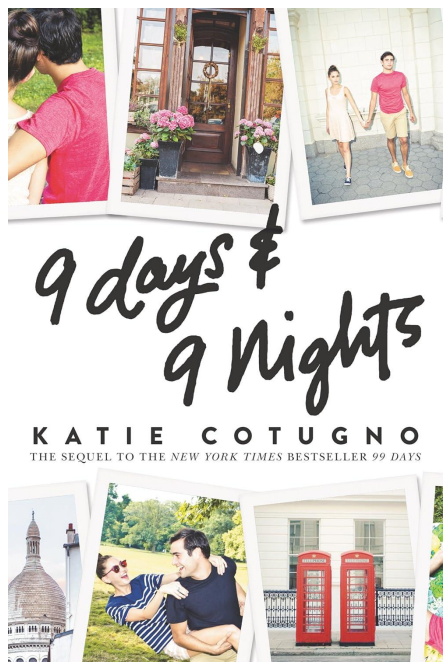


9 Days & 9 Nights



Book Summary

This is the sequel to 99 days, Molly has to spend nine days and nine nights with the boy she once loved, the boy whose heart she shredded, without Ian knowing.

Summary of Concerns

This book contains; abortion, alcohol/abuse, anxiety, deception, derogatory terms, drugs (mentioned), emotional abuse, profanity, and toxic relationships.

YA

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CONTENT WARNING

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Youth Restricted

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13	But what was I supposed to tell him? I spent the bulk of my high school career playing the hypotenuse of a ridiculous love triangle that you can read all about in my author mom's international bestseller? "I'm not trying to be an asshole, I just—"
24	"It'll be at least forty-five minutes," the hostess says, once we make our way through the crowd; she's got impossibly long lashes and cat-eye liner, a smart black dress paired with combat boots. "You could get a pint while you wait?" "You wanna bail?" Ian asks, checking his watch and glancing back toward the exit. "We can still make your reservation, if you want." "Actually, no," I hear myself say, surprised by the urge to stray from my carefully curated itinerary. But there's something about the energy of this place that I like, a sense of possibility. I watch a burly, bearded waiter hurry by with a tray of bright-pink cocktails in delicate champagne coupes. "Let's stay." Ian orders us a couple of beers and we find a spot to post up near the bar as the crowd thickens all around us, cologne and bright lipstick and plaid button-down shirts. We keep getting muscled into each other, my chest pressed up against Ian's. Behind me a girl who's already half drunk is telling a very enthusiastic story to her friends, all hand gestures and colorful British expletives; I duck out of her way, scooting from side to side to avoid a pint glass to the back of the head. After a while I've got a rhythm down—my hips rocking ever so slightly into Ian's, then back again, holding my glass up so I don't spill on my dress. Beer drips down onto my wrist. I lift my arm to lick it away and when I look back up Ian is staring at me, the intent on his face so overt it makes me shiver. He raises his eyebrows, something that just misses being a smile tweaking the corners of his mouth. "What are we, dancing?" he asks, head tipped down close to mine.
49	Forty-five minutes later we've polished off the rest of the wine, plus some Jameson and an ancient, dust-furred bottle of Sambuca Ian found at the back of a kitchen cabinet. Imogen is warm and giggly, lying on her back with her head propped up on a stack of throw pillows. There's a humming looseness in my limbs. Only Sadie, who has apparently never so much as jaywalked, is still resolutely sober, sitting with her tan fingers wrapped around the bowl of her wineglass as the rest of us confess to cheating on finals (Gabe and Imogen), shoplifting (me and Imogen together, plus Ian in an incident involving a plastic dinosaur when he was six), and having sex in a public place (Imogen again).
51	"Um, yeah," Gabe says quickly, sounding a bit rattled himself. "I am." "I . . . see that," I agree. My eyes flick around the green-tiled bathroom for a second, desperately trying to find somewhere safe to land, but it's like everywhere I look there's Gabe and his mostly naked body, his chest and his collarbones and the faint trail of dark hair between his navel and his waistband. "Sorry. I'll—" I motion toward the door so enthusiastically that one of my headphones flies out of my hand and lassoes itself around the doorknob. I grimace.
61	After all, my mom would never have been my mom to begin with if some other couple hadn't taken exactly that route eighteen years before. But for everything I'd ever been taught— everything I'd ever believed—about a woman's right to choose, nothing about this felt like a choice to me, not really. It wasn't something I'd consciously decided. I was a freshman in college, and Gabe hadn't even returned my phone call. There was no way I was ready to have a kid. It occurred to me, not for the first time and definitely not for the last, how lucky I was that I had the option not to. "But I just—" "I want you to do whatever's right for you," my mom interrupted quietly. "And that's all." She came to Boston the following morning, took me to the clinic the day after that; once the procedure was over she brought me back to her hotel in Copley Square, a tall old-fashioned building with a view of the park and a fireplace in the lobby, cookies frosted with the Red Sox logo in little cellophane bags on the pillows.
82	We made up for lost time last summer: we saw old movies at the theater in Silverton and went to noisy parties with his friends down at the dock and rode the Ferris wheel at the Knights of Columbus carnival, all of Star Lake spread out in front of us as bright as a quilt. I lost my virginity to Gabe, for Pete's sake: I loved him. And I thought—no, I was sure—he loved me, too. It wasn't until the fall that I started to worry that none of it had actually been real.

