



# Suicide Watch

*Kelley York*

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18-year-old Vincent Hazelwood has spent his entire life being shuffled from one foster home to the next. His grades sucked. Making friends? Out of the question thanks to his nervous breakdowns and unpredictable moods. Still, Vince thought when Maggie Atkins took him in, he might've finally found a place to get his life—and his issues—in order.

But then Maggie keels over from a heart attack. Vince is homeless, alone, and the inheritance money isn't going to last long. A year ago, Vince watched a girl leap to her death off a bridge, and now he's starting to think she had the right idea.

Vince stumbles across a website forum geared toward people considering suicide. There, he meets others with the same debate regarding the pros and cons of death: Casper, battling cancer, would rather off herself than slowly waste away. And there's quiet, withdrawn Adam, who suspects if he died, his mom wouldn't even notice.

As they gravitate toward each other, Vince searches for a reason to live while coping without Maggie's guidance, coming to terms with Casper's imminent death, and falling in love with a boy who doesn't plan on sticking around.

## **Suicide Watch Details**

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# From Reader Review Suicide Watch for online ebook

## MsMiz (Tina) says

This book was...it just was...

Heartbreaking

Beautiful

Real

Resonant

There is not a soul who cannot identify with at least someone or something in this book.

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## Alexis Hall says

So I accidentally read this at the same time as Julio. Review comes with trigger warnings for suicide, suicidal ideation and the occasional glancing reference to sexual abuse. It also contains spoilers which are likely to comprise a significant chunk of my musings, so while I won't be able to stick them in a tag, I will let you know when they're about to hove into view.

Okay, are we sitting comfortably?

I think I was more positively disposed towards this than Julio. It was well-written, well-characterised, tender and thoughtful. People talk and hold hands, and behave in ways that felt emotionally authentic to me. Nobody casually rapes anyone in a way we're secretly (or not so secretly) meant to find hawt. There's no fuckdungeons, enemas, or anal fisting. Basically, the presence of the first things, and the absence of the second, is kind of all I look for in m/m these days. The fact that Suicide Watch is also quite good is just the cherry on the not horrendously alienating cake.

Here is one my favourite passages from the book:

I want to reach out to touch that hair. Slide my fingers through it. It's unkempt, but looks so soft. I want to curl up against him, around him, and tell him I understand. I don't have a family, and he's invisible to his. I want to tell him that I notice him, even if no one else does. His shoulders hunch up, fingers lacing behind his neck. I know what he would say to that. I'm not worth noticing. And I'm not sure I can stomach him taking something so heartfelt and sincere and tossing it aside, so I say nothing. We sit on the balcony, hip to hip, being sad together.

Which I think is lovely. So, yeah, if that tickles your fancy, go read.

However, there were also some things ... maybe quite a lot of things ... that troubled me. I tried to talk about them with H the other morning, and he kind of gave me a funny look, and was like "So you're saying the

book would have been better if it ended with three kids killing themselves?” Which, uh, is not what I meant at all. However, I think when you explore issues like depression, suicide and suicidal ideation, there are complexities and implications, which are unavoidable. And I’m not sure if they’re reconcilable with the expectations of romance. And while there isn’t any sort of miraculous wang healing in *Suicide Watch*, there is definitely a sense of positive change and hope which, while absolutely necessary, seems just a little bit too neat at times.

Spoilers ho, me hearties. You’ve been warned.

For the record, I’m not particularly troubled by the neatness of the ending per se (and I’d prefer to believe that a couple has a chance, than be convinced they’re going to fall apart the moment I close the book) it just didn’t feel like the natural conclusion to all the ambiguities preceding it. In short, I felt *Suicide Watch* engaged with a lot of quite challenging ideas, and then quietly backed away from them, whistling and looking sheepish. For example, the novel opens with the hero witnessing a girl called Jessica jumping off a bridge. She tells him nobody will miss her, and for the bulk of the book, this seems to be true. But right at the end, they randomly discover a blog Jessica’s sister is keeping, which contains a lot of references to Jessica, and how much she is missed and loved. And while that’s, y’know, nice - it kind of ... transformers her, well, her suicide into a Big Misunderstanding. And maybe that’s the point, but sometimes, the fact is, life sucks and you die, and nobody cares. And I think getting into an evaluative space when you’re dealing with suicide is ... unhelpful. Jessica’s perceptions were her reality, and she killed herself.

I often felt the book was on the verge of drifting into this uncomfortably evaluative space - even if just by implication (rather than direct intent). Essentially the main character, the hero, and their friend Casper all want to die at the beginning of *Suicide Watch*. Vince is anxious, depressed (in the clinical sense of both) convinced of his own inadequacy and general worthlessness. Adam is basically suffering a case of Cartoonishly Bad Mother, which is cured when he moves in with Vince. (I wouldn’t be bothered by CBM but everyone else in the text is drawn with grace and nuance - it is perfectly possible to be a rubbish parent without also being Maleficent). Casper has cancer. Vince doesn’t end up trying to kill himself. Adam tries, but fails. Casper succeeds - not by jumping off the bridge in the presence of Vince and Adam, as they’d planned, but by morphine overdose. Now while I absolutely didn’t want any of these people to commit suicide (and I’m not trying to say the book would be better if they did), the problem here is that *Suicide Watch* essentially us presents us with various cases of suicidal ideation and various examples of suicide, and it’s hard not to read judgements and messages out of those situations.

