

Verity (Bonus Chapter Edition) Transcript

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00:03

Holly: This is Bimbo Book Club with Holly.

00:12

Harley: And Harley.

00:14

Holly: Just because there is really no avoiding massive spoilers on this one. So obviously every episode has a bit of a spoiler warning, but this one more than most. So, rather than doing this at the end, at the start, how would you describe *Verity*?

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Harley: Oh, how would I describe it? It's very much a high-quality airport read with emotional roller coaster elements to it.

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Holly: I think that's fair.

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Harley: I don't know that I necessarily recommend this to a particular kind of reader over another one. But I would say it's like an airport read, where it's gripping enough that you can get sucked into it when you're stuck on a plane and you're uncomfortable and all that kind of thing. But I don't know that I'd be like, *oh my god, she's the best writer I've ever read.*

01:05

Holly: So, for both of us, this was our first-time reading Colleen Hoover. Apparently, this particular book, *Verity*, is the gateway drug for a lot of people into Colleen Hoover. But she does remind me a lot of Jodi Picoult, in the way that I'm sure she's quite formulaic in the way that she writes. So, I can imagine if you read several books back, you're probably going to get to see her style pretty quickly. I also read a lot of reviews that were like, 'She's not a great writer, because she just kind of picks the most dramatic thing that could possibly happen to her character, and then makes it even worse.'

01:41

Harley: But then that becomes the argument of how do we define a great writer? I mean, Jodi Picoult, Dan Brown, Colleen Hoover, all that kind of stuff. They're not necessarily great writers, again, in that technical sense, but they're good to read.

01:57

Holly: They're easy reads. There were no profound sentences that make you stop and go, *Oh my God, that is so beautifully written*. But it's a good story. And it's told well, and it keeps you engaged.

02:08

Harley: And both of us kind of binge-read it as well. So, it's a good binge-read. So yeah, I don't know. Like, if you're looking for something that is going to be like, look at me, I'm so literary, maybe skip this one. But if you're looking for something that will keep you engaged through some travel, or you just want a binge read that you can see everything coming pretty well. But it's still gripping.

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Holly: Yeah, there were enough misdirections and twists and things to keep you engaged. But it wasn't anything super complicated that made it a tricky read. It was a comfortable read.

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Harley: You know what kind of story it is from very early on. So even though the details have some twists and turns that you're like, wow, okay. It's not like you can see everything coming. Like you said, there are a few bits there. But you know what kind of story it is very early. Which I don't think it's a bad thing. I think that's why people like formulaic writers.

03:00

Holly: So, I don't know about the rest of Colleen's collection. But this one in particular, I would probably call a soft thriller. It had thriller elements to it, but it wasn't anything particularly confronting like a traditional thriller.

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Harley: So, to sum it up, good quality, but airport fiction soft thriller.

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Holly: Yeah, that sounds like you and you haven't read it. Turn this off. Right now. And stop listening. Because we are gonna spoil it.

03:30

Harley: She's got a good mum tone, doesn't she?

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Holly: Definitely gonna spoil it.

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Harley: Consider this that moment in a pirate movie where they're like, 'Beyond here, lies certain doom'. Except beyond here, lies certain spoilers, so I really feel like your mum tone and my pirate movie really sums us up.

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Holly: I think it does. Anyway, you've been warned.

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Harley: We really cannot find any other ways to warn you,

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Holly: Last chance.

04:00

Harley: It's on you.

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Holly: Yes, definitely, it's on you.

04:03

Harley: From here on out it's your fault, you're asking for it.

04:06

Holly: Big question. Manuscript or letter? Which one's real?

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Harley: Yeah, I don't know. The thing that I find really interesting about that, though, is the reliable narrator issue. Because we're narrated both from the perspective of Lowen, who clearly has a thing for Jeremy from before the actual plot of the story starts like the very first chapter. So, at what point is she seeing what she wants to see?

04:35

Holly: So essentially, there's three narrators here. We've got Lowen. Then we've got manuscript Verity, and then we've got letter Verity.

04:46

Harley: So, Lowen would be kind of our main narrator. She's the character that we follow from the very beginning of the book, and she's the character whose head we're inside. However, we do get Verity's kind of autobiography. And then the letter that then makes the autobiography maybe less biographical?

05:07

Holly: Yes.

05:11

Harley: So, we know that it's a pretty intense read, pretty much from the start, it starts off with someone getting their head run over.

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Holly: Yeah, so essentially, a guy was too busy on his phone and stepped in front of a truck and got knocked over. And then his head got popped off by a tire.

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Harley: She goes into immense detail, and then it's just, like, forgotten. So this is how Lowen, and Jeremy are initially brought together before they know anything about each other, or what's going to happen in the book. He's just a handsome stranger who's helped her and she's covered in blood. So, he lends her his shirt, I guess gives her his shirt. It's that meet-cute instant connection, except that it's framed by a guy who's just been run over, and she's covered in blood. And then from there, we go into her meeting with her agent, and being offered a deal to write the rest of this super, super famous author's books because she's incapacitated. And that's Verity. In the meeting, of course, the handsome stranger turns out to be Verity's husband. It really is a romance novel meet-cute, except that there's this aggressively violent beginning. And then, that's just never addressed again.

06:28

Holly: Yeah, I was thinking about this, the fact that he was too busy looking at his phone that he got hit by an unsuspecting truck. Is that foreshadowing something about Lowen, are we seeing what she wants to see? And then is blindsided by the letter. Or am I just reading too much into it?

06:49

Harley: She alludes a lot to like, some people just have tragic stuff happen to them all the time. That's the whole thing with Verity's family is that they're just people that bad things happen to. And so, it's kind of that thing from the start of, okay, so here's the thing that Lowen and Jeremy have in common that they're both the people that bad things

happen to, and they just weather the storm. They're the ones that have to survive at all. But no, it's not really going into—it, in retrospect, feels like just—I mean, like that critique that you talked about earlier, where people say that she often chooses the most awful thing to happen, or the most dramatic thing to happen. And it feels like she just wanted to really dramatically put Lowen in a position of being that helpless, like, *I need a man to save me* kind of thing. But like, *I'm the victim or I'm you know, helpless one. All of these horrible things have happened to me.* And it's not just like, *I was on my way to my meeting, and I'm just having a disaster of a day and my heel broke. I spilled coffee everywhere. And he's a nice guy.* It's like, no, no, *someone got run over.* But they're not important to the story. So, moving on.

07:53

Holly: But her morning was like that because she was leaving the house for the first time since her mom passed away a few months prior or a few weeks, I'm not sure. And she had had a bit of a shit morning. And her agent had deliberately told her half an hour earlier than when she had to be there because he was anticipating that this would happen, well not that someone was going to have their head exploded, but that things were going to go wrong for her and she'd be late.

08:19

Harley: again, feels like she's that character that's like, *Oh my god, I'm always frazzled and running late and life's a disaster,* but then she's ramped it up to mild agoraphobia and getting run over. It's fine in terms of some sort of like, I mean, one, those things do happen. And two, I think sometimes for a story, it needs to be that dramatic. I don't know that it needed to be that dramatic for this.

