



# Who You Think I Am

*Camille Laurens*

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**Who You Think I Am** Camille Laurens

**This psychological thriller dissects online relationships, offering a stunning indictment of the way society perceives women in contrast to men when age comes into play.**

This is the story of Claire Millecam, a forty-eight-year-old teacher and divorcee who creates a fake social media profile to keep tabs on Joe, her occasional, elusive, and inconstant lover. Under the false identity of Claire Antunes, a young and beautiful twenty-four-year-old, she starts a correspondence with Chris--pseudonym KissChris--which soon turns into an Internet love affair.

A *Dangerous Liaisons* for our times, *Who You Think I Am* exposes the disconnect between fantasy and reality. Social media allows us to put ourselves on display, to indulge in secrets, but above all to lie, to recreate a life, to become our own fiction--magnifying and manipulating the double standards to which older women are held when they refuse to give up on desire.

Simultaneously sensual, intellectually stimulating, and utterly relevant, this page-turner will stick in your mind long after reading.

## Who You Think I Am Details

Date : Published March 28th 2017 by Other Press (NY) (first published January 1st 2016)

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Author : Camille Laurens

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Genre : Fiction, Cultural, France, European Literature, French Literature

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# From Reader Review Who You Think I Am for online ebook

## Craig Allen says

2 stars. I thought the idea of this book was interesting, especially in the high tech world we live in now. A lonely woman creates a fake Facebook account to spy on her pretty much-ex-lover, but ends up in an affair with her lover's friend as the fake profile, sorta. With me so far? I mean, as a story idea I'm all in at this point. It started off really interesting and I was kinda sad the book was pretty short knowing the story we're on board for.

Then...I dunno...everything kinda falls apart (for me, at least)-We're with a new narrator, for a minute. Then something that's hard to mention without spoilers happens (I think? It was so confusing at this point in regards to who exactly was telling the story I'm not 100% sure...) and I think we're to believe that what we read didn't really happen. And I get the unreliable narrator thing, I really do, but most don't say "just kidding that didn't happen..." which is frustrating after reading for a while especially when the story is told in this rambling, one sided conversation point of view with these really, really big words and philosophical comparisons. Maybe it's my fault for not being smart enough for the book. And if so, I'll take the blame 100%. Needless to say by the 75% mark or so, I wasn't upset that the book was short anymore. So yeah, a frustrating read--but there's lots of positive reviews on here for it, so please remember my willingness to accept the blame for not being philosophical enough when deciding to try it or not! :)

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## Susanne Strong says

2 Stars.

“Who You Think I Am” by Camille Laurens was confusing as all get out. After reading it, I have no idea who the main character, Claire Millecam a/k/a Claire Antunes, purported to be.

Formulating coherent thoughts about a book that was extremely hard to get into (and took me forever to do so because of it) and whose ending made no sense and also had me re-reading it, causing me to scratch my head and rub my eyes, has made me wonder if I read a different book than those who gave it 4 and/or 5 star reviews. For the first-time ever, I honestly don’t know what to say though I will do my best.

After a confusing start, the book does in fact take off quickly. I believe it starts with the main character, Claire Millecam narrating: she speaks in long run on sentences, describing her obsession with her boyfriend Joe, who is a narcissist. He, of course, only cares for himself and breaks things off. Thereafter, Claire decides she wants to spy on Joe on Facebook. Knowing he won’t friend her, she creates a fake profile, that of Claire Antunes, using another much younger woman’s photo and friends his roommate Chris “Kiss Chris.” An online relationship between the two ensues.

Thereafter, things get sketchy. Confusing. What we are told and what is true is unclear. Who Claire is speaking to, describing these actions to is unclear; what happens next; who then takes over as the narrator is confusing. What we know and what we are told could perhaps be left to our interpretation of the story. I am not quite sure.

The book itself was short, and for this I was glad. After the messy beginning, it went quickly and for that I was also grateful. Unfortunately, proofreading errors also made this novel tough to follow. Several people

gave it glowing reviews, thus I guess I must be missing something or perhaps I just missed the point.