So we have Jessica, who basically made a mistake because she thought people didn’t love her and wouldn’t miss her, but they did and they do. We have Adam who is deeply, profoundly unhappy and attempts to kill himself as a way to give voice to that (he is painfully shy, and rarely speaks towards the beginning of the book, initially communicating with Vince only by song lyrics). Vince thinks about suicide a lot, and comes close, but essentially finds ways to manage his mental health and finds reasons to live. Casper is already dying. I know it probably sounds like I am creepily pro-suicide here, but I am essentially against making judgements about the whys and wherefores of other people’s decisions to end their lives. I mean, yes, it’s bloody tragic whichever way you (no pun intended) cut it ... but dying of cancer is not a ‘more’ legit reason to kill yourself than being lost, miserable, or mentally ill. For some people, depression is as incurable as cancer.

On a similar theme, Vince’s decision to accept help, accept love and struggle on with life is basically centred on the rhetoric of trying. And that’s a really problematic word for me in the context of depression. Asking a depressive to ‘try’ is just about the cruellest thing you can say to them. And I was uncomfortable with the implication that wanting to kill yourself goes away if you just try hard enough. I know that for some people

suicidal ideation is more about wanting pain and fear to go away, then actively wanting to die, so if you can find ways to lessen the pain (physical or emotional) living gets easier. But this is what I mean about the difficulties of evaluative spaces. While being loved, getting a job, having friends can absolutely make a difference, you can't really get quantitative about someone else's pain, and what is a reasonable quotient for a human to bear before it's deemed acceptable for them to jump off bridges.

This is further complicated by the portrayal of the Suicide Watch forum itself - this is where Casper, Adam and Vince originally 'meet', but it has an exceptionally creepy admin who goes around being creepy in all the ways, before it turns out he's actively criminal. While I'm sure this is a danger of pro-suicide forums, I felt the melodrama of it fitted awkwardly with the tone of the rest of the book, and ... honestly ... I have high regard for pro-suicide forums. While I think there are always inherent dangers associated with places where anonymous, vulnerable people congregate (online or off) there is so much stigma associated with suicide and suicidal ideation that I think contributing to it is just bad manners. Those places honestly save lives, by creating a safe space where people can talk about suicidal ideation without judgement or bringing distress to friends or loved ones. Feeling suicidal is inherently and overwhelmingly alienating - alleviating that is already one step towards making being alive bearable.

I should re-iterate that these are not problems with Suicide Watch per se. A lot of them are the inevitable consequences of engaging with a complicated, emotional subject. Props, in fact, just for doing that, and for doing it in a way I found genuinely thoughtful and sensitive a lot of the time.

I should also mention Casper, because I really liked her. I briefly thought she offered an answer to the vexed question of how to give women a meaningful role in m/m. The first half of Suicide Watch is basically all about the friendship of three lost people, and Casper is just as narratively important as Adam. By the second half she's become awkwardly facilitate-y, pushing Vince and Adam together, and becoming part of the multi-directional friendship-love-support bonds that connect them.

And then she dies of cancer.

And then they get a dog.

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## **Lauraadriana says**

This book needs a better review so here it goes...

The boy that talks to us in this book is Vince. Vince is a lonely boy, his emotions overwhelm him all the time, he goes into panics and just becomes a mess. The only person that has stuck by him is his foster mom Maggie, except the day of his high school graduation she has a heart attack and dies. Vince officially is alone in the world with absolutely no one who cares about him.

His thoughts become dark and he's feeling a lot of despair. Even though Maggie arranged for all her assets to be left to Vince giving him enough time and money to get on his feet, he is feeling hopeless. His thoughts keep going back to that girl he saw jumping from the bridge near his home the year before.

He stumbles upon a pro-suicide website and there he finds people that are kindred spirits. Casper a 17 yr old girl in the last stages of terminal cancer and Roxwell, actually Adam, a boy who only speaks to him through song lyrics.

They begin a friendship that eventually they take to real life and those relationships change Vince's world. He is not alone anymore and he's with people who will not judge him and understand him. It's not an easy road and Vince is a stubborn guy, but by the end we know that he is looking forward to life...and is in love.

Totally dug this book. It is sad since one of the loveliest characters is a terminal cancer patient it can be very somber at times, but I liked it. I LOVED IT. I liked how the author showed us Vince's struggle with his head and his emotions, how he grew, how he opened up to friendship. I loved how amazing Adam and him were for Casper even though, they were socially awkward themselves they put it all aside to be with their friend in her last weeks. She also explored the darker side of euthanasia and of evil people who prey on the desperate and alone...Very disturbing stuff.

Overall, Adam and Vince were incredibly sweet and I just loved them so much. I was so hopeful for them in the end and trusted they would be alright.