08:46

Holly: I don't know if that needed to be that dramatic. No, but I think they did kind of help to pull her out of her headspace because she's, *Woe is me. I've had all this shit happen to me. My mum has just died, I finally leave the house.* And then bang, this happens. She's very self-absorbed. But then, when Jeremy is helping her, and he looks so sad, and she asks him, you know, *What's going on? Are you okay?* And he's like, *I just lost my daughter a few months ago.* And I think they kind of snapped her out of her like, *Okay, other people have bad things happen to them, as well.*

09:23

Harley: Yeah, of course. She then slips back into self-absorption. I think we see that later in the book so from here essentially, she agrees to take the contract and goes to Jeremy and Verity's house to go through Verity's office, see what bits of manuscripts she has written, all that kind of stuff. And in the house is Jeremy, their son Crew, and Verity who's in a comatose-ish state.

09:54

Holly: She's not comatose because she's eaten soft foods and things like that.

09:59

Harley: She's in that like vegetative state where she, I think they describe her as essentially having the brain of a very early toddler. So, she can eat soft foods or things like that. But she has to be looked after by a nurse. She can't communicate any of that kind of stuff. Very unresponsive to external stimuli.

So, it's just the three of them left, they did have twins earlier, but both of them died, Crew's older sisters, and Verity. So, Lowen comes into the space and essentially gets the master bedroom and Verity's study to stay in while she goes through all the manuscripts and all that kind of stuff. And from here hijinks ensue.

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Holly: Yes, yes.

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Harley: All the hijinks.

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Holly: So, another thing to note here is also that Lowen has a history of sleepwalking. So, she originally hadn't planned to stay in Verity's home, she wanted to come in, collect things, and then leave essentially. She doesn't feel comfortable staying there. She's worried about other people's safety because of what she's capable of while she's sleepwalking, more so than anything else.

11:12

Harley: Which leads to little things like, she asked Jeremy to put a lock on the outside of the door. There's already one on the inside, which she's like, he's thinking like, oh, you think then I might be some kind of creep. That's cool. Like, I want you to be safe and feel safe in my house.

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Holly: But then there's an incident so she goes to sleep, and she sleepwalks and she lets herself out of her room. She unlocks the lock that's on the inside and wakes up in Verity's bed.

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Harley: Not her subconscious at all, like, trying to take Verity's place. Anyway, once he realizes that she's the problem, she's actually not worried about him. He does agree to put a lock on the outside of the door which leads to later on them being like, it's weird how this lock keeps locking itself, while she's getting increasingly paranoid that it is in fact not locking itself and that Verity is full of shit. I don't like Lowen.

12:06

Holly: I don't like Lowen either. I actually don't think I like any of the characters. And I especially don't like Jeremy, I don't know what it is about Jeremy. But it was like I was waiting for him to be the villain. But he's not. But is he? But he's not. I don't know.

12:23

Harley: That's the thing with the letter is he had already read the manuscript. Because in her letter, she says he drove, he's the one that drove her into a tree.

12:34

Holly: But did he? So, this is it. I'm team manuscript, even though I absolutely want to hate on Jeremy.

12:42

Harley: But the thing with the letter is that she had to, at some point, become conscious enough to write it. So do you think she's written it deliberately for...

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Holly: Because there's too much detail in the letter, if she was writing a letter to Jeremy, there wouldn't be that much detail. She's written the letter for Lowen to find, not for Jeremy to find, which is why there's detail in there.

13:07

Harley: But that also could be explained by Colleen Hoover needing to put it in for the plot.

13:11

Holly: But I'm gonna go with it. I think that's it, follow it. Also, when Jeremy supposedly read the manuscript for the first time, let's say the first time was when Lowen gave it to him, he would have remembered those events differently. If it was fake. Yeah, he would have remembered those events differently. For example, when they had the fight, and he threw his plate of food against the wall, because Verity was only ever talking about Crew and not talking about the daughter Harper.

13:42

Harley: I suppose the thing that is the only difference necessarily is because in the manuscripts, she talks about how it was like, 'I had to come up with an excuse. And I came up with the perfect excuse.' But if he remembers her just being like, well, she's doing all of this stuff. And Harper isn't. And I wasn't gonna bring it out with you. But they have brought up that she maybe has autism. And that's why she's not doing it. But like, I genuinely wasn't playing favorites and she's not succeeding in the way that her twin is.

14:07

Holly: So, but if he had read the manuscript prior, and he knew what she was like when Lowen was like, 'I saw your wife at the top of the stairs.'

14:21

Harley: But this is the thing, is if he's failed to kill his wife once, is he hoping that he can use Lowen as an alibi, so he's actually setting up a lot of this stuff in order to have Lowen be like 'No, no, I'm the one that pushed him to do it.'

14:35

Holly: I absolutely want to believe that, but I just feel like it's not right. I really want to hate Jeremy. Also earlier, Verity's father made a comment about how God punishes evil or something like that.

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Harley: So Verity obviously comes from a very religious family.

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Holly: But also in the way that Verity's father made this comment, it seemed like he was implying there Verity was evil to be punished.

15:04

Harley: I mean, arguably because they were obviously portrayed as the ultra-right wing religious kind of ones where it's like, is that an accurate statement of *Verity*? Or is that a, *you didn't go with the husband that we chose for you who was going to beat the shit out of you and knock you up with like, 12 separate kids?* Like, you've betrayed the church, you're a sinner and sinners get punished.

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Holly: Could be.

15:32

Harley: So, one of the things that's really hard about *who done it*, and *who's the bad person*, and all that kind of stuff is I think they're all not great people.

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Holly: Colleen has done a very good job of creating unlikeable characters.

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Harley: And interestingly, in ways where I think the thing that makes Jeremy so unlikable is the fact that all of the women around him are like *he's perfect, and I'm addicted to his dick*. He's the perfect dad. He loves his children, and he's so good at everything. And he's such a caring husband. Did I mention I'm really addicted to his dick? Ugh!

16:07

Holly: Get over yourself mate.

16:10

Harley: He never says it, women around him. He's just like, he's so great. I'd like to hear this story from the nurse's perspective.

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Holly: Did they have a fling too? Probably

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Harley: I'd love if the nurse was like, just a casual lesbian being like, *What a wanker*.

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Holly: Yeah...

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Harley: Like he's fine. But... He is her employer. I don't know. I hadn't thought about it past that point. Why do you ask? Pays the bills on time?

16:38

Holly: Now speaking of the nurse, Lowen made a comment about Verity to the nurse in front of Verity, when Verity is supposedly in this sort of catatonic state, and the nurse, takes Lowen out of the room and says to her, 'We don't talk about our patients in front of them, because we don't know what they can hear. So, we don't talk about them like they're not there.' Now, that standalone, great sentiment. But do we think that perhaps the nurse had an idea?

