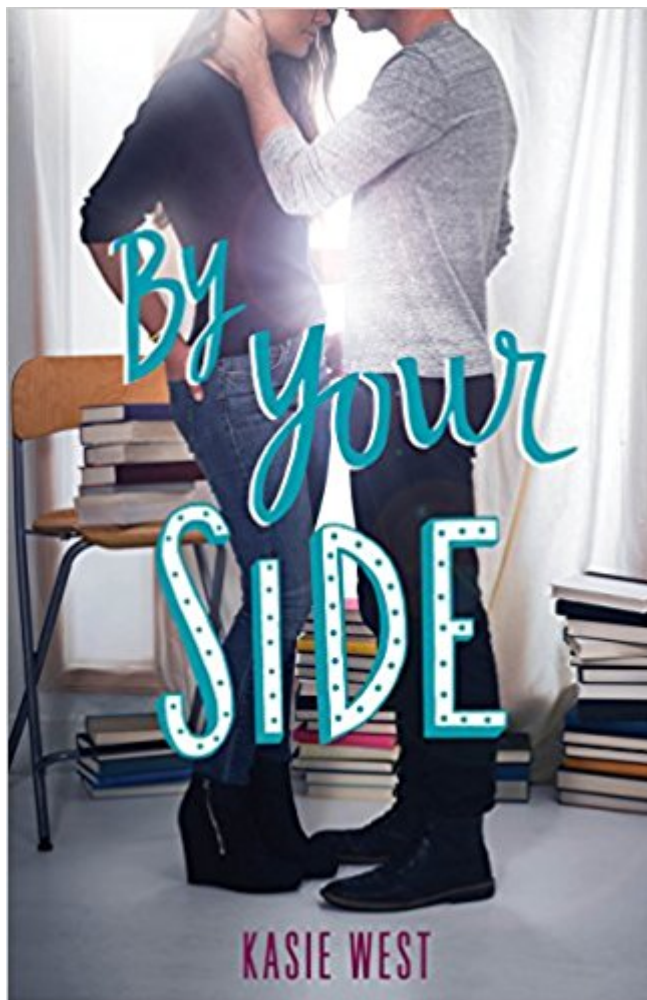


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By Your Side



Synopsis

An irresistible story from Kasie West that explores the timeless question What do you do when you fall for the person you least expect? When Autumn Collins finds herself accidentally locked in the library for an entire weekend, she doesn't think things could get any worse. But that's before she realizes that Dax Miller is locked in with her. Autumn doesn't know much about Dax except that he's trouble. Between the rumors about the fight he was in (and that brief stint in juvie that followed it) and his reputation as a loner, he's not exactly the ideal person to be stuck with. Still, she just keeps reminding herself that it is only a matter of time before Jeff, her almost-boyfriend, realizes he left her in the library and comes to rescue her. Only he doesn't come. No one does. Instead it becomes clear that Autumn is going to have to spend the next couple of days living off vending-machine food and making conversation with a boy who clearly wants nothing to do with her. Except there is more to Dax than meets the eye. As he and Autumn at first grudgingly, and then not so grudgingly, open up to each other, Autumn is struck by their surprising connection. But can their feelings for each other survive once the weekend is over and Autumn's old life, and old love interest, threaten to pull her from Dax's side?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A simmering romance that gives weight to mental health and hard choices." (Kirkus Reviews)

Kasie West lives with her family in central California, where the heat tries to kill her with its 115-degree stretches. She graduated from Fresno State University with a BA degree that has nothing to do with writing. Visit her online at www.kasiewest.com.

I absolutely adored this book and it is probably my second favorite Kasie West book right after P.S. I Like You. This book was typical Kasie West style- an adorable, light-hearted romance that manages to touch on a few other themes of friendship, mental health and growing up. The story begins with Autumn locked in a library for the weekend. Yes, locked in a library! I loved the Breakfast Club feel to the beginning of the story. At first Autumn panics, but she soon resigns herself to relaxing and reading books for the weekend while scouring the staff kitchen for any food. Autumn soon runs into Dax, who is a loner at school and came to the library obviously prepared to stay for the weekend. They eventually start to open up to each other- but when they finally get out, will their relationship be the same? I ate up every page of this book. I loved the library scenes when Autumn and Dax were playing silly games to entertain themselves, it was extremely cute and made me giggle. They also had quite a few tender moments when they talked about more serious topics. Dax comes from a broken home, and he's much darker than most love interests in Kasie West books. Autumn is a well-liked senior in high school- she has a loving family, a group of friends who care about her, and an almost-boyfriend, Jeff. What she doesn't often talk about is her anxiety disorder. Even if it was a bit simplistic, I love how Autumn was portrayed with anxiety. She constantly worries about outcomes she can't control, and we witness triggers that lead to several panic attacks throughout the story. I love how Dax was a calming presence for Autumn and helped her work through her anxiety. This story was just as much about Dax and Autumn's relationship as it was about Autumn working through her anxiety and learning to accept it and take control of her life, rather than ignoring it. I know life isn't as simple as it is portrayed in this story, but it was a nice message! I don't expect dark, moving and emotional stories when I read a Kasie West story. I expect light books that make me happy and giddy for the rest of the day- and that's exactly what this book is. Another very enjoyable story by Kasie West! I highly recommend any of her books, but I think this one is another one of my favorites. It's a quick, happy read. Hope you enjoy it!