Sweet sweet book. Tissues might be a good idea for this one.

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### **Trisha Harrington says**

**This book stomped on my heart and tore me in half. It left me feeling extremely emotional, and it's definitely a book that will make some people cry.**

I read this book and fell in love with the character Vince. He was someone who could appear unsympathetic and cruel. His life had not been easy and loss seemed to be all he knew. I found it hard to imagine a life where he was so unwanted. It was a heartbreaking way to start off the book. He sees suicide from the beginning, it's always there and become a part of him.

I feel in love with Casper after we met her. She was like a breath of fresh air in such a deep and emotional book. Her struggle with cancer and life was believable. Her parents and her issue with them made her seem like a normal person. Something not shown in books enough. Casper was a real character, and my favourite in the book. Her view of suicide was real and beautiful. Her reasons were to end the pain, the pain of a slow death.

Adam was harder to like at first. I didn't really see his struggles until later on and when I figured out his connection with Vince it was nice to see him develop. By the end I was hoping he would be in it more and he was so sweet. It was sad to think of how the three characters met. I would like to think of Adam as one of those hidden gems. Beautiful and loving, who just needs to be found in the big bad world.

Suicide Watch has a lot of power. It ripped my heart out and repaired it again. I was left knowing the outcome, but hoping and praying that I would get a proper HEA for all three MC's. It took me on a journey I had not been expecting. Kelley York wrote a beautiful YA novel that could pack a punch with anyone. I would not call this book light in any way. It's an insult to a book that draws the reader in and leaves them on

the brink.

(view spoiler)

The fact we get a deep insight into suicide might put a lot of people off. The truth is it's a real issue that needs to be addressed. I loved the way it was written here. I was left wanting so much and craving more. The ending was satisfying for the whole topic. I felt it was needed. If you take offense to the controversy, this would not be a book you should read. I had my eyes opened while reading and I am proud that I came out with a clearer picture in my head.

*For some reason The Fray's How To Save A Life played in my head when I finished this book.*

I could not read this book lightly. It's not something you read when you want to have a nice time. It's one of those we need to teach us. One that leaves us with a feeling of, what next? Suicide is a real issue and Suicide Watch is a heartbreaking and honest portray of that. No book about suicide has ever been so beautiful and brutally honest and yet could be read by anyone, of any age and could teach us all something.

Overall, I think this is one of the most beautiful books I have ever read. It was such a powerful read and I wasn't able to put it down from the time I picked it up. Do I recommend this book? Honestly? I do. I really, really do. I think people will probably get something different from it and yes, it's depressing at times. But this is one of those books that *needs* to be read. It's tragic and beautiful and it just makes you feel. So there you go.

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## Shelby says

**Warning: There are some intensely personal thoughts and feelings in this review. Read it and I'm sure you'll know a few more things about me than maybe you wished to. I thought about editing them down or out, but in the end I decided I wanted people and maybe especially the author to know how much this book touched me.** God this book touched me so much. I know those kids, I *was* one of those kids everyday struggling, wondering if anyone would notice or care if I wasn't here anymore. If I hadn't had the amazingly wonderful family I grew up with I probably would have ended up on the wrong side of that scenario, but not matter how unworthy and invisible to the rest of the world I felt I always knew my family loved and cared for me and that was more than enough to pull me back from the edge. Because of all that I don't know how I'm going to write a review of this story, but I'm going to try.

This story may have started here - with so many feelings boiling underneath...

Vincent has had it rough pretty much from day one. His parents decided when he was around 2 that they just didn't want a kid anymore and he's spent the rest of his life being bounced from foster care to foster care, never settled anywhere for long. School was a struggle and he's never felt comfortable around people. Finally his most recent foster mother seemed to actually care about him a little bit and helped him pull out of high school and get his diploma through an independent study program. Every day he's waited for her to send him back, and every day it hasn't happened. Yet today he's graduating, only she's not there to see him

accept his diploma. What little piece of stability and faith Vincent had managed to establish just came crashing down around his ears when he finds out his foster mother had just passed away from a heart attack. Truly convinced that there's no one in the world that would notice or care if he was gone he stumbles across a website for those suicidal souls, only this page isn't there to help boost you up, it's there to help you decide how to die.

This book could have been over the top depressing. I mean the entire story is told from the POV of a suicidal teen. One boy searching for any reason to hope that the world isn't better off without him. In the end though that's really what this story is about, the hope that there is a better tomorrow out there. When I read the title to this book I admit I geared myself up before I even cracked a page. I was sure I was going to be buried neck deep in an angst fest second to none. Instead I got a truly touching story with a boy finding inner strength when he was sure he had none. Not to say that there wasn't emotional angst in the story, there was and justifiably so, but it wasn't the end all be all of this piece.