17:13

Harley: I don't think so. Because I think it's pretty standard for and I mean, she already obviously didn't like Lowen, because Lowen came in already thirsty for Jeremy. And went straight into the master bedroom. It was clearly like, and to be clear, Jeremy's upstairs.

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Holly: Jeremy moved from that room to be closer to Crew.

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Harley: So basically, the family is upstairs. So, Verity has her own room upstairs with all of the equipment and stuff required to make sure that she makes it through the night and all that kind of thing. Crew has his bedroom upstairs. And Jeremy has moved up there so that Crew is not alone upstairs with the mom. But Lowen comes in, clearly like fluttering her eyelashes at every opportunity at Jeremy and, in a way, positioning herself a bit as mistress of the house. I think the nurse is very much like there's something sinister about her. But I think when you take yourself out of Lowen's perspective, I can see her just being like, 'You're kind of an asshole.' And one of the things with Verity, is she's not capable of controlling her body or communicating I think, so they don't actually know how brain damaged she is, where potentially, she could be trapped in there, fully aware, but not able to communicate or take care of herself or things like that. So, I think it's a pretty standard notation. It's just, for me, a good nurse, where she's like, it's really like can you imagine being stuck in your body not able to communicate? And everyone talked around about you, but around you and not to you. So I think, it's that thing of being like, Okay, Verity, we do this, don't we Verity? Like the same way I talk to Peanut. But it is that thing of, I don't think she knows.

18:59

Holly: For those who don't know, Peanut is the spoiled dog currently sitting on Harley's lap.

19:03

Harley: He's a fur child who actually communicates very effectively, despite not using words. But I do think that that's just her being a good nurse. And I think, combined with her kind of dislike of Lowen, and Lowen's feeling of being judged by her. Which to be fair, she's very much still in her own head about it. Like she's still very self-absorbed about it instead of being like, *oh, fuck*, she's like, *she's pulled me up and like, no, I'm like, I'm so sorry. And I would never and how could this happen?* Oh, Jesus Christ, nut job. Also, part of the reason why she needs the money, where she finishes the books for Verity, is because she's an author who is actually relatively successful, but she's too scared to meet any of her fans because someone one time said they didn't like a sentence in a book or some shit. Like, oh my god. How do you function in this world when that tiny bit of

criticism will send you right off the deep end? And I'm not saying that it's not hard to see your creative work critiqued, but like, you know what you're in for. And that it was not a big amount of critique that sent her off, she would have gotten more from an editor. But if one fan doesn't just totally love everything she's doing. She can't handle it.

20:24

Holly: Yeah. So, Verity is famous, because she writes a series and the point difference about this particular series is that Verity has written it from a point of view of the villain. Yeah. And then Lowen is brought in to finish the series, once it becomes apparent, Verity can no longer finish this series.

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Harley: So, a big question in the book is kind of that. What does it take to write from the perspective of a villain?

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Holly: Yes, and very early on Lowen brings up the idea that it's very difficult to separate the author from the characters in a lot of situations, which is why she had a bit of a fling with her agent, Cory, because he fell in love with the protagonist from her first book, he very quickly realized that Lowen was not the same as the character. So, this leads us to is Lowen special in the way that she can be separated from her character? Or is Verity the same has already written from the point of the villain and can be then separate from the point of the villain, and therefore this manuscript was just a writer's exercise to maintain that villain sort of narrative? Or can she not be separated from the character? And is she this evil person who has written this manuscript or autobiography about essentially, killing her daughter, and doing all these horrible things and falling pregnant with Crew simply to keep her husband? And, so that's the big question.

22:03

Harley: But I think it's made harder by the reliability of Lowen as a narrator, because, not to say this book is bad, but like a bad retelling of something like *Rebecca*, I don't know if you've read *Rebecca* says by Daphne du Maurier, and it is this gothic thing, whether the plot of it basically is that the narrator who's never named in the book is an assistant or like a companion to this rich lady off in Ibiza or somewhere sunny or whatever. She's going on a holiday and back in the day when the like, you know, women didn't travel and unmarried, old rich, single women would hire younger companions who could learn from them, but actually just had to be their maid. So, the narrator is doing this and she meets this guy, she falls in love. It turns out that he's a lord and he's got an estate and all that kind of stuff. She's on holiday with this older woman she meets Max, falls in love, they get married, and he takes her back to his estate, where she's haunted essentially by the ghost of Rebecca, who was his first wife, who died in an accident. And it's this really like gothic-

there's a like sinister housekeeper who loved Rebecca and there's a guy who shows up and then it's like, something's not right here, but it's that whole thing of the there's this perfect version of Rebecca, where she was the perfect hostess and she was so beautiful and all this kind of stuff. And then there's this sinister side where it's like, what's real and what's not. That book answers the question.

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Holly: This book does not, no.

23:53

Harley: The whole thing throughout it your like is Lowen paranoid and nutty. Like she because I mean, the thing about the narrator in *Rebecca* is that she's not neurotic the way that Lowen's neurotic. So, there are moments where you're like, is she reading too much into it? But it's completely different. Like *Rebecca* is one of the best works of fiction ever written in my opinion. It's just beautifully done on so many levels. But yeah, so when I say that it's a bad version of *Rebecca*, *Rebecca* is something that I really love. So, in a way it's written in a technical sense, but also in a storytelling sense. So, I'm setting a very high bar here. When I say it's a bad version, like I said, from the start not saying it's bad, I'm just saying that something that Daphne du Maurier has done really, really brilliantly. It feels like it's what Colleen Hoover was aiming for, in her style, which is all good, all cool, but you are left being like, should I hate everyone?

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Holly: Yes, you do. We do. We hate everyone.

24:58

Harley: Who's good? Who's bad? I can't tell. I just don't like them.

25:01

Holly: Crew, the six-year-old. He's the only one. So, Colleen did start to lose me towards the end there. Once we did find the letter. I thought that I don't like how this is wrapping up. I don't like how it's very neat and tied together. And it could just be like trying to stab at the heart for no reason. But then she did win me back with the last line. And so essentially this letter goes on to say that the manuscript was fake. The autobiography was a fake autobiography. It was a writing exercise to stay in character.

25:39

Harley: And this is after—so Lowen's given the manuscript to Jeremy, they've gotten it on by this stage. He's gone, *You're crazy*. She's gonna read the manuscript, make your own decision, and then they kill Verity, make it look accidental. She's knocked up now with his child, and they've come back to clean out the house because they're basically

gone, this is a house full of bad memories. They're going to clean it out and find something that's theirs. So, while she's doing that, she finds a very secret hiding spot.

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Holly: Well, Crew gives it away. The son mentioned that he'd forgotten something that was left in the floor of the room.

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Harley: Like 'the drawings I used to give to mum', because he always knew that his mom wasn't in as much of a catatonic state as she pretended to be.

