

VERITY

COLLEEN HOOVER

WHO'S TRUTH
IS THE LIE?

"Everyone has
secrets...*right?*"

INSIDERS'
UNWRAP

"FIND WHAT
YOU LOVE
AND LET IT
KILL YOU"

ON THE SAME PAGE

AUGUST 2022

DISCLAIMER!!

Hello and welcome aboard to the reflections of the August voyages! The fact that you have clicked on this link proves that you are intrigued and we will squander no time. Just for a quick introduction- 'We' are On The Same Page, a literature association that began in August and are presenting to you the findings of our monthly readathons (a reading marathon).

Consisting of members who share a dying passion for ink on paper. If you truly believe that literature isn't a field which may be of interest to you, you can keep scrolling, and it was nice knowing you!

But if, even the most minute muscle in your body is gravitating you to know more, join us on this adventure. Together we can cherish and enrich our love for reading and build a bond with books that can never be severed.

For most introverts out there who are reading this, I think we can agree that when it comes to the August monsoon weather, there is nothing in the world that can stop us from curling up with a blanket and binge-reading an enticing thriller while listening to the pitter-patter of the rain.

The gloomy aesthetic of the month was all the volunteers needed to pick a sensational psychological thriller that has been a New York Times bestseller for 37 consecutive weeks by the book tok sensation- Colleen Hoover.

SPOILER FREE!!

Verity's story will leave goosebumps permanently engraved on your skin. A quick disclaimer: This book is not for the faint hearted and deals with gore and violence, and an unorthodox journey of grief that may be sensitive to some readers. The story is unlike any novel ever written and it focuses on accepting the darkness in people as much as you accept their light.

Colleen Hoover's mind-boggling novel refers to perpetually unlucky people as "chronics", a nickname given to those who are prone to loss and tragedy. Enduring terrible occurrences after another, as though it was written in their destiny.

Lowen Ashleigh is a struggling writer on the brink of financial ruin when she accepts the job offer of a lifetime. Jeremy Crawford, husband of bestselling author Verity Crawford, has hired Lowen to complete the remaining books in a successful series his injured wife is unable to finish.

Lowen arrives at the Crawford home, ready to sort through years of Verity's notes and outlines, hoping to find enough material to get her started. What Lowen doesn't expect to uncover in the chaotic office is an unfinished autobiography Verity never intended for anyone to read. Page after page of bone-chilling admissions, including Verity's recollection of the night her family was forever altered.

In the words of the author herself: "What you will read will taste so bad at times, you'll want to spit it out, but you swallow these words and they will become a part of you, part of your gut, and you will hurt because of them."

I don't know how much more persuasion one would need before they picked up this novel, if you think it's something you would be able to bear, do not let this opportunity slip past you."

Happy reading :)

SPOILER DISCUSSION!!- WHO'S TRUTH IS THE LIE?

After reading this book I've started thinking of myself as a psychological thriller chronic: Every time, I go in with high expectations, and inevitably, I end up desperate to hurl the book across the room. Would that happen again with this one? It's something that I asked myself from the moment I picked up the story. Colleen Hoover is best known for her unanticipated plot twists, before she launches you off the cliff with no harness to catch your landing.

Having previously read other books by the author before, I thought I could brace myself for the turning point of the story if not predict the events, but never did I ever believe that it would turn out the way it did. Each time I felt as though I was hanging off of the edge, Colleen would lift me back up only to finally stab me in the back. From the moment Lowen accepted the terms of the deal, I always felt disturbed, but I could never really point my finger as to what it was.

At the house Lowen learns Verity is bedridden and according to the nurse, Verity's mental state is fragile and her functions are equal to that of an infant. Through the process of Lowen's research, she stumbles upon a draft of Verity's autobiography which reveals that the woman is as disturbed as her fictional characters. The autobiography, commonly referred to as the 'Manuscript' focuses on uncovering the dark secrets of Verity's life.

The chapters focus on Verity's obsession with her husband, her pregnancy, which she attempted to abort with a hanger and a deep hatred for her own twin daughters and the events following the tragedy. Colleen Hoover juggles between perspectives, and while I was reading the story it felt as though I was looking at two different characters. There were chapters where one would see Verity being a passionate and flawed human, contrary to those where she is portrayed as a villain.

SPOILER DISCUSSION!!- WHO'S TRUTH IS THE LIE?

Verity loved her husband to an infinite degree and that love turned into her obsession. Living in a life which was built on lies made her insecure and she relied on her emotions for Jeremy as a motivator through her day. When she realised that Jeremy loved her daughters more than her, it was a trigger for her. It awakened a dark and malevolent side of her.