It's amazing how morbid a thought it is to think of a website established as a support group for people who want to die. But the one thing I did like about the idea presented here was that it wasn't all about people who were mentally ill or struggling with depression. This opened up the discussion about death as an option when the physical act of living with an illness becomes too much to bear. I've never understood the idea of forcing someone to live their life in agony as their body betrays them more and more each day. Granted I'm not saying go out and kill every person with a terminal illness, but on the same token I don't understand the idea of punishing someone willing to help them leave this world with a little dignity and grace. When my aunt passed away from breast cancer and my grandmother lost her fight with the numerous ailments she was suffering from, neither woman was living in a state they wanted to be in. We as a family had decided to honor their DNR's and not force them to continue in life past the point they chose to fight. That mentality makes so much sense to me. I want to be in this world as long as I can enjoy each and every moment that I'm here. At the point my body is betraying me with no hope of a future and every breath is pain, prolonging that agony isn't living any more. Ok...so that just totally went morbid and I'm sorry and maybe I'll think about adjusting it, but it's strangely a subject I'm passionate about. In fact I have an entire screenplay written dealing with just that. It's a beautiful romantic drama and a story I feel needed to be told (yes it is entirely fictional).

The point of that whole rant was that I absolutely adored Casper. God her strength of character and fight to enjoy every last piece of her life was awe inspiring. I loved the hope she had for Alex and Victor. Her conviction that all they had to do was try was phenomenal. As sad for her own state as she was, she knew the cancer was going to kill her, there was no way out, she knew that wasn't the case for them and she wanted to see them live full lives. This wasn't a case of three teens agreeing to a suicide pact together. No, she wanted to see them blossom and grow. She wanted the best for them and loved every minute she got to spend with them as well.

As for Victor and Alex...those poor boys. Every character in this piece had their reasons for their fear and depression. I appreciated how Ms. York allowed that every person's pain is real no matter how big or how small it is. It doesn't matter. All that matters is that it's real to you. [image error] All three of these teens have had to struggle and overcome terrible odds to even get to the point they were at. But reading this, being inside Victor's head, I truly felt like I was getting to see hope blossom one little sprig of green at a time. Sure he's not healed completely yet, and maybe he never will be, but with Adam there, together they've found the strength to face each day and fight.

**"Keep fighting. You have the rest of your lives to fix what's broken."**

And that's exactly the sentiment I left off feeling after finishing this story. I cried a little, but at the end of this story it helped remind me that I do have things as well that are worth fighting for and no matter how bad things may seem in the moment, how much you don't want to get out of bed and face the day... Tomorrow is right around the corner and it can be better if you just try. It was a long hard road for me to get to the point where I was happy with who I was and genuinely liked being me. At this point most people would assume that I'm an extremely happy person as I tend to have a smile on my face and a ready laugh. But this story reminds me of how much I fought to get to that point, and how it's ok that I still have those bad days. Those days when dealing with people is just too much effort and all I want to do is curl myself into a little ball and lose myself in a book. It's ok, cause tomorrow will be better if you just try.

**"Keep fighting. You have the rest of your lives to fix what's broken."**

I think this is going to go up on my wall as my new motto. This book is a wonderful read for those who like YA as well as for those adult readers out there. There is a broad appeal here. I just want to finish this up by saying a special thank you to Ms. York for writing this story and putting it out there. I know somewhere there is or has already been some troubled teen that will read this and know that it's ok, that it does get better and gain strength from that. This is an incredibly sensitive and understanding look at one it means to be suicidal and struggling, to be dealing with depression and sadness outside the bounds of your control. **So thank you Ms. York, I will treasure this read for ages to come.**

But I'm so happy this story ended here!

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## **Julio Genao says**

[harbinger, the site admin, (hide spoiler)]

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## **Tina says**

Read in December 2012.

Suicide Watch is surely one of those books that stay with you for a long time. It's about a friendship of three broken and forgotten teenagers. Casper, a girl in the last stages of cancer, Adam a boy whose mother doesn't seem to know he even exists and Vincent, a lonely boy suffering from panic attacks. All three of them are toying with the idea of committing suicide.

The characters are so pained and hurt, but still the story provides hope and love for the sick, lonely and forgotten people in our heartless and cold world. The slowly blossoming love between Vince and Adam is so beautiful to watch. Only thinking about this wonderful and extraordinary love makes me cry again. It's sad, heart-breaking, beautiful, brutally honest, exceptional and... hopeful at the same time, a little gem I won't forget. Ever!

My review in German:

TinaIsReading

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### **Emma Sea says**

I'm physically and emotionally exhausted. That was beautiful and heartbreaking and poignant and hopeful and . . . just so marvellous.

Huge thanks to Jenn for naming this author as a best of 2012 for her: would never have tried it otherwise.

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### **Sheziss says**

“He’s like you. Broken, but fixable.”

I knew that, only basing on the cover and the title, the book wouldn’t be for the faint of the heart. But the question was: would it be just about the topic or due to the ability of the author to make our hearts wrench? Because it’s one thing using a delicate theme and another thing altogether to manage to make something from it. The subject can be tough but if the form is not convincing, it’s just an empty shell for me.

I have a future in which I’ll look death at the face more than it’s comfortable to tell. Sometimes I’ll see happy endings, sometimes I won’t. Sometimes it will affect me, sometimes it will be routine. Yeah, it sounds bad: routine. But people are born and put to sleep forever since the beginning of times. And like so, death has been a mystery and a fear since the beginning of times.

