



Three Truths and a Lie

Brent Hartinger

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A weekend retreat in the woods and an innocent game of three truths and a lie go horribly wrong.

Deep in the forest, four friends gather for a weekend of fun.

Truth #1: Rob is thrilled about the weekend trip. It's the perfect time for him to break out of his shell...to be the person he really, really wants to be.

Truth #2: Liam, Rob's boyfriend, is nothing short of perfect. He's everything Rob could have wanted. They're perfect together. Perfect.

Truth #3: Mia has been Liam's best friend for years...long before Rob came along. They get each other in a way Rob could never, will never, understand.

Truth #4: Galen, Mia's boyfriend, is sweet, handsome, and incredibly charming. He's the definition of a Golden Boy...even with the secrets up his sleeve.

One of these truths is a lie...and not everyone will live to find out which one it is.

Three Truths and a Lie Details

Date : Published August 2nd 2016 by Simon Pulse

ISBN : 9781481449601

Author : Brent Hartinger

Format : Hardcover 288 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Mystery, Thriller, Lgbt, Horror, Contemporary

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Chelsea Humphrey says

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Date Read: 08/05/16

Pub Date: 08/02/16

3 STARS

A weekend retreat in the woods and an innocent game of three truths and a lie go horribly wrong in this high-octane psychological thriller filled with romantic suspense by a Lambda Award-winning author.

Deep in the forest, four friends gather for a weekend of fun.

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Truth #2: Liam, Rob's boyfriend, is nothing short of perfect. He's everything Rob could have wanted. They're perfect together. Perfect.

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One of these truths is a lie...and not everyone will live to find out which one it is.

Sounds intriguing, right? Well, it was; unfortunately it just wasn't quite what I thought it would be. I'd call this a case of mostly enjoying a book with a clever twist that ended up being unmemorable. This is my first experience with the author, and I would certainly be open to reading more from him. On my particular scale 3 stars is not a negative review; it's just not as stellar as those 4/5's are. There's not much I can touch on plot wise so I felt I would list my likes and dislikes below to give a better sense of my thoughts.

THINGS I LIKED:

-Alright, that twist was totally unexpected and I did not see it coming. This will always be a plus for me, as it is getting more difficult to find thrillers of any type that can give me that moment of pure, delectable dupery (google it-that's a real word people!).

-Although I am not a member of the LGBT community and my knowledge of such is limited, I felt the author had extensive knowledge to provide here. I'm not sure how close his ties are with the community, but from what I could research I know all his books champion the LGBT community and he writes with a sense of respect and dignity toward all humans.

-This book wasn't as gory and violent as most with a similar plot line. I found it hard to place what specific

age range inside the YA spectrum would enjoy this most, as it does have little snippets of adult-ish content, but the violence and gore was much more tame here than most these days.

-I thoroughly enjoyed the way this story was told; our narrator Rob is telling this story to someone who's identity isn't known to the reader, which made for an interesting and unique read.

THINGS I DIDN'T CARE FOR:

-The characters were just so-so to me. I didn't really feel drawn to any of them and had a hard time empathizing; I found myself just drawn in to the shock value.

-While the ending took me off guard, it wasn't anything that will keep me thinking about this book for weeks, or even days. I'll likely box this one into the back of my head as soon as this review is published. I enjoyed reading this one; it just wasn't anything outstanding.

-Some parts did feel a bit cheesy and unrealistic in a sense of how teenagers act and what they say. I hate to even include this though, as "cool and hip" in the eyes of a young adult is ever changing and almost impossible to nail unless you are one. I'll be the first to admit that I would fail miserably at attempting such a lofty feat.

***I received my copy via NetGalley in exchange for an honest and fair review. Many thanks to Simon Pulse and the author for the opportunity!**

HFK says

What do you do when it is a nighttime, you are surrounded by silence while laying on your sofa? You have a big plate of juicy meat wraps (soft meat, onions, salad, tomato, cucumber, chili sauce) on your lap and your hand is reaching that icy coca cola glass?