The chapters through which Verity attempts to choke the daughter she likes the least, Harper in infancy, was extremely challenging to read. The internal battle of emotions and anger made me want to tear apart the pages of the story. There have been countless instances where I had to put the book down to process and really understand what I had just read.

Coming back to present day, where peculiar occurrences keep happening: Jeremy and Verity's remaining child Crew, waves to his supposedly comatose mother in the window suggesting she was looking out to him. Lowen thinks she sees Verity at the top of the stairs, and Crew casually mentions talking to his mother, leading Lowen to question if Verity is really as 'delicate' as was believed.
(Clearly not!)

Still, for inexplicable reasons, Lowen remains in the Vermont home. As her feelings for Jeremy deepen, she finds herself in a situation where she's unable to leave without him. No good-looking face is worth sleeping in a potential psychopath's home! Naturally, things only get worse: Lowen reads the final chapter of Verity's manuscript, in which she describes intentionally dumping her remaining daughter in a lake to drown. When Lowen finally confronts Jeremy and Verity, the climax unfolds, which reveals that Verity is not brain-damaged, after all.

SPOILER DISCUSSION!!- WHO'S TRUTH IS THE LIE?

“I’ll explain everything,” she begs a rabid Jeremy and as a result, the intense grief causes him to want to kill her. With the help of Lowen, he suffocates her with a pillow and Verity is said to have died by choking on her vomit.

Apart from the entire scene and how wrong it all is, this book has taught me different ways in which a person can successfully be killed. It's all a reflection of the dark and sadistic atmosphere. Something that I noticed while reading, that I really admired about the writing style, is how through the progression of the book Lowen becomes the next “Verity”.

Just like how obsessive and entranced Verity was at the beginning of the story, Lowen ends up replacing her. In addition to which, by hiding the contents of the Letter from Jeremy, she is doing the exact same thing Verity did with the manuscript. The author subtly merges both the characters together to form two distinct plotlines yet identical series of events.

That’s a lot to take in, but the pace of the novel only quickens. Fast-forward seven months, and Verity’s killers – Jeremy and Lowen – are living happily ever after, about to welcome a baby girl. The duo make one final trip to Vermont to clean out the old house. While there, Lowen discovers a letter hidden under the floorboards of Verity’s bedroom, addressed to Jeremy. Fearfully, she starts to read...

THAT LEAD'S TO THE FINAL QUESTION- TEAM LETTER OR TEAM MANUSCRIPT?

If we're to believe the letter, Verity's autobiography was a lie - a writing exercise that helped her cope with unbearable grief. Her editor introduced her to a technique called "antagonistic journaling," which would help her get in the mind of evil characters by writing journal entries about her own life, but making the inner dialogue opposite what she had really experienced. "It was never meant for anyone to read and believe. It was an exercise ... A way to tap into the dark grief that was eating at me," she writes.

And apparently, Jeremy had already found the manuscript - and in a blind rage, packed Verity into their car, drove her into a tree and left her for dead. Except the plan didn't work, and she survived. Verity pretended to be comatose to buy herself time before she was able to run away in the middle of the night with the couple's son. "I don't blame you for what you've done to me," she writes. "You were a wonderful husband until you couldn't be. And you were the best father in the world."

Does that make Lowen and Jeremy guilty of committing a murder? Did Verity deserve to die?

What about Jeremy? Is he as perfect as we thought him to be or is he also battling his own grief stricken demons?

Questions upon questions left unanswered and readers lost in the darkness of the plot.

What we do know is that if Verity is clever and sinister enough to commit the acts she described with her own husband in the dark, for years to come, she clearly has a flair for inventing stories. Her letter could have easily been an attempt to redeem herself, especially if she thought her son would be the one to find it. (The letter was hidden in a spot that only he knew about.)

I made the mistake of reading the novel at 2 am and it is perhaps the most disquieting twist I have ever read. It made my intestines knot together and I spent hours awake in the dark trying to justify the ending. WHO IS VERITY? Was she a murderous sociopath we read or simply an expressive writer dealing with grief in an unorthodox way?

But either way, it is clear that Verity was not mentally stable. She was facing an internal battle with her inner demons, and in order for a person to be able to have the stomach to write such sickening stories, even through grief- it is all an indicator of something clearly wrong. Just like Colleen suggested, everyone has a dark side and I am convinced that every single character in this story needs to go and see a psychiatrist. Especially, Crew. The poor boy has gone through gore that no adult has ever even thought of in their life. And considering how each of the characters turned out in the end, if he ends up a sociopath, I wouldn't say I am surprised.