If she is in a better place, why are the rest of us trying so hard to stay where we are?

But Death is unfair with the people She chooses. Death is so sure of its victory that gives us an entire life of advantage. Even it that life is prematurely short. Like Adam's. Like Casper's. Like Vince's.

RoxWell has parents who don't care.  
Casper has parents who care too much.  
NowhereMan has no parents at all.

It's funny the reading of this book coincided with a case of a patient I didn't give much thought about till then. This summer, during my holidays, I've been following some interns around the hospital for a month and once we were called to Psychiatry because of an oncologic patient who managed to grab a pair of scissors and stab himself between the ribs. Luckily, there was some spare room for the heart, so it ended as a minor wound, nothing comparing to his current disease. There is some doubt about it being a suicide attempt or not. On one hand, he was a doctor, so he knew exactly the space he had for the tip of the scissors to not to touch the heart, and he himself recognized afterwards doing it just to attract attention from the people surrounding him. But on the other part, he has been taking psych medication for a long time, and all this could be due to a confusional state, and his speeches sometimes make sense, sometimes not. In spite of everything, his family keeps saying he really wanted to kill himself.

We sit on the balcony, hip to hip, being sad together.

In any case, after being explored by the doctors, I got to be alone with him and asked him if he let me touch his abdomen, where the mass was easily palpable. He said immediately: "Of course, it's a honor. I had been a student too." At that time I didn't give much thought to those words, and I very doubt it was his intention for me to do that, but while reading this book I remembered him and it struck me like a cold shower he could have said something more and it would have felt natural: "I was once in your shoes. Someday, you could very possibly be in mine."

"Keep fighting.  
You have the rest of your lives to fix what's broken.  
And the "rest of your live" is only as short as you make it."

It's foolish to think that those things that happen to other people can't happen to us.

Harold twists in his seat toward me “It does make me sad, Vincent. It makes me really sad.”  
“You don’t look it.”

“Just because someone doesn’t act or look unhappy doesn’t mean their lives are perfect.” He raises his eyebrows. “There’s this method of dealing with things that involves keeping your chin up. Knowing whatever crap you’re dealing with *right now* isn’t going to last forever. All things pass.”

I was with him up until this point. Because he’s wrong. “Not all things. Sometimes bad stuff *does* last. Sometimes it kills you.”

What would I have done in his situation? In Casper’s situation? Would I end my life before the cancer does? Maybe this is a very extreme scenario, but life can be complicated enough without an organic illness. That’s the case of Adam, a kid being ignored for the most time of his life, a soul erased by the perfection imposed by his parents. Or the case of Vince, whose parents gave up on him a long time before he remembers them and has been passed on from foster home to foster home.

Sadness is the rule of the day. And so much sadness drive people to do desperate movements.

"What've you got to lose? You're both miserable. Why not be miserable together?"  
I guess she's right. Misery does love company.

Like login in a pro-suicide forum, for instance.

Once upon a time, Vince saw a girl jumping from a bridge. He begins to think it a good idea, too.

“What was the wish I made back when Maggie died?  
That I wanted something to love. Someone to live for. Someone who would miss me.  
Now I have it, and I’m going to lose them.

This tale has been smooth to read because it’s masterfully written. There was no lump in my throat because I read the book like if it were an ordinary thing, an everyday thing. And in truth, that is the issue. For Vince this apathy in living is an everyday issue. He doesn’t feel angry, he doesn’t feel sorry. He just is there. He has been one foot on the narrow way, one foot on the edge his entire life, but something happens that pushes him to the emptiness and he wonders what does it feel to die.

Once upon a time, I lost everything and I was so alone. The sadness, the hurt, it all seemed to infinite. When you're wandering alone in a storm, you can't see the end, or if there even is one, and how close it might be.  
I'm still wandering, but maybe I don't feel so lost now.  
I'll keep trying. I promise.

But in a stroke of luck (or misfortune) he gets to know two people who will give him food for thought for some months. He is not unfixable. He can have a future. And he is not alone. If he leaves this world, there will be people who will miss him, and just the opposite. He finds people he will miss if they leave this world.

"You guys don't get it, do you?" She fixes her gaze on the ceiling. "You have forever. You have a *choice*."

My hands drop to my sides.

"There are all these shitty things, and you feel alone, and you feel sad, and sometimes the sadness is this all-encompassing... *thing*, this monster that eats you from the inside out. Not existing is the less painful alternative. But you and Adam have the rest of your lives to make things better and find happiness, you know?"

There is no sex in this book. I didn't miss it, either. This is a story of a boy who is broken and wants to end his life but during the way he finds reasons to live and ways to do so, and a person with whom to do so. Nothing excessively melodramatic, just the right proportions of romance, friendship, angst and pain. I fell in love with the three of them. I'll remember Casper's vitality on the edge of death. I'll remember Adam's silences on the edge of lonesomeness. And I'll remember Vince's voice on the edge of emptiness.