Thank you to NetGalley, Other Press and Camille Laurens for an ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review.

Published on NetGalley, Goodreads and Amazon on 3/30/17.

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## **Jill says**

Most of the reviews I've seen focus on the opening part of this totally compelling novel: a 48-year-old woman named Claire who is almost (in her words) at the point of expiration creates a Facebook persona, using the photograph of a younger woman, and connects to the friend of the man who dumped her. Both become increasingly obsessed with the other's fake persona to the point that reality becomes irreversibly blurred and consequences result.

Yet it's the entirety of the novel that is so striking. The structure of the book unfolds like Russian Matryoshka nesting dolls, with one story placed inside the other. The result is a searing look at the devaluation of women as they age, the shaky boundaries between fantasy and reality, and the very nature of love itself (electing, not selecting).

Narrated through taped interviews with her therapist and then expanded into the disciplinary hearing of that therapist, and relayed by the writer herself (who happens to be named Camille Laurens), the structure calls to mind *His Bloody Project*, a book I enjoyed immensely, as well as J.M. Coetzee's *Summertime* (which has a character named Coetzee). As the novel deepens, readers get a sense of what the true Camille Laurens is really after: how our minds inform the fictions we create about ourselves, and how we create new realities (which may or may not be real).

In today's times of social media – combined with metafiction – it is terrifyingly easy to substitute desire for love, recreate our own lives with any trajectory we choose, and even become our own fiction if we so desire. This is a stunningly intricate book that demands close attention as it slowly exposes its nested secrets.

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## **Oreoandlucy says**

A longer review is available on my blog:  
<http://reviewsofbooksonmynightstand.b...>

I found this book very difficult and cumbersome to read. Most of the book is told with only one side speaking so there are times when the narrator answers questions that we, as readers, are not privy to. Reading a string of "Yes. No. Yes. Yes." when I have no knowledge of the questions being asked is frustrating. Most of the book was told from the perspective of a psychiatric patient and I believed that the author was trying to make this felt in the writing until the psychiatrist's point of view was also written like this. It may be an

interesting experimental writing style but it didn't appeal to me. The story also moves so slowly that it becomes uninteresting to read. It is too bad because this book touches on important themes, such as the worth of women as they age and honesty online, but the poor writing and slow story made this a very difficult and tedious read.

Thank you to Edelweiss and Other Press for an advanced copy of this book for review purposes. All opinions are my own.

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### **Dana says**

Camille Laurens scrie un roman p?tima? ce ilustreaz? at?t drama unei femei prinse ?n propriile capcane de seduc?ie, c?t ?i influen?ele nefaste ale tehnologiei ?n via?a noastr? atunci c?nd este folosit? ?n scopuri meschine. "Femeia inventat?" este un p?ienjeni? dens de minciuni ?i r?sturn?ri de situa?ie, dar ?i un amestec de registre narative din care cu greu vei g?si ie?irea.

(fragment din recenzie complet?: <http://www.bookishstyle.ro/femeia-inv...>)

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### **Florence Morin-Martel says**

J'ai absolument d?vor? ce livre !J'ai particuli?rement aim? le jeu sur le titre "Celle que vous croyez" qui se r?p?cute ? la fois dans la forme et dans les discours des personnages.

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### **Shelby \*trains flying monkeys\* says**

When I read the blurb for this book I got excited. I thought it sounded right up my alley.  
\*image ragey gif here that won't post for me\*

It's soooo bad. Bad enough that I wanted to go back over all the years of one starring books and raise some of their scores because this was honestly that bad.

Before you get your panties all in a wad and your trolling fingers ready....I'll give you some examples of the writing.

**You can imagine all sorts of things, you do imagine all sorts of things, you look at his new friends' profiles-both male and female-looking for a revelation in someone's posts; you decipher the tiniest comment, you keep cutting from one wall to another, you play back the songs he's listened to, read meaning into the lyrics, learn about what he likes, view his photos and videos, keep an eye on his geo-location, the events he's going to, you navigate like a submarine though an ocean of faces and words.**

I swear that's one sentence!!