Normally I would say; press the play button and enjoy yourself that B-labelled, badly filmed but entertaining horror movie that is more on the psychological side than on the side of bloody gore. You know, that movie that has somewhat stereotypical characterization, has witty but simplistic dialogue and surroundings that can give you much needed chills if you are mood for it. It is not that it would be scary, it is more that it is fun and easy.

But, because we are in the bookish world, you can get all the above with opening *Three Truths and a Lie*, and spend the next three hours wrapped inside a psychological thriller.

Three Truths and a Lie has an distinctive voice. The writing is bare, monotonous, simplistic and keeps itself strictly on its track from the start. There is no beating around the bushes, the focus keeps being on the twisting and playing the mystery till the ending that might surprise many, or no one at all.

Friends at the cabin is always a good setting, and in *Three Truths and a Lie* this setting is realistically build (as a woman who has spend most of her years by doing heavy cabin visitations with the family or the friends, and has a close relationship with nature, I can relate to this one quite good).

I give props to the author for presenting the four friends as heterosexual and homosexual couples, mixing a

bit the dynamics and giving a different voice to gay men. I am more (personally) familiar with this voice than I am with most I come across in books that are directed to ya/na audience.

The plot is the strongest part of this book, and the mystery is build from the first sentence. There is no page without a clue to the ending, and it is nicely twisted with multiple options to mess a readers head, but if you are a high fanatic of this sort of literature or cinema work, you will get there before the final page.

The ending, however, makes you wanna get back to the first page to discover all the messages and hints. Despite of encouraging this, and despite of GR insisting I have read this book twice even when I have not, I myself may be too lazy to do this intriguing exploration.

A solid, good read I would recommend only to readers who generally share my view with these kind of books. You know who you are.

Lee says

Four friends, Rob, his boyfriend Liam, Mia, Rob's besr friend and another friend Galen take off for a weekend break. Mia's family owns a cabin in a very remote area and this is where they decide to go. On arrival the cabin is quite run down but they clean up and settle in. Unfortunately it is not long before strange things begin to happen, are they really the only people here or is there something else at play? The story was quite engrossing but I found it hard to connect to any of the characters so three stars for this one.

Kaje Harper says

The author sent me an advance copy of this, (which was just cool because... Brent Hartinger! I think I read *The Order of the Poison Oak* at least three times, back when it came out, long before I even thought about publishing anything.) He did say he wasn't sure if this one would be my kind of book, and it isn't, but it kind of is. I like mystery, but usually not books dark enough to shade toward horror, which this one does.

At the same time, here's a book with a gay YA main character, where the fact that he's gay is fairly tangential to the plot. You could make Rob's boyfriend Liam a girl, and the details of the story would change, the characters' interactions would change some, but the plot could stay very similar. There's no real gay angst, no bullying or homophobia as plot elements. And that's the way it should be sometimes, a gay MC living his life inside the story, with a boyfriend and a best friend and... a lot of dark and creepy plot twists. Cool.

The narrative style breaks the fourth wall sometimes, speaking to the reader. At the end it turns out to be possibly linked to plot, but it's a device some people feel pulls them into the narrative, but in my case pushes me out a bit. So I started cautiously moving into the story, wondering if I'd enjoy it. But the narrative managed to capture me, between the good-guy nature of the MC, and the constant twisting of the plot. There are several significant turns of the plot and some minor ones, and I didn't anticipate any of them. Not a freaking one.

Especially not the BANG at the end.

So although this book is a genre that I don't typically enjoy, I did have a great time following the author's

twists of imagination as Rob and his boyfriend Liam head off to a remote cabin with Liam's friend Mia and her hot boyfriend Galen... and things begin to get weird...

Recommended for most ages of YA - some non-descriptive sex-as-plot, and some very-slightly-graphic violence. If you like dark mystery, and are looking for gay YA that isn't about coming out or being bullied, give this one a try.