Have a life with me.  
Fight with me.  
Fix things with me.  
Everything will be okay because we'll make it okay.

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## Kaje Harper says

4.5 stars. This is a well written book about three teenagers who all have reasons to find life bleak and hopeless, and who come together first online and then in person, to discover that sometimes human contact can ease that bleakness. And sometimes it can't.

I thought the author did an admirable job of taking the reader into the mind of a near-suicidal teen, and particularly of finding ways to express his emotions clearly and vividly, but without overwrought angst. Vince has good reasons for his depression - he is alone, and has lost his one support person to unexpected death - but he also expresses the kind of overwhelming hopelessness and futility that is sometimes out of proportion to the visible cause of a person's pain. For many teens that feeling of black depression is less concretely tied to the real world, and yet is all too salient. All three teens in this story have very real causes for their pain, but there are so many more for whom the slings and arrows of life are more subtle but no less wounding. This book specifically acknowledges the reality of pain on all levels, and the inappropriateness of making comparisons and saying "I shouldn't be depressed because there are others worse off." It is what it is. At the same time there is a message of hope, of it-gets-better in a life sense, not just a gay bullying sense. "You're broken now, but you can be fixed."

Casper, the girl with cancer, is a wonderful character, and the driving force in the story between the two depressed boys, Vince and Adam. Were it not for her illness, you get the feeling Casper would be out there living life to the fullest. As it is, she tries to push her friends who have the hope of a future past their despair. And in coming together, the boys both find the beginnings of an answer to the hardest question to get past with suicidal teens. When you say "You can be fixed," they sometimes say, "Why bother?" Vince and Adam give each other reasons why.

There is a little bit of idealism and simplicity to this story that puts it into more of a YA territory for me. But in a book about depressed teens, it feels very appropriate to have hope, and closure. And the author does not shy away from logical consequences in most cases. Well written, moving, and hopeful.

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## Nina says

I honestly cannot write a review for this book. Not now, probably not ever. Also, I'm choking up again.

So I'm not going to talk about plot/characters or anything of the sort. I just want to mention a couple things.

This book is the kind of book that makes you want to change all your other ratings to one star because there is just so much distance between those books and this one, the kind of book that instantly enters your list of favourites and starts kicking the others in the balls just for the fun of seeing them run away cowed and terrified.

Aside from the sheer technical perfection of this - its perfect pacing, flowing narration, complete, compact plot, skillful writing - this book doesn't only delve into the characters' psyche, it also invades the reader's. We've all been through the angsty teenage phase - and, um, some of us are still going through it... \*waves\* - and I'm sure there's not one of you out there that has never felt completely alone and desperate, even for just one afternoon. If you try to remember those moments, it's not hard to imagine how it would be to live like that *every single day of your life*.

I have to admit that I have never given conscious thought to this topic. I've probably read or heard about suicides, of people around my age, even living in my own city, but I just dismissed the thought, thinking that it wasn't my problem. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't a conscious process; I just didn't really get it. I'm not saying that I do now, but I'm certainly closer to it.

While I was reading, I was just made so aware of *life*: life, in the most trivial, everyday sense, the noise in the street, the TV, the sounds in a house that you normally don't even notice. I couldn't help but think how people don't necessarily feel a part of it, involved in this meaningless noise. Some just feel left out, lonely, hopeless, and I don't even know what I'm saying, really. I just wanted to say this is something I noticed.

What I mean to say is that this book was actually about life, not death, for me. How people can make it better, get better, be better.

In the beginning, I thought I was reading the most deeply, overwhelmingly, drainingly sad thirty pages ever written. Then it got worse. Then people died.

And then I was lifted ten feet in the air by the most wonderful, uplifting, hopeful ending - splendid, because it's not definitive.

Wholeheartedly recommended.

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### ♥Laddie♥ (Lee Lee) says

#### I Could Not Sleep Until I Wrote This

About fifteen minutes ago I wrote a status update where I said that I wanted to sleep on my feelings for this book before I reviewed it. The problem is that it's so heavy on my mind that I can't sleep.

This book is so sad, poignant, and beautiful that it's indescribable and there is no way I'm going to do it any justice. I started this book after it was recommended to me. I'd just finished a book that left a bad taste in my mouth and I was looking for one that had a more positive portrayal of mental illness while still being realistic. I didn't know what to expect from *Suicide Watch* but whatever I was expecting it far surpassed anything I was hoping for.

Vincent broke my heart and then Casper broke my heart right before Adam came along and broke it some more. Once Vincent, Adam, and Casper were all together my heart was ripped to shreds. Their friendship was good and gorgeous because it saved them. It was also the most heartbreaking thing ever because I knew there was heartache coming and these three characters that I loved and felt in my heart were just so broken.

This book portrayed mental illness, emotions, melancholy, death, life, and everything in between in such a realistic way. It does it in a way that didn't make me feel like it was being unfair, melodramatic, or emotionally dishonest.

I cried, damn near sobbed and in the end there was a bit of a smile on my face because I had hope.