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Holly: And there were hints that there was perhaps a hiding spot because there was an incident where a Crew fell off the bed and was holding a knife or something and so there was a knife on the ground and Crew would hurt himself. This is kind of the first time that Lowen really stepped up and plays mummy to Crew, notices this knife on the floor but has to deal with the bleeding child then deals with that and goes back to get the knife, but the knife is gone. So, we're starting to go okay, well, maybe there's something, she actually did look for the knife, but couldn't find it.

26:58

Harley: And then it becomes a thing of like, Jeremy, of course, he's like, did you actually see a knife? Are you seeing things and do you like being paranoid? So that her reliability is questioned. But of course, being the kind of book it is, you are like, *so, something is afoot?*

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Holly: Yeah, it was pretty obvious that Verity wasn't actually as you know, passed out as she seemed to be.

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Harley: I mean, the woman deserves an Oscar.

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Holly: Yeah, impressive for how she stuck to that even when it was just the two of them, just Lowen and Verity.

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Harley: Also, Lowen, a few times tries to test Verity to prove that she's not as catatonic as she seems. And made loud noises behind her and she doesn't respond. So, like, the woman can act.

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Holly: Or is this possibly, Jeremy has read the manuscript and is drugging her? It could be many options, because there's so many options.

27:59

Harley: But yeah, so you kind of have a neat, nice little wrap-up where it's like, they lived happily ever after, Verity's the bad one. And then she finds this letter. Which is where you were lost for a minute?

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Holly: Yeah, so I was lost with this letter. I didn't like how it was wrapping up neatly and everything. So, the letter was basically explaining how the manuscript was a writing exercise. And she didn't actually hate her children, she didn't actually kill them.

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Harley: So, I can't remember the name of it. But the writing exercises are essentially something that had been suggested by Verity's agent because she was having trouble with a book, so the exercise is basically that you take real events that have happened, but you rewrite them as though you're a villain.

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Holly: Great exercise, by the way, everyone, every writer should have a crack at it.

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Harley: Have you ever?

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Holly: Oh, yeah, I did a whole course on villainy at uni.

28:52

Harley: I've never actually had anybody suggest that as a writing exercise. I like it. But so yeah, the idea then is that the manuscript is invalidated because it was a writing exercise where she's taken the real events of their children dying and rewritten it with her as the villain.

29:08

Holly: Then Colleen Hoover manages to pull me straight back in with the last line of the novel. So the last little section of the book is, no matter which way I look at it, it's clear that Verity was a master at manipulating the truth, the only question that remains is which truth was she manipulating. The book also ends with *the end*, which is also how both the manuscript and the letter and so, did Lowen find a non-villain autobiography and then rewrite it to get into the headspace of Verity. To write Verity's books and so was this manuscript actually Lowen's villain rewriting excess exercise, which wouldn't necessarily explain why Verity was faking being catatonic, but it just adds an extra layer there.

30:14

Harley: Yeah, I have to say why I actually think the biggest argument for Verity is the bad guy is that she stayed so long. Like, I know she's got some bullshit about waiting for the payout from Lowen's money or whatever, like the books that Lowen's writing but I'm sorry, she would still be getting royalties and things from the preexisting books. I can't believe for a second that she couldn't have figured out a way to pull some of that out of the bank account. Oh, for sure. And ran off with Crew if she really thought that Jeremy was gonna kill her and send her to jail and she was totally innocent. And it was just a writing exercise. Like why the fuck is she staying in this house and just watching it all happen? But then on the other side of it, I feel like the Verity from the manuscript is like she would have given Lowen a run for her fucking money. Because the whole time her motivation was that she was obsessed with Jeremy, she was obsessed to the point where him loving his own children was something that she was jealous of. So, her just staying catatonic and moving some knives around while Lowen is there mooning over and winning over her husband? I don't believe for a second that she wouldn't have been like, *Enjoy eating glass bitch.*

31:25

Holly: Yeah, we also know that Lowen is developing this obsession for Jeremy as well. So that obsessive behavior is displayed by both women kind of dismissed because they do go into town and all the women fawn over him and everything. But there is quite a powerful scene where so when Verity and Jeremy are having sex, it's so intense that she liked bites down on the headboard and are these teeth marks in the headboard. There's another scene where Lowen is imagining herself straddled over his face and bites down to replace Verity's marks with her own teeth marks.

32:04

Harley: But actually, I wonder how much Lowen is obsessed with the idea of becoming Verity more than she is Jeremy. So, he's just the prize that represents that she has ascended to the role of Verity.

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Holly: Yeah. Which starts with her being asked to get into a headspace to write these books.

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Harley: By the end, she is doing interviews and things that she'd always avoided doing.

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Holly: She fully steps into and embraces Verity.

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Harley: Which then makes you wonder if Verity is the bad guy or is Lowen the bad guy?

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Holly: Everyone's a bad guy. Especially Jeremy, hate that asshole.

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Harley: I think he's just a bit bland. I can conceive him being played by someone like Ben Affleck and being like, hmm.

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Holly: I think I was just waiting for him to be the villain. And he just wasn't, I think because it's called life experience. Whenever a guy seems too good to be true, it's because yeah, he 100% is.

32:57

Harley: But I think that's then where that ending is that thing of the like, because in her letter, essentially, she says that Jeremy found the manuscript. So essentially, she's writing to Jeremy, but she's like, 'I can't believe that you believed that and that you didn't realize that it was just a writing exercise. You should know me better than that. You're my husband, but you just immediately believed it.' And so her version of the car accident that put her into the hospital. And that is the reason why she can't move or ride or speak or anything anymore, is that he orchestrated it essentially. So, he drugged already strapped her into her car. And while she couldn't control it, ramped up the speed. I'm not entirely sure about the technical aspects. So, he taped you to the chair, but then he untied you. But then somehow the pedal was still down, but he wasn't in the car. The airbags were turned off.

33:53

Holly: But this was your idea because that's how you were going to kill Harper. You were going to turn her airbag off when she was sitting in the passenger seat.

34:01

Harley: Like I should have done that before she killed her twin. So, in the manuscript, so essentially, the way that the two twins died is that Chastain had a peanut allergy. And she was at a party and the kids raided some snacks and she went into anaphylactic shock. Died in her sleep. And then Harper, who in Verity's manuscript, is just like the evil twin, drowns, but in Verity's manuscript, she's drowned her. So, the actual series of events that we know for a fact has happened is that Chastain has had a peanut allergy and died, and Harper has drowned in a boating accident. That's the only thing that we know for a fact. So, we know the boat tips over and we know there was fishing underneath and unfortunately, Harper got tangled in the fishing net. But we don't know anything beyond that. So, in the manuscripts of the like, the villain edits or the writing exercise, whatever. Verity's whole thing is that she knew from the start that so she, as soon as she fell pregnant and Jeremy was like, 'Oh my god, I'm so excited to have children,' she was immediately jealous of her children. But then when they were born, she fell in love with Chastain. And she actually had a maternal bond with her. But then she was like, completely convinced that Harper was the evil twin. So, from the get-go, she was convinced that one day, Harper would kill Chastain and that she loves Chastain because she knew that she wouldn't have as much time on this earth. So, when Chastain has their reaction to peanuts because they've snacked in the middle of the night, she's really like, but we were so careful about this stuff. We've always been careful with people's parents that they weren't peanuts in the house that they were like, completely out of reach of the children. And I'm convinced that Harper has deliberately snuck peanuts into Chastain's food to kill her. So, Verity takes Harper and Crew out to the lake and tips the boat. And then she says that she tried to go back for Harper, but she couldn't find her, and she had to get Crew to shore.

