend Brad are inseparable. She knows it is true love and she can't wait to spend the summer with him. Then Brad disappears on his high school graduation day. He didn't say goodbye, nobody has seen him and his car is still in the driveway. He doesn't return and Lillian calls the police. Brad is missing, but they don't take the case seriously. They think he left because he wanted to and aren't convinced something happened to him. Lillian is sure Brad would never have deliberately done that to her. Is she right? If You're Gone is a gripping story about a girl who's heartbroken when she can't find her boyfriend the day after his graduation ceremony. I felt so bad for her. She's upset and nobody understands how she feels. The uncertainty of the situation is

killing her and she sheds a lot of tears because she misses Brad so much. Lillian's grief is so severe that it's making regular daily life very hard for her. She doesn't care about the things that used to be important to her, she can't sleep, she can't eat and she walks around feeling like a zombie. Brittany Goodwin describes those emotions in a beautiful emotional way. Lillian had it all, she's pretty, she has excellent grades, she has good friends and she has a loving and loyal boyfriend. She used to be a cheerful, carefree girl. Now grief consumes her and it made my heart break. Brittany Goodwin writes about the present and the past. There's some happiness before all the sadness began and there's also hope, which gives the story a good balance between light and dark. I loved that this book shows people that you can find true love at any age and that the pain it causes when you lose it is the same for everyone. That's a fantastic message. I liked the mystery aspect of the story. For me Lillian's emotions were more prominent than the search though, but I was still really curious. I had tears in my eyes when I read about Lillian's struggles. The ending is intriguing and it gave me butterflies in my stomach. I love it when I feel so strongly about something. *If You're Gone* is a quick and easy read with a lot of depth and an interesting plot.

(I was provided with a free digital copy in exchange for an honest and unbiased review.) *If You're Gone* could have been typical. It could have gone the way so many romantic suspense thrillers go. When I started reading, I fully expected it to. *If You're Gone* is not typical. It's a character study, a in-depth look at one teenage girl, Lillian, dealing with loss. Losses, really -- there's the obvious loss of a boyfriend who disappears under mysterious circumstances, and there's the less-obvious loss of Lillian's own expectations for how her life should unfold. More even than the plot, which moves along at a solid clip and never bogs itself down with unnecessary diversions, the development of this character is what sells the book for me. Lillian is a real person. She's not a collection of contrivances designed to drive a plot to its conclusion. The end of Lillian's story, without spoiling anything, is emotionally powerful and ultimately realistic. (There is an additional, deleted scene-style chapter available online that can serve as an epilogue -- I much prefer the ending that made its way into the book proper, but your mileage may vary.) I'm looking forward to what the author comes up with next. This is a promising start to a literary career.

If You're Gone is a fascinating exploration of a young girl's journey through the disappearance of her boyfriend and coming to terms with life without him. Lillian, a rising high school senior, is very much in love with her boyfriend Brad, who has just graduated. On the night of his graduation Brad tells Lillian that he loves her, and then he disappears without a trace. Lillian is desperate to find Brad

and feels lost without him. She doesn't believe he would choose to leave her or his family without an explanation of some sort, but with no evidence to the contrary, she is left feeling confused, dejected and unwanted. The search for Brad seems to go cold and with no clues leading to his whereabouts the authorities have no reason to continue looking for him, assuming that he, as an adult, has left of his own accord. Lillian is devastated but she refuses to give up on Brad. This book realistically examines the emotions felt by those who are left behind when a loved one disappears. You can feel Lillian's grief and frustration as she continues her search for Brad, often unaided by others. I appreciated that this book shared some very real and raw emotions, along with the concept that when one has not gone through a certain experience, they cannot "understand" what you are going through. It also delves into the topic of forgiveness, which is so often overlooked in today's literature and society in general. I can't say that I wasn't occasionally frustrated with the main character for being a bit whiney and needy but the author does an excellent job in portraying the emotions of a teenage girl. It is also a pleasure to see Lillian mature in her thoughts and choices throughout the course of the book. Finally, it was very refreshing to read a book that mentioned God, faith, and prayer semi frequently and was not chock full of curse words or filthy topics (only 2 or 3 words that I noticed). I really enjoyed this book despite the fact I rarely read young adult romances and I highly recommend it! I received an advance copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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