Here's another one.

**And you can go ahead and do what the others did, deducing that I had God knows what sort of**

**fusional relationship with my mother, an inability to break away, a castration complex and everything else.**

Now if you read my reviews..you know that I AM NOT A WRITER..I use run on sentences, sentence fragments and I make up words...but I don't profess to be an author. Nooooo hell nooo on this crud. DNF and I have no shame!

*Booksource: Netgalley in exchange for review.*

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## **Adela Cacovean says**

<https://vanillamoonbooks.blogspot.ro/...>

Descrierea de pe spatele acestei cărți m-a dus inevitabil cu gândul la Lorelei de Ionel Teodoreanu, carte pe care am îndrăgit-o în urmă cu câțiva ani, când am citit-o la recomandarea mamei. Intrigat? Și impulsivat? Și de rugămintea unei colege să-i împrumut și ei cartea după ce o termin, am mutat-o în topul 1 al priorităților mele și pot spune că a fost o decizie inspirată, pentru că demult nu am mai citit o carte atât de deosebită.

Cartea pare inițial să conste în confesiunile unei femei către psihiatrul ei, sub forma unui monolog. Nu ni se arată nici intervențiile acestuia, deși putem bănui unele întrebări după răspunsurile primite, cât și unele reacții prin intermediul contra-reacțiilor femeii. Pe nume Claire. Aceasta suferă o dramă, aflându-se la vârstă în care femeile își pierd farmecul față de sexul opus, indiferent cât de bine se țin. Ne trezim în fața unui puzzle fără piese, acestea urmând să își facă apariția rând pe rând, pe măsură ce Claire își descarcă sufletul în fața doctorului. Mențiunea unei crime m-a făcut să devin numai ochi la toate indiciile, încercând să întrezăresc adevărul în jumătățile de confesiuni.

O abordare foarte interesantă a autoarei, diferită față de ce am mai citit. Mulțumesc @edituranemira pentru exemplar #citescacum #eucitesc #bookstagram #booktube #booktuberomania #femeiainventata #camillelaurens #bookshelf #edituranemira

O postare distribuită de Adela Cacovean (@ad3llec) pe 24 Feb 2017 la 06:38 PST

Când pare că totul a fost pus cap la cap, însă, intervine capitolul 2, cu confesiunea doctorului și noul unghi asupra întregii povești. Se conturează o idee, totul capătă sens, te gândești, apoi ești lovit de partea a II-a a cărții, un nou personaj, aflat în umbră în tot acest timp și brusc, te trezești că adevărul și minciuna s-au împletit într-o idee foarte complicată, nu mai poți ce să crezi din toată pânza de păianjen? Esut? de autoare. Dacă vreți, acest roman se aseamănă din punct de vedere al construcției cu filmul Inception.

Mai mult decât atât, Femeia inventată e o poveste despre boli psihologice și sănătate mintală, granița fină dintre patologie și disperare, confuzie întemeiată. Este despre povara de a fi femeie într-o lume în care încă există locuri unde sexul frumos este asuprit, lipsit de drepturi și ucis, folosit, violat, distrus, zdrobit, invizibil. Este despre feminitate, feminism și o trezire la realitatea că încă mai e o cale lungă de parcurs până la egalitatea adevărată, pentru că sunt cel mai greu de schimbat mentalitățile și atitudinile adânc înrădăcinate în

comportamentul societății ca întreg, dar și al individului. E o carte atât de frumos formulată, încât dacă mi-aș fi însemnat pe ea toate pasajele care mi-au vorbit, aș fi transformat-o într-o mare de semne colorate, ieșind într-o veselie din marginile cărții, arătând toate cărțile interioare ei: Ia-mă, citește-mă, iar și iar și iar...

Mulumesc Editurii Nemira pentru exemplarul trimis spre recenzare.  
Acest aspect nu influențează în niciun fel părerea exprimată mai sus.