36:00

Holly: Yeah, so she does also say, as the boat is tipping over, she says to Crew, hold your breath, sweetheart, hold your breath, honey, or something like that. So, the question is, why did the boat tip?

36:14

Harley: And this is the thing is that that's one of the points that after reading the manuscript, supposedly, Jeremy has gone to her. Why did you say that to him ahead of time? And she said, because I thought that Harper would be able to, I didn't know the net was there, I thought that Harper would be able to swim enough that like I was more worried for him than her even though I was worried for both of them. Like she didn't know that it was going to happen. But that's the point where he's like something is afoot.

36:41

Holly: Had he supposedly read the manuscript or had Crew told him? I think Crew had told him before he'd read the manuscript. So, he already kind of had a bit of an inkling that something.

36:52

Harley: Yes, because this was in the manuscript. He'd gone and she realized that she'd lost him. And so, she drove herself into a tree.

36:59

Holly: Yes. So then in the letter, we hear a slightly different version of events. So, in a letter, and supposedly Harper is leaning over the side of the boat, and Harper accidentally tips the boat over. And as the boat was tipping, supposedly, there, she says to Crew, 'Hold your breath, honey.' There's a period of time where she's searching for Harper, can't find her, needs to get Crew to shore, then goes back in trying to find Harper. She's tangled. I believe 30 seconds was mentioned. It was like 30 seconds before she realized that Harper wasn't following her to shore or something like that. When there's a traumatic incident like this, and everyone's been kicked out of the boat and no one's wearing life vests. It's much deeper than you thought it was going to be. And you've got to get kids out of there. 30 seconds is a long time, like as a mother 30 seconds before you realize your child is not behind you. Is a long fucking time.

38:02

Harley: So, say as somebody who I don't know how much time you spent boating. So where I used to live in South Australia, it's like, right on a river, a horseshoe bend in the river. So, I've done a lot of kayaking and things and one of the things that we were taught was essentially how to tip a kayak and get out safely. But the boat tips and stays afloat generally. If I had two children, and a boat tipped, would you not get the one who can't swim to the boat and go, 'Hold on, do not let go, I'm finding your sister.' Because he doesn't have to swim. He just has to hold on. And he's old enough to do that, like a five-year-old definitely can do that.

38:45

Holly: He's definitely old enough to do that. I think he was about five or six. Because it wasn't that long before the first meeting that it happened. But also, you've lived on this property for a while with this body of water, that he can't swim at all. I don't believe that.

39:04

Harley: I mean, like I said, even in the version of events where he can't, he's old enough to hold on, he should have been able to the end like, superhuman mum strength in the midst of an accident. Let's flip that boat back over like that. Well, you could like sit on top

of it and be like, just don't let go of the boat. I'm coming back for you, don't let go of the boat and immediately go down and find your daughter.

39:22

Holly: So, I would have managed that situation. But also like the boat tipping, and the fishing net being at the bottom, but we already know that the water is very deep. So how has she got that deep that quick? Yeah, if she was the one that actually took the boat, she kind of knew it was coming, right? Yeah, obviously they knew the tip was coming with enough notice for Verity to say to Crew, 'Hold your breath.'

39:50

Harley: Like I mean, obviously accidents happen, and people react the wrong way in them and all that kind of stuff. But like the fact that they couldn't find her at all as well where it's like... It almost would be a more realistic telling event if she had gone down for her daughter as well. And couldn't free her from the net. And so, there's this panic thing of like, how do I save you? And, I can't go back and find a knife because we're miles out. Like by the time I get back to shore, run up to the house and run back down. You're not going to be okay. Like, I can't leave you, but I can't save you. I don't know, that feels more realistic to me. Because how far down, how long was Harper at the time? How far down could she possibly have gotten that they couldn't find her at all? There's not a version of that that makes sense to me.

40:39

Holly: Which I think the manuscript version makes the most sense, allowing for some, like, possibly not quite lived experience creative liberties there. Yeah. I think the manuscript makes the most sense.

40:52

Harley: Yeah. And I think too, it makes the most sense in terms of her not actually being that far down, but Verity just looking in the wrong spot because she swam away and swam back.

41:03

Holly: I mean, already in the manuscript she said that she just wanted to go under, and backup just bob up and down a few times until she was breathless, so it seemed like she'd been looking in a panic, without actually looking.

41:11

Harley: But it is very much in line with the kind of person she presents herself to be in the manuscript that she would go down being like I thought she was here and be like, it was just panic that made me look in the completely the wrong spot.

41:23

Holly: Because the first thing she's gone is back to the boat to check that Harper's not in that air pocket.

41:30

Harley: Yeah, be like, don't you fucking hide out in here and survive you little bitch.

41:34

Holly: Which we're assuming this is a very still like, the boat flipped, it's probably not drifted too far away from where it had flipped.

41:44

Harley: They seem to make out in all versions of it that it has though. So, it's always hard with stuff in fiction, where it's like, how much is the author not understanding what they're writing about? And how much is deliberate? Do you know what I mean? Like, Colleen Hoover may have liked the idea of a lake, but has never gone boating. Whereas I'm reading it as somebody who's like, I like I can steer a kayak just fine.

42:08

Holly: But if we're going to actually tip, accidental tip over by Harper, it's probably not going to move that far. Very violent on-purpose tip, by Verity. The boat may have moved further away then, with my very limited knowledge of how boats and water work.

42:29

Harley: Any water movement will get the boat to move, and they drifted further out than they intended to, which does imply that there is movement in the lake, or that there's wind or something moving them around. Because it's not just the water. It's like wind and air and all that stuff as well. So, like it can move, but it just like this just...

42:47

Holly: It feels like it's like two kilometers down the stream, the way she writes it.

42:51

Harley: It's like, long river and he's like, nice to meet you boat, bye boat. Yeah, I think that's the thing that's disingenuous for me, not that it would move at all because of course it would. But it's moved so far that they've just got no marker for when this poor child is

drowning. I feel like it sounds like I didn't enjoy reading it, but I did. I stayed up till 4 am to finish it.

43:19

Holly: Which I think because you stayed up till 4 am I was like, this is gonna be binge-worthy. And I read it, more or less, in like two sittings. Yeah, it was binge-worthy. It's not the typical book that I would have enjoyed. I probably wouldn't have read it before.

