

This blog contains MAJOR spoilers!!!



Autumn, a freshman who just began high school, is growing apart from her childhood best friend Finny. When they were younger Autumn and Finny would hang out with each other any chance they got, but now that they've started high school they have become a part of two different groups. Autumn wants to keep her and Finny's relationship strong, but their separate friend groups have made it hard, and whenever they see each other neither of them knows what to say. So, throughout the rest of high school Finny and Autumn both do their best to avoid each other. Then, the summer after Finny and Autumn graduate Autumn's boyfriend breaks up with her. This leaves Autumn heartbroken. Finny decides to spend the summer with Autumn and help her heal. Will Autumn and Finny become best friends again, or will they go backward and grow apart even more? This story demonstrates the theme, when people take things for granted it can lead to regret.

When Finny realizes that Autumn has always been in love with him it displays the theme, that when people take things for granted can lead to regret. Finny realizes that he should've told Autumn that he loved her earlier when Autumn confessed her love for him. "I do" Her voice is trembling but certain. " 'Since when? *Since last night? Since last month?* ' 'I dunno,' she whispers 'Maybe since forever too, I just didn't admit it since two years ago.' *Maybe forever too?* She loves me. She really, truly loves me." (Nowlin 97-98). After Autumn tells him this he feels regretful. He recognizes that if they had shared their love for each other sooner it would have led to them getting to spend more time together. So he goes to break up with Sylvie, his girlfriend. He gets in a car wreck and passes. This shows how both Finny and Autumn took each other's love for granted and both landed in regret.

When Autumn relives a moment in *If He Had Been With Me*, by Laura Nowlin, it demonstrates the theme, when people take things for granted it can lead to regret. The prime

conflict in the story is character vs. self, as seen when, throughout the story, both characters debate with themselves about confronting the other and sharing their true feelings. Autumn is in a shop when she returns to a moment she regrets when Finny was alive. "Everything stops. There's no boutique. No onsie in my hand. I'm sitting on that hospital bed with him, and he loves me but I don't know it. How could I not know it? It's so stupidly obvious now, and I want to scream at us, but I can't. We say the things we said that day, and even though every word was "I love you." it also wasn't. And I can't change that. I can't change that. I can't, I can't, I can't, I can't...Oh, God." (Nowlin 385-386) In this quote, Autumn realizes that if she and Finny had been honest with each other earlier and shared their true feelings, everything would have been different.

I would rate *If He Had Been With Me* a 9.75/10. I really really enjoyed the plot of this book. Even though I knew what was going to happen, I still loved the storyline and the author did a great job on the characters. The only downside is that some parts in the middle were slow, and it was a bit predictable. I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys realistic fiction and romance.