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### **Andreea Chiuaru says**

La granița dintre realitate și ficțiune, minciună și adevăr, sănătate mintală și delir. Recomand!

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### **Kevin Dio says**

Un roman très intéressant, découpé en trois grandes parties : Claire qui raconte son histoire à un psychiatre, un roman de ce qui aurait pu se passer écrit par Claire, et enfin l'auteure, Camille, qui nous raconte sa version de la réalité. On se perd franchement, on ne sait plus ce qui relève de la fiction ou de la réalité (peut-être rien ne relève de la réalité d'ailleurs), et je pense que c'est ce que l'auteure souhaitait. Sur ce côté fiction/réalité, ce roman m'a fait penser à D'après une histoire vraie, même s'il est différent. C'était aussi mon premier roman de Camille Laurens et j'ai beaucoup aimé l'écriture et les réflexions qu'elle nous propose... Une bonne lecture, bien que troublante !

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### **Melissa says**

Thanks to Netgalley and the publisher for an Advanced Reader Copy in exchange for an honest review. I read this book in two hours. It was so fascinating. But once I finished, I wondered what happened to the ending. It just sort of stopped with what I think was supposed to be the big reveal, but it didn't really reveal anything...

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### **Kasa Cotugno says**

This reminded me of Italo Cavino's *If On A Winter Night a Traveller more than Dangerous Liaisons*. Whereas it has been compared to that epistolary 17th century masterpiece, its abrupt leaps from one narrator to another, each layering a different meaning on the subject, and providing a healthy example of meta fiction constantly keeps the reader off balance. This is the best rendition I've read so far employing the seductions and dangers of the Internet.

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### **Lolly K Dandeneau says**

via my blog <https://bookstalkerblog.wordpress.com/>

"Yes, that's it, I'm no longer operational, I've blown a fuse, if you like, or blown a gasket, tripped a switch, and whee! I've spun out of control..."

Whoa, there are times when readers are misled by interesting book cover art. Not so here! I started reading the first few pages annoyed at the mad ravings, the sentences that went on and on, manic even-but it fits and after that... gorgeous literary fiction! There is anger, passion, some mad musings and if there is a disorder for highlighting too much then I now have it. Maybe it's because I am 41 that I related to the anger women feel in double standards, the hypocrisy of it all! Something happens when you are dismissed, overlooked, made to feel like an old cow set out to pasture. Yes, we all know the argument- you can only be made to feel that way if you allow it. Pfft!

We follow Claire Millecam as she creates a fake identity with a social media profile. Here she becomes young, beautiful Claire Attunes, not to win the affections of Chris but initially to spy on her fickle lover Joe through Chris's social media page. Claire tangles the web she weaved, now the spider sits in her web and Chris jumps right in but who is the real victim? Becoming young, she is now worthy of wooing, she is fascinating, fresh and new! It isn't long before Claire is seduced by the connection she and Chris have made. Chris (whom she admits she was jealous of) as Joe's friend has usurped her place! He told her, unseen over the phone- "Go Die" loaded with spitting cruelty. "People throw themselves out of windows for less than that, don't they? Plenty here would. They've been bashed around by so many words they start to wobble. Go die. Go Die. Other people's words follow them around like hostile ghosts." She is falling in love, but can it be love when she isn't who she says she is? There is a violence in fiction, and the lies turn on her leading to fatal consequences or is it all deception? The reader is the fly, truth be told, because we are played with throughout! Just when we've dug our feet in and are on solid ground, the author erases everything, and the reader is left on thin air, just as Claire's love is thin air.

I understand I am rambling, but I devoured this in two nights! Claire argues with us and herself in the telling, she loses the plot, there is a comfort in insanity, an anchor in believing the horrible things that passed were done in the name of love. We deceive ourselves so dreadfully to live with what befalls us in the name of love. It's not just her head we climb into. Joe's cold dismissive nature of women is sort of funny and delusional too. "My life- he seemed to think with one last pitying look at my apartment, my books, my face- my life wouldn't mean much now that his was going to be so wonderful on the far side of the world. Being happy isn't enough, you also need other people to be unhappy: it's a recognized formula." Is his vain attitude any worse than a woman's clinging despair? Let it be said, there are plenty of female Joe's in the world too. Off they go to better, shinier things and imagine you remain behind, like an unloved abandoned haunted house. Sometimes we take up that role, be if we're smart, we shake it off and move on.