43:36

Harley: I'd just gotten far enough in that I was committed to just seeing it through you know? Also, I really thought that we were going to have more of a horror movie kind of ending with the like, Lowen and Verity alone in the house, fight for survival?

43:50

Holly: Yes, I was so sure I even messaged you about it. Because they make such a big point about the basement door being on backwards. And how you can't open it from the inside if you put your arms full.

44:02

Harley: And it's literally just an excuse to get it down in the basement. So, she knows things have been rearranged.

44:06

Holly:
And it's dark down there.

44:09

Harley:
And it's like, this really felt like a setup for a bigger thing than just I went into the basement later and was like, Wait a second. Somebody's been going through boxes.

44:15

Holly: Did Colleen Hoover intend there to be a confrontation like that, and then change your mind and be like, oh, just leave those breadcrumbs in there. Or she deliberately put those breadcrumbs in there to misdirect. I was so sure that was like foreshadowing. I even messaged you about it.

44:34

Harley: I didn't want to let you down where I was like, it's literally nothing. Because I mean, I feel like you may have not made it to the end of the book if I'd said that to you,

just out of sheer like excuse me, no, fuck you. Yeah, there's a lot of stuff like that where I really felt like I was gonna get more of a payoff.

44:53

Holly: I think that's partly why I don't like the characters because they felt like they had more potential. Yeah, and they just didn't quite live up to it. It's like, are you a villain? Are you not a villain? It's so morally gray at this point because of the way the book is written and if they're deliberately like that.

45:12

Harley: I mean it's very hard to know how much Lowen's paranoia is because she has a dream at one point where she's like, oh my god Crew, and that's actually what pushes her to go to Jeremy about Verity and like push it to those final confrontations because she has a nightmare that Crew's grown up evil because of his mother's influence. What the fuck Lowen? Your nightmare doesn't justify destroying a family. Even if you're right about Verity, like the fact that that's the thing that finally makes you be like, no, I won't stand for this. Jeremy, you have to know the truth about her. And I feel like that is Lowen trying to make herself the like, *I'm just such a caring, loving person. And I care so much about everyone. Even this child. It's not my own.* But it's Jeremy's last hope or whatever, from this relationship. But like, *I'm so caring that that's the thing that made me do it wasn't for myself. It was for Crew.*

46:14

Holly: Like bitch it was for you. Crew, his due date, right? So very, Verity's worried that Jeremy's gonna leave to give a shit. So, she says, I'm pregnant. And then they fuck like rabbits for two weeks until she does fall pregnant. So, there's not just a two-week discrepancy there because if she already supposedly knew that she was pregnant, it would be at least a six-week discrepancy, which is a long time even to be like, oh, he's just overcooked, like, that is too long. It's way too long. So, I feel like that's another clue that when Jeremy did read the manuscript, once Lowen had given it to him, things clicked into place before he confronted her. Because that's a big one.

47:09

Harley: Which then makes you be like, is Jeremy stupid? Is he stupid or is he evil?

47:17

Holly: Both. But which one primarily? I don't know. I think he's just stupid. I think he's just like a himbo.

47:27

Harley: It does feel like a game. So, I always say when I'm bartending and I'm serving drinks. And girls, I never know what to do, like, play drunk or stupid. And they're like, what do you mean? I'm like, you literally going up to people being like, are you stupid? Are you drunk? Because if you're just stupid, you can have a beer. But if you're drunk, no beer for you, it's like that with you where it's like, evil or stupid. People are stupid. Can't tell. But can I have a second opinion? If you were to call your boss I would be like, can I serve him? Is he just dumb? Or is he evil?

47:56

Holly: Yeah, so second opinion, is he dumb or evil?

48:01

Harley: I think mostly dumb. He does, in the end, no matter what version of events you believe, murder his wife.

48:05

Holly: He does. Yes. It's just whether it's the third attempt or the first attempt.

48:09

Harley: Yeah. I also think it's quite telling that he doesn't give her an opportunity to speak. Like, if you heard like, let's just play the straight version of events for him. You've lost two children, your wife's catatonic, or whatever. You try to make the most of all of it, like, finally getting a taste of not being alone all the time after being the good, dutiful husband. And then this woman who's fucking here gives you a manuscript from your wife, where she confesses that she's like, the vilest thing ever. And you go in there, and you force her to respond to you to prove that she's not actually as catatonic as she seems. And then you just immediately kill her. And you don't make her explain herself. You don't do any of the like, would you not be like, 'Thank you for giving me all of this information moment but get the fuck out. Verity and I are having a conversation.' Even if he kills her in the end, would you not have that minute of being like, 'No, I want you to explain yourself.' And then if she can't be like, 'Cool, well guess who's dying?'

49:16

Holly: I mean, I think I'm gonna sound like a horrible person here. I feel like his reaction was accurate. I think it was because he's reading the manuscript for the first time and things are clicking into place because they make sense things like Crew's birthdate being off, confirmation that the suspicions that they already hinted the boat that had caused her to die were correct, then, yeah, I think it deals with suspicions that he'd already had. And this is confirmation from her own hand that yes, it is correct. And then go in there and the

final nail in the coffin is oh yeah surprise I'm actually not catatonic. Also murder is wrong, and we are not condoning in any way, shape, or form.

50:01

Harley: I do condone playing drunk or stupid. I do not condone murder.

50:06

Holly: Drunk or stupid can be fun. I am both most of the time.

50:11

Harley: So, we're talking about you think that it's a normal reaction for—

50:16

Holly: Maybe not normal.

50:17

Harley: Whatever justified or not, I guess normal for the circumstances?

50:23

Holly: Normal for the circumstances. But this is assuming that he hadn't previously read the manuscript. And he was reading it for the first time, things were clicking into place.

50:33

Harley: To be fair, I brought that up as well, like in that version of events, because I feel like in that version of events, he hasn't had time to have that *what the fuck* moment, they're not saying he'd hear her out properly, or they'd have a really deep conversation and everything would be fine, or any of that kind of stuff. But I would have a *what the fuck* moment where it's like, you got to start talking real fast, because you've got about 60 seconds before I start getting stabby, or strangle-y in this case, but you know.

51:01

Holly: I think it was something that he had already kind of assumed, and he'd been dwelling over for a long time. And this was just like a confirmation that he was correct.

51:12

Harley: Yeah, I guess there's just a level of calculation in both of them where he's like, I mean, he goes to strangle her and she's like, no, make it look like an accident.

51:21

Holly: Yes. So, Lowen is a very cold and calculated character. Regardless, she steps into playing the role of mummy quite well. She steps into replacing Verity very well. But

ultimately, she was chosen to write the rest of Verity's novels, which are from the point of the villain. So, there must be some reason for that. So, there's a whole theme throughout the book of the really similar style to Verity. Or you can touch on what she can touch on or like, which kind of brings us back to the probably not correct, but possibility that Lowen was the one that wrote or rewrote Verity's autobiography.

