

Change of Heart

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Emmi Miller is a sixteen year old girl that has the world by the tail. She is a star soccer player, a good student, has great friends and a handsome baseball player is showing interest in her. Life couldn't be better until she gets a cold that refuses go away. When Emmi can't lick the cold her parents take her to the large children's hospital in downtown New York. There Emmi is told her heart has been damaged by a virus. As the days go by the new medicines don't help Emmi and the cardiologist tells Emmi that she needs a heart transplant. She is devastated by the thought that she might die and that someone will have to die to save her life. No longer allowed to attend school, her best friend and her boy friend are her lifeline and support during the wait for the new heart.

As the months go by and there is no heart for Emmi, she becomes more depressed and worries that a heart won't come in time. At the hospital, she meets Abe a boy who received a heart transplant two years earlier. They form a friendship based on shared experiences. Abe helps Emmi get through the days of waiting.

Finally in July the call comes that there is a heart for Emmi. She goes to the hospital and receives her new heart. Abe becomes more important to her as Emmi navigates the new changes in her body and her life. During the same time, she notices that her best friend and her boyfriend have become distant. Pushing her best friend to tell her what is wrong, Emmi discovers that her best friend has had sex with her boyfriend. Emmi's physical heart is working well but her emotional heart is broken.

She and Abe become closer but even that doesn't go well. Abe is sick and dying. With the loss of Abe, Emmi realizes again how important life and friends are. She works to forgive her old boyfriend and her friend. Emmi returns to school with a new view of what is important in life.

Change of Heart is an excellent fiction book for teens about what it is like to need a heart transplant. Shari Maurer truthfully and sincerely weaves a story of a young girl coming to grips with her immortality, disappointment in friends, the importance of family and organ donation. Transplantation saves lives.