3.5 stars Kasie West is one of those authors who I will read anything she writes. I preordered this

book and found time to read it. I enjoyed this story, but she's given us better. I do think lots of teens will relate to the characters in this book, the MC with her anxiety disorder, and the love interest in foster care. But I felt she could have gone a bit deeper, everything felt very surface level when dealing with issues. Like a teen afternoon special on TV. I have to get one thing off my chest, I have worked in libraries for 13 years, we do extensive checks before closing the building AND it is a violation of safety codes not to have an emergency exit in a building. So the whole getting stuck in the library thing I had to really bust out the suspension of disbelief. (Yes I understand it was all for the story, but it was too much for me)

You know who's my favorite? Kasie West. You should probably already know this about me, but I'm just reminding you. Kasie West consistently delivers sweet, fun, swoon-worthy stories. She manages to tell a story that touches on serious, relatable topics without making it the sole thing that the story is about. In *By Your Side*, Autumn finds herself locked in the library with no way to get out and unable to contact anyone. Then she realizes she's not alone. Dax Miller is in the library too, only it looks like he isn't exactly trapped. She knows very little about Dax, only that he's spent time in juvie, and he's a loner. Not exactly someone she feels entirely safe with, but she just has to stick it out until her friends and her almost-boyfriend realize she's not where she's supposed to be. Only they don't. Autumn and Dax have to make the most of their situation, and eventually they start to open up and share with each other, and they find that maybe their preconceived notions about each other aren't entirely accurate. Now let's be honest, who among us book nerds wouldn't love to be trapped in a library for a long weekend? Now throw in a cute boy and I don't think a single person could say no. But if I'm honest, that's only part of the story here and maybe only the first third of this book happens in the actual library and it truly might not be what you are hoping for in that regard. However, that's where West introduces us to Autumn and Dax and shares some of their secrets and why they are who they are. The characters being cut off from everyone else in the story allows us to really get to know them on a very personal level and we learn things about them both that are very important. I'm just going to come out with it right away. I loved Autumn. She's funny, and smart and super awkward, and she just happens to deal with anxiety. I loved that West created a character who is dealing with anxiety, but

she portrays it in a way that totally normalizes it, as it should be! It's so important in YA today that people read about characters that they can relate to and that young people can see others who are dealing with things they might be and see that it doesn't have to be life-ending, it's just something that is a part of her life but she's so much more than her diagnosis. Seeing her come to terms and finally share with her friends what is really happening in her life is just wonderful. I have to admit too, that I really liked Dax. I suppose you could call Dax a "bad boy", but I don't know that that is entirely accurate. He's certainly the most troubled of all West's characters. He's more someone who is trying to make the most of his circumstances and just trying to survive in the situation he finds himself in. As his past is revealed, I understood his loner status, and I got why he kept himself apart from everyone. I do love that he finally opened up to Autumn, and I really loved the evolution of their relationship. Is this the swooniest relationship West has written so far? No, I have to admit I'm more partial to some of the others, but I still totally shipped these two so much! Their relationship was slow and sweet and I really enjoyed getting to see them learn to trust each other. I think one of the things that West really excels at with every book (aside from swoony boys) is building and portraying friendships in a really positive way. She truly does it in every book she writes! Autumn here has some amazing friends (despite them leaving her stranded) and while it seems like there are a lot of friends to keep track of, the one to really focus on her connection with her best friend Lisa. It's always so refreshing to see wonderful friendships portrayed in YA. Overall, another quick favorite from Kasie West! If you're looking for a quick, sweet read, you definitely need to grab this one, and if you've held off on reading ANY Kasie West, I urge you to start at the beginning of her booklist because you really can't go wrong with a single book!

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