52:07

Harley: Yeah, I think too, it's quite telling that like, throughout the beginning of the book, so the original thing is that Verity always admired Lowen's work and wanted to bring her in. But actually, it was Jeremy, who'd read her stuff and liked it. And he's also said he's never read anything except the first book of Verity's. So, there's just a whole lot of questions that are unanswered that draw you in, but also kind of what makes it, I mean, it is junk food, but it has that junk food quality, where it's like, you feel like you've eaten a whole meal. And all of this stuff was good, but I'm not satisfied. So I've eaten my cheeseburger, but I'm still hungry somehow.

52:50

Holly: So then, are there any parallels between Jeremy and Corey, the agent, because both of them have read Lowen's work, and both were attracted to her through this work? Corey very quickly realized that she was not the character and therefore fell out of love.

53:09

Harley: That then becomes the question of is Lowen as we see her in the book, because she is the one who identifies that's why Corey loved her and why he stopped loving her. But also, do we believe the version of herself that she is presenting throughout the book?

53:27

Holly: And I don't know that I do. There's obviously something else there. Because just the way that she's so coldly makes it look like an accident. That was just very...

53:40

Harley: I mean, it's told from her perspective in that way, where kind of as you're reading it, initially, it's that thing of like, you're very these awful, like, save yourselves. But then when you kind of stop and think about it, or you reread it, you're like, hang on a second here.

53:55

Holly: Everyone's fucked up.

53:57

Harley: But this is what I mean.

53:58

Holly: It just makes sense.

53:59

Harley: I feel like it's like junk food.

54:01

Holly: It's so junk food where it is,

54:02

Harley: It's like, I'm really craving that. And I mean, I don't eat at McDonald's because I'm vegetarian. And I don't think they've ever had a good vegetarian option, ever. But it's that thing of that, like, I'm gonna have a cheeseburger and some chips. And I'm really craving that kind of food, and then you eat it, and you're hungry again, within five minutes. And it's that kind of quality where, while you're reading it, it's satisfying. And then as soon as you're done, you're like, how you might feel? Well, I'm still hungry. And it feels like the same thing where I really enjoyed reading it, but then I got to the end of it. And I mean, to be fair, when I got to the end of it, I was like, holy shit. But then, kind of immediately after that year, it was like, I feel unsatisfied. Like, this doesn't feel like it's given me any fun.

54:43

Holly: And we definitely left with a nasty hangover. Not a nice hangover.

54:45

Harley: Yeah. And there's no nutritional value. Which is fine. Sometimes that's what you're after. I think that is why it lends itself to that definition of an airport read that we had at the start. But yeah, it does feel a bit junk food-y. And the more we talk about it, the more I realized that I'm still hungry. Yeah, to wrap it up, because we really could ramble about this book and what all of the options could be and how unsatisfied we are for hours in the interest of our time and yours. We're going to finish it by asking you some questions. So, first things first, which Verity do you think is real?

55:23

Holly: Yeah. So is it manuscript Verity, or letter Verity?

55:28

Harley: And based on which Verity you think is real, what do you think of Jeremy and Lowen? Because I think which version you decide on really does change the perspective of them. Also, if you really liked Lowen, Jeremy, or Verity, let us know and let us know

why. Because we may very well just be disagreeable people, so let us know if we're disagreeable. Let us know if you agree. But, like I said, let us know if you disagree too, because I think we're gonna say all discussion—most discussion is good discussion, as long as everybody's respectful.

56:06

Holly: So, I guess we opened the podcast asking us, manuscript versus letter. So, we're going to finish it by asking you, manuscript versus letter, or crazy random third theory that Lowen has rewritten everything. But then why is Verity pretending to be in a coma? So let us know. Are you going to crazy fourth theory that actually it's all Chastain? And she didn't ever have a peanut allergy or something? We want to know.

56:34

Harley: We'll also accept aliens. Always could be aliens or the Illuminati.

56:41

Holly: could be. It could be weird sirens that live in that lake. You know? And that's where Harper is. She's actually becoming a siren, joined the sirens, to bring on the New World Order. Yeah, yeah.

56:52

Harley: So basically, we're saying crazy or otherwise, we'll accept all theories.

Harley: Hi, guys, it is us from the future. Hello from the future. So, we originally recorded this episode of Verity when it was pretty freshly released.

57:12

Holly: Yeah. So, since we've recorded, Colleen Hoover has released a special collector's edition, which did include an extra chapter at the end.

57:21

Harley: So, we're here to talk about the extra chapter.

57:25

Holly: So, this is an additional spoiler alert, if you haven't read the collector's edition extra chapter, you might want to switch off now. Or you could just listen, like it's your choice.

57:37

Harley: What did you think of the extra chapter?

57:39

Holly: I feel very validated. But I also don't feel like it was necessary.

57:44

Harley: I resent a little bit that we, I mean, so we only got one copy of the bonus chapter version. But essentially, we've paid for three separate copies.

57:54

Holly: Four. Well, you've bought the Kindle edition. I have a physical copy of the original, plus the physical copy of the collector's edition. And I have an audiobook version. So, we have four.

58:10

Harley: Yeah, so I don't think that the extra chapter was worth paying for a hardcover price again.

58:15

Holly: No, yeah, I was quite annoyed that it wasn't like you couldn't just buy a \$4.99 version on Kindle or something with the extra chapter or just buy the extra chapter, you had to go out and buy a whole new hardcopy, and it wasn't available in your cheaper mass retailers that also stocked books, you had to go to a bookshop.

58:41

Harley: It also wasn't something that like, I mean, admittedly, I'm not a particular Colleen Hoover fan. So, I'm not really following these things very closely. But it's not like we knew when we originally bought *Verity* that there was going to be a version with an extra bit that came out. Because if we'd known that we probably would have just waited and bought that. And I think if you're already reading *Verity*, so if you haven't read it, you're gonna go by it, you're gonna go read it. I think it's worth getting the copy with the extra chapter. But if you've already bought it, I don't think the extra chapter is worth buying it again.

59:15

Holly: It's very disconnected. So on top of that, what happens in this chapter?

59:20

Harley: Yeah, so we start off like a year later.

59:22

Holly: About a year later. So, she's had the baby, they've moved. They're living their happy little family life with the four of them.

59:31

Harley: With a healthy dose of paranoia in case they ever get caught out.

59:34

Holly: With a very healthy dose of paranoia that only gets worse.

59:38

Harley: So Lowen is still absolutely fucking obsessed with Verity.

59:43

Holly: Yeah, and becoming Verity. And she actually mentions that.

59:46

Harley: Yes, she does seem to acknowledge that in herself. I do feel in a lot of ways like this is an attempt to maybe be able to write a sequel, given the turn of events, and cast Lowen as a sympathetic character but the thing is I already hate her. And Jeremy, being a bad guy doesn't make me hate her less.

1:00:08

Holly: Yeah. So essentially, they've gone off for a lovely family day at the beach. Jeremy's gone for a run leaving Lowen on the beach, nursing the baby, and Crew is just playing in the sand. A woman walks by who happens to recognize them and knew Verity. And essentially, Jeremy is just like, 'Well, better tie up this loose end,' and fucking drowns her. So, I feel very validated that yes, Jeremy is a bad guy, and I am justified in my hatred.