This review was not much of a review and more of a rambling mess but I needed to type out something so that this book might stop haunting me long enough to let me get some sleep.

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### MLE says

Beautifully stark, and haunting. I love that the author has pulled no punches, but still didn't fall into melodrama. The characters are the kind that stay with you, and I love the process they have to go through to come out the other side. There is no magic cure, no one person that makes everything better, they have to reach out to others to heal.

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## Sandra says

*Once upon a time, I lost everything and I was so alone. The sadness, the hurt, it all seemed so infinite. When you're wandering alone in a storm, you can't see the end, or if there is one, and how close it might be.*

*I'm still wandering, but maybe I don't feel so lost now.*

*I'll keep trying. I promise.*

It's hard being alone. I've been there, I still am actually. This book really hit me square in the chest. There are just so many things on here that I could relate to. I don't have cancer. I am not overly anxious. I haven't been abandoned. I don't have parents that ignores me. But still, I could relate to this book. **The feeling of loneliness. The feeling of sadness. The feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. They're all very familiar feelings to me, which is why this book really touched me.** It was like, I was one of them.

**Vincent** never knew what it was like to have a family. He felt unloved and unwanted - which is very understandable because her parents gave him away at a young age. He only knew what it was like to have foster parents, but not real ones. Then Maggie takes him in.

*Nobody wanted me. Not until Maggie.*

Maggie was the closest to a parent he ever had. He wanted to make her happy. But just when things were going well between her and Maggie - she had to leave him too.

*I want to cry. Crying would be the normal reaction to this, to losing someone who was more family to me than anyone else has been. Being a wreck would be better than this: feeling nothing and everything all at once and physically unable to react to any of it.*

There was nothing out there for him. No one was going to miss him when he's gone. He then often wonder about whether the girl she saw jump over the bridge made the right decision. **Was it right to submit to the feeling of emptiness? Was it right to just let go of everything?**

*What's it like to die?*

He's gone searching on the internet, then stumbled upon a website called **Suicide Watch**. It was a forum where people go, if they are thinking of giving up on life. He signs up, wanting to get some answers: should he or shouldn't he do it. Instead of answers, he unexpectedly found friends.

**Casper, Roxwell and Vincent** each have their own demons to face. They may not have the same ones, but they were able to help each other in ways that no body else could have.

**Let me talk about the characters**

***RoxWell has parent's that don't care.***

***Casper has parents that cared too much.***

***NowhereMan has no parents at all.***

Vincent's thoughts were very genuine. I wasn't put up for adoption. I wasn't given up to foster care. I don't get anxiety attacks. I do trust people. But I had, at some point in my life, felt alone, unwanted and uncared for. I understood what Vince went through, and all of them were valid responses to these types of scenarios. But of course, there will be some exceptions - those exceptions are mostly the ones that have someone to really guide them with what they're going through, unlike with Vince's case - he had no one. I get why he couldn't let himself trust anyone - he doesn't want to trust and then they'll just leave anyways. He was over with rejection. He was over with people not wanting him and giving him away. It is not a good feeling. As the story progressed, you'll see how he grows, and you'll smile, because you witnessed his journey. It wasn't easy to read, but it was worth it.

Casper would have to be the one that broke my heart the most. **I just really love this girl.** She reminds me so much of **Hazel Grace** from the **Fault in our Stars** only more rebellious and spunky. I actually think I like her more now than Hazel. Okay, so aside from cancer, they were both strong-willed girls. That's one of the things I love about them. They were fighting it. They knew the inevitable will come at some point, but they tried to live the most of what time they had left. I'm not gonna tell, but you probably know based on what I'm saying what will happen to her. It was very tragic for me. That part made me the saddest.

My pain is more of a family thing like Adam's. I get his pain the most. The difference though is that my mom focused too much on me. She focused too much on the stuff she wants me to do, never what I want. And that really fucked me up. I wish I had gone for what my aspirations were, chose the course I wanted to get, then maybe my life wouldn't have turned out the way it did. I love my mom, I really do. But there's still this part of me that thinks, life would have been far better, if I was given the choice. Adam's mom distanced herself from him more the moment his dad died. Like Vince, he felt alone and deserted by the people who should have been there for him.

**I still have a lot of feelings right now.**

***"Look. I know you think life is terrible. And it is. It's... pretty shitty, actually. But you weren't supposed to do this. Not yet. You think it's fine, because no one else will miss you, but you're wrong."***

***My voice hitches, cracks.***

***"You're really, really wrong, Adam. I would miss you."***

Everyone needs someone. Sometimes, knowing that someone's there, makes things better. Suicide's only an option for some, because they think, no one will care anyways, that no one will be affected if they die. **But they're wrong too.** There are people who care about them as well, they just couldn't see it, or doesn't want to see it sometimes.

Life is short. Death is inevitable. This book shows just how little time we all have through Casper. Casper's last days had become more than what it should have been because of Adam and Vincent. They made the last days of her life more bearable. She was so grateful to them, her parents, that she decided what needs to be decided - I'm not going to judge her for that. I know I'm already ranting about a bunch of random stuff, but my point is, that we have an effect on other people. What little thing we do for others, maybe a big deal for them. By the way, it wasn't only Adam and Vincent who's done something good here. Casper has done her fair share as well like bringing Vincent and Adam together.

