

By the Newbery Medal-winning author of *Dacey's Song*

CYNTHIA VOIGT

★ "Izzy is a winner."

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

Izzy,
willy-
nilly

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"Isobel? I'm afraid we're going to have to take it off."

"Take it off, take it off," I sang, like a vamp song; but I don't think I actually did, and I know my laughter stayed locked inside my head. I think my voice did too.

"Isobel. Can you hear me?"

I didn't know. I didn't think so.

It was my leg. I went to sleep.

"Izzy," I said, finally figuring out what was wrong. "My name's Izzy." Nobody ever called me Isobel. I felt better, then. I didn't open my eyes, but now that the disturbing, frightening feeling that something was wrong was explained, I relaxed.

Except nobody here called me Izzy, I remembered that. Here, where everything was bright white, or cold metal, or

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pale plastic, where voices seemed to echo strangely, here they called me Isobel. Doctors and nurses, and there had been a policeman—why had there been a policeman in my room?—all calling me Isobel. I didn't correct them. It didn't seem so important at the time.

Except my parents, sometimes they called me Izzy, although most of the time they called me old baby names, Pumpkin and Angel, Sweetheart, Lamb. Remembering their voices, I drifted back to sleep. Pumpkin and Angel, Sweetheart, Lamb.

The next time I was really awake. I knew where I was. Before I could stop them, my eyes opened.

I was still attached to an IV, this time clear liquid not one of the red bottles of somebody else's blood. My mother sat in a chair near the metal crib sides of the bed. She looked terrible. She was dressed all right, but her face looked terrible. Her eyes were closed. Beside her sat my father, broad-shouldered, his hair still white-blond from the summer sun.

A nurse turned the pages of the chart that hung from the foot of the bed. The only sound in the room was the rustling of papers. Before the nurse could see me, I closed my eyes again.

What, I asked, is a nice girl like me doing in a place like this?

A nice girl—that's just exactly what I was. Am.

Most of the people I know don't want to be just nice. They want to be interesting, or exciting, romantic, terrific—something special. I don't think I ever wanted to be more than

nice. Nice suited me: pretty but nowhere near beautiful; popular enough, with girls and with boys; although no jock, I could give somebody a respectable game of tennis, and I was one of only three sophomores on the school cheerleading squad. A B student, except for Latin where, for some reason, I got a few As, I did the work I was told to do and didn't mind school: just a nice person, easy to get along with, fun to have around. I usually got jokes although I seldom made them. I often tried to make peace in quarrels although I took part in my share of them. I liked people, liked doing things with people, liked being with people. Like.

And here I was in the hospital, surrounded by the unhappy silence of my parents, with—

I had awakened once before, I didn't know how many days ago. Against the backdrop of my closed eyelids I could replay that day. Like a TV rerun. Of *Mary Tyler Moore* or something. Like *M*A*S*H*? No, it was like a soap opera, like I'd been tossed into the script of one of the soaps, where I didn't belong. Nice girls are too dull for the soaps. I wasn't wild about being dull, but there wasn't much I could do about that, even if I wanted to; and I didn't, not really anyway, want to do anything about it. I liked myself pretty much exactly the way I was.

That other day, the soap opera day, I was in the same bed, in the same room, and it was morning. There was blue sky outside the one window. I had an IV attached to my left arm, only that one dripped blood. I didn't feel like moving, because

One moment can change a life forever.

Fifteen-year-old Izzy has it all—a loving family, terrific friends, a place on the cheerleading squad. But her comfortable world crumbles when a date with a senior ends in a car crash and she loses her right leg.


Suddenly nothing is the same. The simplest tasks become enormous challenges. Her friends don't seem to know how to act around her. Her family is supportive, but they don't really want to deal with how much she's hurting.

Then Rosamunde extends a prickly offer of friendship. Rosamunde definitely isn't the kind of girl Izzy would have been friends with in her old life. But Rosamunde may be the only person who can help Izzy face her new one.

"A highly satisfying read . . . one of the notable books of the season."
—*Publishers Weekly*

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Simon & Schuster, New York
Cover photograph copyright © 2005
by Marc Yankus
Cover designed by Debra Sfetsios
www.SimonSaysTEEN.com
0605

US \$6.99 / \$8.99 CAN

ISBN-13: 978-1-4169-0339-0
ISBN-10: 1-4169-0339-9

EAN



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