Verity delivers the grand slam of thriller twists and I didn't have to like it, yet it lit something inside of me.

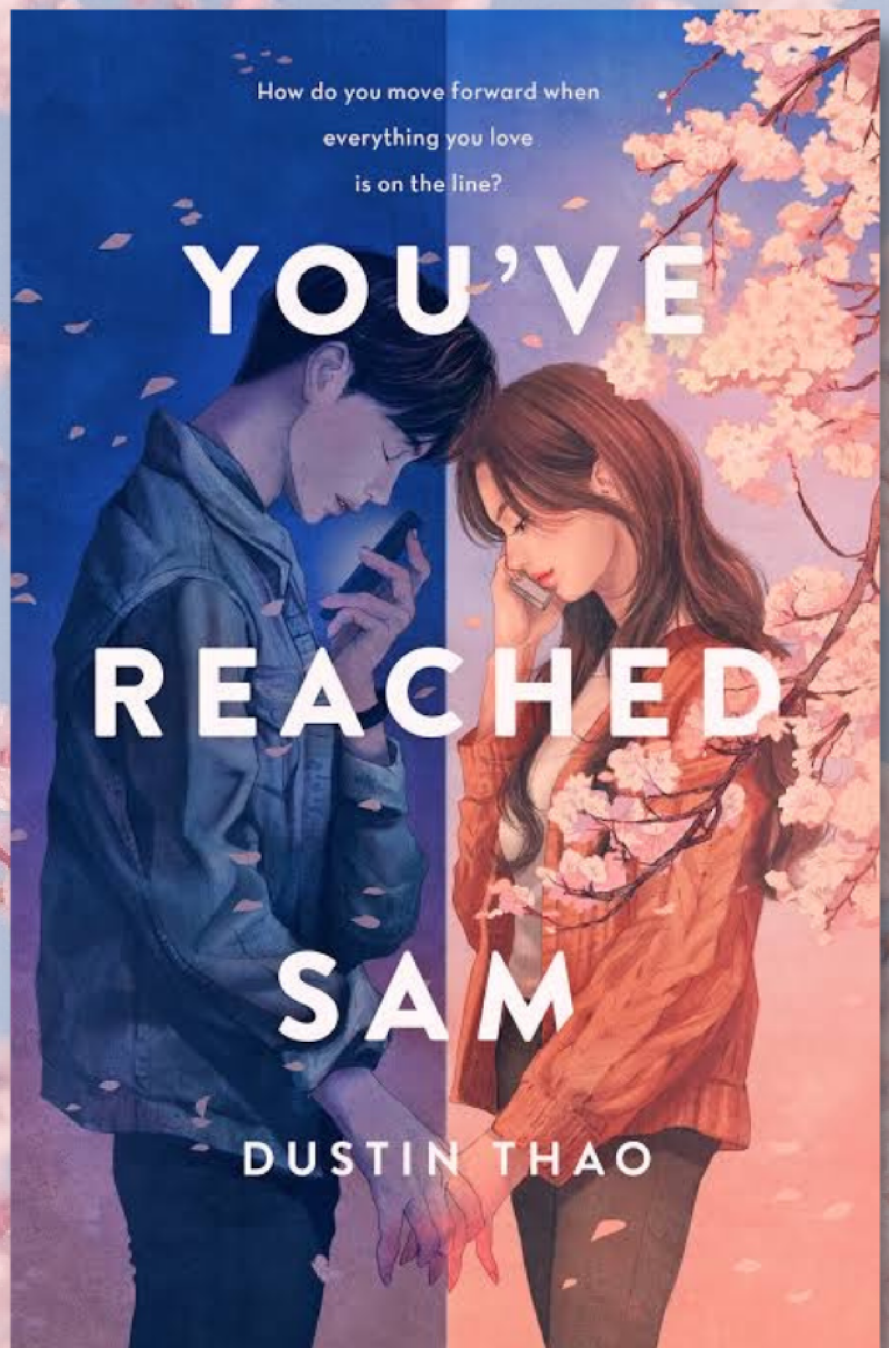
And the best part is, if you haven't read the book already, Colleen Hoover just announced that a new exclusive chapter will be released on Verity at the end of this coming month. The timing couldn't be more perfect and seems like this readathon was destined to happen.

For those wondering, no, this is not the end of Verity and her chronics and there is still content yet to come. Even though we don't and might never know what side of the story was true, which one do you believe in and do you think that this exclusive chapter could be the salvation that we are all looking for?

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*With words engraved with love,
On the Same Page*

SNEAK PEEK
INTO THE
SEPTEMBER
READ...



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