Reader, be warned, you are lied to. But to get to the gooey center of truth requires sifting through the wreckage. This is one of the most unique literary fictions I've read in a long time. There is nothing I love more than dredging the dark corners of the mind, getting past the 'social mask' we wear, be it media or not. Even through Claire's disastrous moments I found myself laughing. It's hard to take a man seriously when he is acting belligerent and silly. Being a woman requires crocodile skin, if you make it past your 'expiration date' of say, 25- you must toughen up. Claire is becoming an angry victim, she isn't playing nice and her deception is brutal too. As a woman I can well relate to the wide eyed, harsh reality many women face as they age in comparison to men. I also can see young women (not all, some) being just as ugly about older women, not realizing they are looking at themselves in the future. Don't be put off by some self-indulgent whining, we all have a right to it now and then, so long as you don't get swallowed up by it. But men and women of any age can relate to being ejected by a lover from your place in their life. So long sucker! Loved this and it is not a novel I can easily explain, I feel I am failing the author because it's original and I can't express myself clearly. The deceptive dark side of our online persona is exposed here but it is misleading to



imagine the novel purely a social media story, because it's not. There is a lot of fat to chew on when it comes to how we manipulate others and ourselves online, how we are vulnerable hidden behind a screen and yet the reader could ignore all that and still come away with one heck of a story about love and self-deception. Read it! Just read it for yourself! "Every night I howl with terror at the thought of being a woman." Claire has blown a fuse, no doubt about it!

Publication Date: March 28, 2017

Other Press

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## **Mary Lins says**

Wow. If you are a woman over 50...or frankly a woman of any age, you'll need some time to digest, contemplate, and regroup after this beautifully rendered twisty cautionary tale. "Who You Think I Am" by Camille Laurens (beautifully translated from the French by Adriana Hunter), had me utterly spellbound. In such a slim volume, Laurens manages to give us an unflinching look at female aging, and the wealth of double standards that go along with it. "Go die!" Is that indeed the message that society, and men, send older women, perceiving them useless now that their youth, beauty, and fertility have faded?

This is a novel presents several characters, some of whom are "real" and some of whom are "avatars" on social media. This very real phenomenon of pretending to be someone else on the Internet (Facebook in this case) is fascinating. Can you actual fall in love with someone you have never met? Can someone fall in love with a person who doesn't even exist? This novel, (and the documentary "Catfish") could certainly convince one that not only they can, they do. Laurens quotes the controversial French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan: "Relationships start in the imagination." Indeed.

Laurens plays skillfully with identity and there are several delicious and surprising plot twists in "Who You Think I Am", but no spoilers here. While the topic and a fair amount of the story is certainly depressing and even angered me at times, I did close the book with a smile.

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## **Jennifer says**

I was excited by the description of Who You Think I Am but was sorely disappointed. Prepare for one of my shortest reviews of all time. I thought the story sounded interesting with a woman creating a fake social media account to keep tabs on her ex, but it was impossible for me to get into the story or connect with Claire. This is a short novel at 196 pages but I must confess that I gave up on page 51. There are so many long run-on sentences and it's confusing at first who is talking and who she is talking to. I can only think of one or two occasions where I put a book down and didn't finish it, but it was necessary for my sanity. I looked over other reviews once putting it down to see if I am crazy and this is actually a fabulous novel, but it appeared that 3-4 other reviews agreed with me regarding the difficult to read writing style and the confusion regarding time, place, characters, and so on. This novel was translated from French to English so it could also just be a writing style I am not used to, but regardless, I couldn't see this one through to the end.

\*Thanks to Edelweiss for providing a copy of this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

