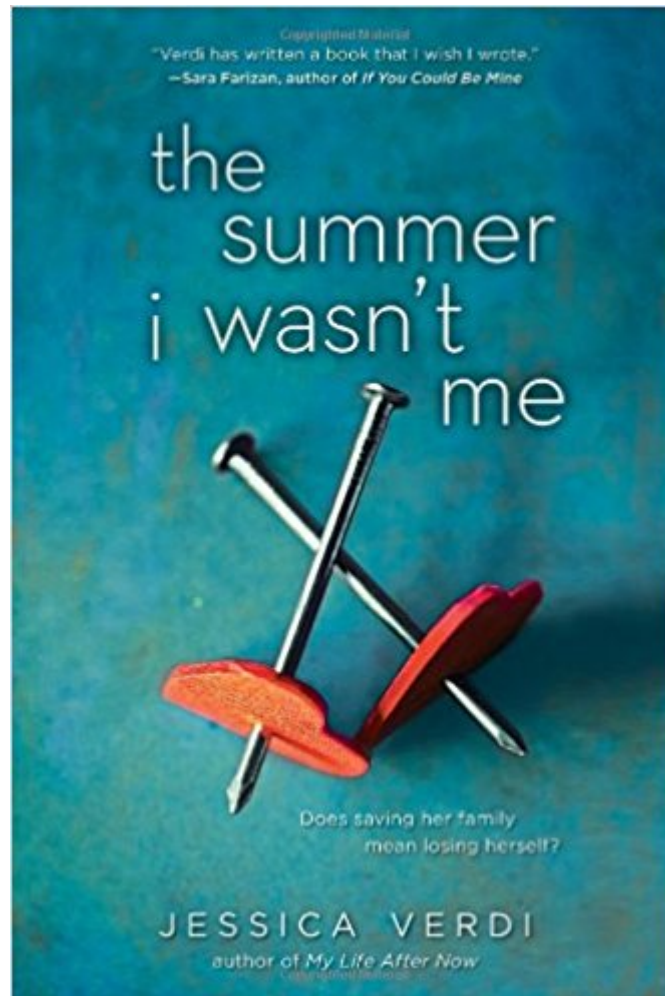




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# The Summer I Wasn't Me



## Synopsis

Lexi would do anything to keep her broken family together. Even if it means denying who she really is. You are on the road to truth. Help is on the way. The road signs leading to New Horizons summer camp promise a new life for seventeen-year-old Lexi. Ever since her mom found out she was in love with a girl, her broken family has been pulled even further apart. But Lexi swears she can change. Denying her feelings is harder than she thinks. And when she falls heads over heels for one of her fellow campers, Lexi will have to risk her mother's approval for the one person who might love her no matter what.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up "Lexi Hamilton feels her homosexuality is too much of a burden on her recently widowed mother, so she agrees to go away for the summer. At Camp Horizon, a Christian "un-gaying" institution on the East Coast, each teen reveals his or her past trauma in group therapy sessions led by the evil Jeremiah Martin. What keeps campers cooperating is that, like Lexi, the reality they've gotten away from seems much worse. Only Matthew, in love with Justin at home, remains aloof, until Mr. Martin selects him for his personal brand of mistreatment, and a rebellion ensues. Kids' doubts and misgivings about both identity and religious beliefs get a good airing here, and two books familiar to high school readersâThe Great Gatsby and the "Harry Potter" seriesâprovide an interesting backdrop for these discussions. The trouble with *The Summer I Wasn't Me* is that since Lexi is likable from the start, we know she isn't going to change; good for her, but tough on readers, who must endure a contrived and drawn-out ending that attempts to convert this too-long novel into

a page-turner.â "Georgia Christgau, Middle College High School, Long Island City, NY