*Have a life with me.*

*Fight with me.*

*Fix things with me.*

*Everything will be okay because we'll make it okay.*

Another thing that surprised me the most, is how much I was rooting for Vincent and Adam. **I would not have ever imagined that.** I'll be honest, I have never read a book with a guy and a guy falling in love. I actually had a feeling that there will be something like it as I was reading, but surprisingly, I didn't care at all. In fact, I absolutely wanted them to be together. They were perfect for each other. **Who says two broken people couldn't make a whole?** LOL. I'm serious though, I think it's one of the things that drawn me to this book, it made you love and understand things you couldn't.

Not everyone could understand why a depressed person would want to kill himself. Not everyone would understand why a girl with cancer would endangers herself by sneaking out of the house just for the sake of fun. Not everyone would understand why someone would wreck his mom's carpet just to get her attention,. Not everyone could understand what they're going through, but this book made us think about the why these people are doing it, not the what. You get to understand why these kids act the way they act.

I'm not sure if I reviewed this book right, mostly, I just rambled on and on about stuff that relates to it and not really to review the entire content of it. This book is a poignant coming of age story about three teenagers fighting their urge to end life. It will make you laugh. It will make you cry. It will make you happy. It will make you sad. It will make you feel all sorts of emotions. I highly recommend this. This book is a message of encouragement to all those out there who are feeling down and alone.

*You have the rest of your life to fix what's broken.*

*And the "rest of your life" is only as short as you make it.*

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**Mona says**

*My advice...don't read my review. Go make your own opinion of this book...before my review SPOILS it for you.*

#### **\*\*4.6 Touching and Heart-rending Stars\*\***

I need you, I need you. I need something.  
Someone.

**Suicide Watch** equals, *sadness*, extremely emotional thoughts and feelings, a need for oblivion, madness and heart breaking circumstances, where **suicide** is the answer.

A book that will deeply affect you, have your **heart** aching and push you to the edge of your comfort.

A realistic story,  
when surrounded by fairy tales.

It will open your *eyes*, to the grief and **depression** people may go through. A fiction read...yes, but that doesn't necessarily mean this doesn't happen, or people don't *suffer* from depression and **suicidal** thoughts. After finishing this book, I believe that everything we read, watch or hear, somehow teaches us about life and the people we are *surrounded* by.

**Vincent** is alone in this world. Given away by his parents at a young age, Vincent has spent his childhood and teen years in foster care. His shuffled from one home to another, **unwanted, unloved and easily forgotten**. Until Maggie takes him in. Even though he stays with Maggie for three years, Vincent suffers from thoughts of **abandonment**. His unsettled and waiting on the day she too, will also shuffle him off.

***Breathe in, breathe out. Over and over again. Just to prove a broken heart can't really kill you.***

But that day doesn't come. Unfortunately Maggie leaves Vincent, *involuntarily*...when he needs her most.

**Alone** again in this world, lost and with no idea how to move forward, Vincent reaches a point in his life where **suicide** becomes an option. A form of *relief*...but the question is, will anyone miss him? If only he can find one person that **wants** him to stay.

***I open an internet browser and, after starring at it for awhile, I type in the only thing I can think of. What's it like to die?***

He signs up on a site called Suicide Watch, under the name of **NowhereMan**. This site is for people looking to **end** their life, and the best methods to go by. But the question is...will this free him from his **demons**? Free him to find the relief he's seeking?

Here he meets, **Casper** and **RoxWell**. The three form a friendship...even with **death** being their mutual connection, they somehow make it work. Each of them *suffering* for their own reasons. Casper aka **Caitlin**,

is sick and dying, with devoted and protective parents...but wishes to leave this *world* on her own terms. RoxWell aka **Adam**, has always been easily pushed aside and forgotten by uncaring and selfish parents...leading him to have a **bad** home life.

*RoxWell has parents who don't care.*  
*Casper has parents who care too much.*  
*NowhereMan has no parents at all.*

The three, soon meet and become best friends...and struggle together, with their decisions on how to **end** their difficult lives. One, having no choice in the matter, due to *sickness*...while the others choices are chosen freely. Slowly, the three realize the hardship of leaving this *world*...and those you've connected with and grown to *love*.

**Blackbird by Alter Bridge** comes to mind, when reading certain scenes throughout the book.  
(view spoiler)

A difficult journey, in a world where the living are on the brink of **death**...drifting fare beyond the **edge** of their sanity. A story that will stay with me and push me to believe...

*"Just because someone doesn't act or look unhappy doesn't mean their lives are perfect."*

A story that should be experienced, **read** and not forgotten.

**So mates, even though this isn't your typical romance, even though you'll grieve and shed tears...you should give this book a chance. Experience the life on the other side of happiness...and be apart of their lives, as they grow to become stronger and better xx**

Keep fighting.  
You have the rest of your lives to fix  
what's broken.

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