Cece (ProblemsOfaBookNerd) says

*2.5/5

Jen Ryland says

So I'll give **Three Truths and a Lie** credit for keeping me reading. I polished this off in a matter of a couple hours. The book starts off on an intriguing note, with four friends getting tattoos. Except that they're interrupted by some sinister/threatening "friends" of one of the kids. The foursome gets spooked and runs off to hide a deserted cabin where weird things start to happen.

The twists are well-executed. I think what kept me from completely enjoying the book was that I found the characters a little flat, and, as a result, didn't really connect with them on more than a superficial level. Me: "you're dead? Okay. Whatever..."

In addition, can I just say that this seems to be the year (few years?) of the YA (view spoiler) And I didn't really understand the killer's motivation beyond (view spoiler) Yeah, I can't think too hard about these things...

Try this if you're in the mood for a quick page-turner.

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Thanks to the publisher for providing a free advance copy of this book for me to review.

Stacee says

I was super excited about this synopsis. It sounded exactly like my sort of book, yet I found it sort of lacking.

Rob was okay. His inner monologue was nothing spectacular and to me it came across as quite immature. Liam, Galen, and Mia were also just okay. Their personalities were described as having different aspects, but I didn't see those differences.

The plot does move and it was a quick read with some surprises, but since I didn't really care about the characters, I didn't care what happened. And the ending left me wanting a bit more. Where it ends works, but it also felt rushed.

Overall, an interesting idea, but a disappointing execution.

****Huge thanks to Simon Pulse for providing the arc in exchange for an honest review****

Brent Hartinger says

I'm the author! What, did you think I was going to give it a bad review?!

Jessica says

This book was fun! If I had more time I would have gone back to look over clues I had missed. I had a pretty good idea, but I'm always one for being the amateur sleuth. ONLY IN BOOK FORMAT. I've had teens (and their parents) looking for a teenage "Gone Girl" readalike and I'll be definitely adding this to the list. There were some plot aspects I chuckled at because I could not help but remember,

I did do some internal screaming at different characters reactions/choices...because *coughculturallycough*

The fact that these teens made different life choices makes it that much entertaining. Hartinger wrote a quick read interspersed with randy teens and exciting terror.

Chloe says

Four friends Liam , Rob , Galen and Mia decide to go away to Mia's remote cabin for the weekend. There is obviously no cell phone service out there. After going skinny dipping the four friends decide to play the game Three Truths and a Lie. During the game a terrible secret is revealed and then everything starts going wrong after that ,like their satellite phone goes missing , the car is sabotaged etc. Is their imagination running wild or someone really out there trying to stop them from leaving ?

This book was a real fast read but I felt the characters were very one dimensional. Overall I would give the book 3 stars but I would give it another star for the ending .The ending was a complete surprise and I never saw it coming . I will definitely look forward to more books by this author.

Cheryl says

This young adult novel is very hard to put down! It is complex, suspenseful and frightening with twists and turns that culminate in a totally unexpected ending!

Told by one of four young people who set out for a long weekend stay at a remote cabin in Washington state,

the narrator leads the reader through an adventure that turns deadly. This novel would appeal to mature teens and adults as well.

Note: for those readers who might object, this novel includes a gay relationship.

Thank you to Net Galley, Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing , and author Brent Hartinger for giving me the opportunity to read this psychological thriller!

Javi says

Rather disappointing. Even with the massive twist at the end, I'm struggling right now to find some redeeming quality but failing miserably. Not even the writing is that good- maybe it's just Hartinger's writing style, I didn't like it either in the Russel Middlebrook Series. It's somewhat atmospheric but not as oppressive as it should have been. And come on, that twist? It's been done a million times before, how about some originality?

I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone, to be brutally honest.

Peach says

A weekend in an abandoned cabin? What could go wrong?