Since the death of Lexiâ™s father, Lexiâ™s conservative Christian mother has been a shell of herself. When she discovers the truth about Lexiâ™s sexuality, her depression worsens, so Lexi agrees to attend a camp that promises to make her straight. But when she falls for a fellow camper, Lexi becomes conflicted. With this crush, as well as a new friend who doesnâ™t believe in what the camp preaches, Lexi has to decide how she can be true to herself and still keep her family together. Lexi comes off as a bit naive about her camp experience, and the characters that surround her arenâ™t always fully fleshed out. Furthermore, the eventual reveal about the camp leader and the truth about what has been happening is a bit predictable. But even given the overly neat resolution of Lexiâ™s crush on Carolyn, their relationship develops in a satisfying way. This would be a fine additional purchase for libraries looking to shore up their LGBT collection. Grades 9-12. --Sarah Bean Thompson

Lexi never got to tell her father her most important secret and now he's dead, a victim of pancreatic cancer. Her mother, a teacher, tumbled into a deep depression after her husband's death and Lexi would do anything to pull her mom back from the brink. When Mom finds a telling sketch in her notebook, one that opens up Lexi's sexuality, her mother goes completely off the deep end. In order to bring her mom back, she agrees to go to New Horizons Summer Camp, a christian camp that claims it can reprogram gay teens to be straight. At first, Lexi has some hope. The director of the camp claims he's been straight and happy for ten years. Most of the counselors also say that the program worked for them. Lexi just wants her mother to be okay again and is willing to do whatever that takes. Her resolve is seriously weakened when she's placed in a group of four teens with Carolyn, a quiet and beautiful blonde from Connecticut. The two boys in the group, Matthew and Daniel are interesting opposites. Daniel is continually abused both verbally and physically by his dad who drinks. He'll do anything to feel normal and stop the abuse. Matthew is fine being gay and even has a long-term relationship back home. His father, however can't stand the thought of a gay son and has issued an ultimatum: Make it through the two month program, or don't come home. The story takes you through the exercises designed to reprogram the teens as well as giving the reader an intimate look at how camper ticks and why. As the camp session goes on, Lexi begins to start questioning the methods, and more importantly, the supposed success of the program. When she can't hide her attraction for Caroline and Matthew steps over the line and is placed in a very frightening and dangerous situation, Lexi, Daniel and Caroline have to decide what's really

important. This is one heck of a book, but it has the potential to polarize people. Those who are of the mindset that homosexuality is a learned trait, will not like this book, those who are more open-minded may well like it as much as I did. Regardless of how you feel, this is a great book for creating a dialogue about an extremely important issue that many teens and their families face.

The story was good but I feel as though it could have been better. The characters were very hard to visualize because we got so little information to go on. They weren't exactly fleshed out either. Overall I'm giving this book 5 stars because it was entertaining to read and actually was pretty accurate in the way it portrayed the fundamentals of a conversion camp.

Yeah, it was a pretty good read. I read it in one night. It definitely had the right idea on those de-gaying camps and the people that run and attend them. The only thing was it got real weird, real fast. What with the child abuse and the exorcism... I don't know, it was sort of strange, but good. The relationship was cute and it showed the good and the bad of being found out as gay by your parents, and it manages to work in the religious aspect of the people who believe homosexuality is "sinful" without all out bashing Christianity itself. So yeah, pretty good, a bit strange, but I liked it.

This was a really great book and a different take on the traditional reparative therapy novel as the girl was there mostly by choice and she herself very much wanted to change, typically the kids in these books are forced into it by parents/church leaders. I liked the take of 2 girls who very much both wanted it to work, for different reasons, and how they dealt with finding out it definitely wasn't possible to change despite their best efforts. I could of done without the drama of an evil minister running the camp, mostly cause that's been done many times, but, yea, still a great book that I totally suggest.

I am profoundly happy to have found this novel because until I had found it I had told people there was no good lesbian fiction out there. I denied it's existence but Jessica Verdi wrote a novel I enjoyed with a protagonist I deeply related to. It was funny, poignant and wise beyond it's pages. I will be giving it to my mom when I come out to her because I think it conveys all the struggles this journey encompasses and maybe it'll help her like it helped me. Read it. You won't regret it.

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