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87	"Are you okay?" Ian asks, and I startle; I didn't even realize he was awake. I look over at his sweet, sleepy face and abruptly feel like the Loch Ness Monster: why the hell am I obsessing over Gabe and his girlfriend when I'm lying next to Ian? Enough is enough. "Just hung over," I say, even though between all my ridiculous, farcical encounters I hardly had time to drink anything last night at all. Then, pulling him toward me on an impulse: "Come here." I slide my hands up under Ian's T-shirt, bite lightly at his bottom lip. Then, a second later, I wrinkle my nose and push him gently away. "Okay," I say, laughing a little. "Wait, maybe not. Your mouth tastes like ass." "I just woke up two seconds ago!" Ian protests. "And you're the one kissing me! You think you taste like a fucking Shamrock Shake right now?" Then he grins, pulling me back under the covers. "Don't stop." That makes me laugh, warm and pleased-feeling; I'm settling in closer when Imogen's voice rings out.
88	"You guys took off early," Ian says, nodding at Gabe and then Sadie, who's slicing tomatoes at the kitchen table, rosy-cheeked and satisfied like a person who unequivocally spent the night having super-romantic makeup sex. Just looking at her makes me want to howl.
111	"Molly," he says quietly. "Come here." He reaches for me as I climb under the covers; his mouth is warm and eager and wet. I scratch my fingernails through the hair at the nape of his neck, running the bottom of my foot along the back of his calf and trying to relax. After all, it's not like I'm ever going to find a more romantic venue: the moonlight makes patterns on the plush Oriental carpet. The duvet is cumulus fluffy and soft. If ever there was a perfect moment to have sex with your boyfriend for the first time—if all my hesitation really has been about waiting for one—alone in his parents' French vacation house is probably about as ideal as a reasonable person could hope to get. The muscles in my shoulders are balled tight as socks underneath my skin, my fight-or-flight instincts all humming; when Ian reaches for the drawstring on my pajama bottoms, I freeze. I take a steadying breath and kiss him harder, knowing even as I do it that I'm overcompensating, that it feels fake and forced and strange. God, what is my malfunction tonight? It's Ian. I love him. We had an amazing day together. Our whole trip has been leading up to this moment—in a lot of ways, our whole relationship has.
112	"Wait," I say, sitting up finally, my feet sliding against the starched sheets as I push him gently away. "Hang on a sec, I just—" "Hm?" Ian's voice is a tiny bit slow, distraction, or maybe he's drunker than I thought. He goes for my waistband again, smiling a little like he thinks we're playing a game. I shake my head. "Easy." Then, more forcefully, wrapping my hand around his wrist: "Hey." Ian's smile falls. "What?" he asks. "Just hold up a minute, okay?" I take a deep breath. "I just—I don't—" I break off. "I don't know if tonight should be the night." "Oh." Ian sits up, scratching at the back of his neck. He exhales, something that might be a normal breath and might be a sigh. "All right." I wince. "Don't be mad, okay?" "No, I'm not mad. But, like—this trip is almost over, you know?" I blink. "Meaning what, exactly?" Ian shrugs; his T-shirt is in a puddle at the foot of the mattress, and he makes a fist in it with one hand. "Meaning we've been together a long time, we're exclusive, we're in France—" "Wait a second." I sit bolt upright. "Did you bring me to Europe specifically to have sex with me?" "No!" Ian says, sounding honestly offended. "Of course not. But—" "Because I don't actually owe it to you to have sex with you," I inform him, swinging both legs off the mattress and standing up. "You know that, right? We could date for twenty years, we could be married, and I do not have to have sex with you if I don't want to." "Of course I know that," Ian says, shaking his head like I'm being dramatic. "Come on, Molly, don't make it like that." "Don't make it like what?" "Like I'm a fucking sex predator!" he all but shouts. He's never sworn at me in anger before, not once in all the time we've been together; I flinch, glancing instinctively at the closed door. The last thing I want is for Gabe and Sadie to overhear us. Ian takes a breath. "You're my girlfriend," he continues, lowering his voice with what seems like some effort. "It doesn't make me a creep to want to have sex with you." "I'm not saying you're a creep," I protest. "I'm saying it's not cool to put pressure on me when—" "I'm not putting pressure on you!" "Then what do you call this?" This time, I'm the one who's yelling; Ian looks startled, then slightly cowed. "It's not some gross, cheap thing," he says after a moment, raking a hand through his beard roughly enough to yank it right off his face. "I want to be

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113	close to you. I want to know you. And yeah, sex is a part of that for me.” He looks at me for a moment. “Really, in all honesty. Do you even I—” “Don’t you dare,” I interrupt him, holding up a hand. “Don’t you dare ask if I even love you.” I’m furious; I’m actually outraged. But I’m also worried that he’s right. After all, at what point do I need to admit out loud that this isn’t about waiting for some hypothetical perfect moment? At what point do I need to admit that this is just about . . . me?

Profanity & Sexual or Derogatory Terms	Count
Ass / Jackass / Asshole etc.	11
Bitch	3
Dick	5
Fuck, Fucked, Fucking, etc.	34
Piss	6
Shit / Bullshit etc.	15
Slut	2
Sacrilegious & other offensive language usage	Count
Damn	5
God / God damn etc.	28
Hell	8
Jesus	5
Christ	4