Four friends are ready for fun. Rob, Liam, Mia, and Galen. Rob and Liam, and Mia and Galen are all dating. They decide to spend the weekend in an abandoned cabin in the middle of the dark, rainy woods. Like I said, what could go wrong?

They skinny-dip, eat Corn Flakes, and play a game of Three Truths and a Lie (get it?), which takes a cryptic turn. After Mia gets half-wasted and goes, "oh lololol I killed someone when I was thirteen." the MC, Rob, tenses, and is stuck on that fact for the rest of the trip. Conspicuously, things immediately start going wrong.

Rob is stuck on the fact Mia is a killer and is constantly updating his boyfriend, Liam, with mini conspiracy theories. He pinpoints on the fact Mia wasn't wearing underwear after their impromptu skinny-dip session. As if that was a key topic.

My problem with the book was the sexual references. This book is quite inappropriate for the average YA. Galen is disgusting. He waggles his junk at others and makes all-around gross comments. (view spoiler) Not trying to say I'm a prudish reader or anything, but at one point, he pulls down his pants and reveals himself. Really. What grade are you in?

And what parent - ironically, parents are nonexistent in this YA - would let their daughter go on a trip with her boyfriend and two other boys? Mia was the token female. It would've been cooler if another girl was invited along. Even as a friend.

The reason this book isn't a one-star is because I was blown away by the shock-factor ending. Semi-overstatement, actually. (view spoiler) Great ending. Surprisingly sad, too.

Laura says

A YA psychological thriller with a big twist that leaves little impact unfortunately.

Told entirely from the perspective of Rob to a mystery individual making it feel as if he's speaking directly to the reader at times. He is recounting what happened to him and his friends beginning with when they initially decide to go away for a weekend. Rob, his boyfriend Liam, Liam's best friend Mia, and Mia's boyfriend Galen all decide to go on a weekend getaway. They pick Mia's family cabin in the super remote NW corner of Washington state..and I mean **extremely** remote (because what is horror if it's easy to get away or get help..). The closest town they pass through is creepy immediately sending off weird, eerie vibes. When they finally arrive at the cabin, it doesn't take long for things to start going wrong. They may not be alone at the cabin after all...

I found it hard to care about any of the characters. My need for horror is what kept me reading. While there were some deaths, that thirst wasn't quite satisfied. The twist was intriguing even if little things didn't completely add up. A couple days after finishing, I see how little an impression it left on me. I think a younger audience would enjoy this one more.

Carrie says

Rob has been dating Liam for the last three months and being with Liam also means getting along with Liam's best friend Mia and her boyfriend Galen. When Rob suggests they all take a trip together the group decides to go to Mia's family's cabin to stay for a weekend and what could possibly go wrong with a weekend of bonding?

Arriving the group decides to go skinny dipping then have a few drinks and play a game of Three Truths and a Lie where a secret is shared to the horror of Rob. When things start going wrong the next day for the group they find that they may or may not be alone in the wilderness.

Three Truths and a Lie seems to be another of those books that I'm going against the majority of the earlier reviewers with my rating. Is the book perfect? No, probably not. But that didn't stop me from really enjoying this read. This one is for the fans of the teenagers getting offed horror movies such as Friday the 13th or I Know What You Did Last Summer and quite honestly I loved it.

If you watch things like the ones I've mentioned you know you just want to throw your popcorn at the screen and yell at the characters for being such idiots and not getting to safety with a killer on the loose. This book will take you to that point and then beyond with keeping a reader guessing all along and then a rather twisty ending that most should not see coming.

A few things to warn about that some readers may not enjoy in this one. The story is told by the main character Rob who several times throughout the book talks directly to the reader as he's telling his side of what happened that weekend. To me this seemed to fit with the tone of the books rather well and I actually liked it. Also, there's sex involved in the book but it's not overly graphic but just a warning since this is a YA horror/thriller.

Overall, I enjoyed this one, a rather fun campy horror type of read with a twisted ending.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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