

*Girl, Interrupted* is a novel that went in a completely opposite direction from what I expected while simultaneously leaving me with a new perspective on subjects I never touched upon prior. What I came into expecting a dramatic, distressed retelling of the author's experience in a psych ward—mostly due to clips of its movie adaptation I've come across—ended up being a strikingly calm, composed novel that accurately portrays the reality of mental illness and institutionalization without turning it into a sensationalized thriller for the sake of entertainment. Susanna Kaysen narrates how she got hospitalized in 1967, her observations of other patients, and her own thoughts on how people view her and others considered “insane”. Her writing style is straight to the point, and she never needs to embellish the story she's telling for the reader to be compelled by the struggles she observes of both herself and her peers. Susanna is hyperaware of herself and in no way delusional, unlike others she describes with manic episodes, hallucinations, blinding rage or hysteria, etc. This is precisely why she is such a good narrator and analyzer of her and others' behavior; she shares this common ground with the “insane”, unblocked by the social boundary of regular and irregular, but she doesn't have the unawareness to be misguided in her observations. Susanna gives readers a true description of individuals with mental illness that's not from the perspective of a doctor or self proclaimed not crazy person. She doesn't set these ‘crazy’ people apart from herself or the reader— instead, she poses the question: what makes you any different? Sure, it can be that you don't have homicidal tendencies or see shadows lurking in the dark, but neither did Susanna. Yet, she was still put in the same box. She was still deemed just as unfit for society because nevertheless she remained irregular, and once you're established as insane, you can't be anything else. The consideration of ‘crazy’ was to be a confused, depressed, youth, especially in the sixties. But she wasn't violent or unable to survive

on her own, neither were many of the other girls in her unit. They were really just girls, interrupted.

*Girl, Interrupted* stuck with me so much because it gives you a story readers can connect with even if they've never stepped foot in a psych ward. It resonates with the part of your mind many would rather not dissect. If you want a new way of viewing yourself with an open ear to the side of everyone society keeps tucked away, I believe *Girl, Interrupted* is definitely for you.