1:00:41

Harley: We also get a lot of stuff about Crew being more sinister.

1:00:46

Holly: Yeah, so I do have to retract my statement earlier where I was like, Crew was the only redeemable character in the whole book because apparently not.

1:00:56

Harley: Team nurse still.

1:00:58

Holly: Yes, I'm still waiting for that sequel. That's from the nurse's perspective.

1:01:02

Harley: It very much feels like this chapter is one to answer all of the speculation about which Verity is the real Verity. And it appears that Colleen Hoover's answer is it doesn't matter. Either way, she was a shitty parent. And to set up a say, it really feels like a sequel setup. To me, it feels insane, like a post-credit scene in a movie, where it's like, oh, yeah, by the way, the story is not done. Come back next year for the sequel.

1:01:29

Holly: And that's exactly it. But you had to buy the special edition DVD version with that theme to get it?

1:01:37

Harley: I feel like if it had been really released as, like, a bonus chapter on her website or something, but you can't grab all the money as a publishing house is want to do. Like I'm sure that was from her publishers more than her specifically.

1:01:49

Holly: Well, she's a best-selling author, how many times? I don't think she needs the money grab that this feels like it is.

1:01:57

Harley: Yeah. And yeah, it just really does feel like, so it feels like the next book is going to be set up with Lowen trying to get her baby and escape from her increasingly sinister husband and psychotic child.

1:02:10

Holly: So are we going to find out that, like, Jeremy was the one that wrote the manuscript and the letter?

1:02:18

Harley: Maybe they were both crazy. And what does that say about Lowen?

1:02:22

Holly: Is Lowen the one that's actually in a coma? And this is all a dream?

1:02:25

Harley: Has she been in a psych ward this whole time? And it turns out, Jeremy's actually her doctor, and she's not pregnant at all. She never had a baby.

1:02:32

Holly: She had a psychotic break after watching someone's head go pop. That would make a lot of sense.

1:02:36

Harley: That somehow would actually make more sense than the book does?

1:02:40

Holly: It would. And that would explain why there was so much emphasis on that scene at the start.

1:02:45

Harley: And why are there so many things that go nowhere? Like the basement door. So we did want to come in, we wanted to acknowledge that final chapter. There were elements of it that were really validating, having read the earlier books, I don't think it's entirely without value. I just don't think that its value can be measured with having to buy the book again, especially given that we had to purchase a whole other hardcopy, and we had for one reason or another, purchased three copies already. I've got no issue spending money on books; I've got no issue spending money on books that I sometimes already own. If there's a really good reason for it. I don't think this bonus chapter was a really good reason for it. You might differ if you're super obsessed with Colleen Hoover, and you love everything she's ever written and all that kind of stuff. Maybe that's a different thing for you. That's not really how I feel about authors. I'm not inclined to rebuy for something like that. But that said, for authors I really like I've definitely got physical copies. And then I've bought another copy on my Kindle so that I've got a copy if I'm just like out and about or, when so at the end of the month, we're both traveling. And if I'm traveling and I'm like, oh, I've had a shitty day and I just want to comfort read, being able to go to something that's on my bookshelf when I'm not home is convenient. Yeah, and I've got no issue with the author getting paid twice in that scenario. And with having two copies of the exact same book with no bonus chapter. But I knew what I was in for. I knew what I was paying for.

1:04:14

Holly: It is a collector's edition, so it does have a nice shiny gold cover. And it would look really great on my bookshelf if I knew where I had put it.

1:04:26

Harley: Holly's ghosts have stolen it.

1:04:28

Holly: I read it. I put it down next to my bed when I finished reading the chapter and it just evaporated.

1:04:32

Harley: Yeah, her ghosts are busy reading it. It'll turn up as it always does. I would recommend it if you haven't, I guess the additional bit that I would add is if you are buying it, I would recommend that you buy it with the extra chapter because I do feel like it feels a little bit more finished. But I wouldn't go out and buy the extra chapter. I would wait for somebody to leak it online because they'll be pissy that they paid for it. It'll get out there.

1:05:04

Holly: So, you feel it's more finished with that chapter because I actually feel the opposite. I think I liked how it finished previously.

1:05:13

Harley: I feel like it wrapped up some of the loose ends that because there's unfinished things, I didn't mind ending on the mystery of like which Verity was the one?

1:05:22

Holly: Because you can kind of wipe your hands and be like, Okay, we know Lowen is unreliable as a narrator. We also know that she is unreliable as a narrator. So yeah, we can just walk away from that whole situation as arguments were made about all of that.

1:05:34

Harley: But given that there were so many things that were just left open-ended, I mean, the basement door is just one of many, it's so telling that you sent me a message being like, 'Oh my God, this is so going somewhere.' I got nothing. I don't know how to respond to this. Because the answer is, it doesn't. It doesn't go anywhere.

1:05:51

Holly: I feel like if they don't bring out a sequel, which is like you say, potentially Lowen and the baby trying to escape, it's going to feel like a whole lot of fluff for no reason. It has no purpose, other than to sell more books. And then I'll be very jaded. I do feel validated that Jeremy is the bad guy or is now the bad guy. But I am interested to see where this goes.

1:06:17

Harley: I think it's a really hard sell trying to make Lowen a sympathetic narrator, because she's just so unlikable. And it kind of worked for everybody for the like, not to say that there couldn't be a sequel or any of that kind of stuff. It works that everybody was

dislikable, that was one of the things that I actually would have given her credit for. She did a very good job of that. And that kind of added to the mystery of what version of events is real because you've got the stories that Lowen tells herself because it's convenient, because she's in love with Jeremy, then you've got the stories that Jeremy tells because let's be honest, like he gets his wife's fortune, with none of the carry-on of having her around. Which version of Verity is true, like, there's so many levels of unreliability and which version of anybody that you meet really is real, or it's a curated version of or you know, yadda. But yeah, I feel like there wasn't enough resolution with all of the little things in the first book. I feel like the overall story, I could have ended there and been happy. But I did feel like there were a lot of small things that weren't resolved. This feels like it's given me a sense of resolution, but it now has made me go you better fuck and not with the sequel, but then equally, you better fucking not have given me that for no reason. Like, I don't know, I just it just has made me not happy. Any which way? I'm like, is this a cash grab? Is this a sequel angle? Is this too many people on Reddit? Will I get it? What were we trying to do here?

1:07:45

Holly: I think that's what I don't really like about it. I liked that the original ending left you with questions. I don't like the questions at this additional ending.

1:08:00

Harley: I don't know that there's much more that we can say really for that one until unfortunately, we see if she does a sequel. Or I guess kind of what she chooses to do from here with this story. It's kind of hard to know what her motivations are. I can tell you right now, if she ever does a book that we read again, and then there's a bonus chapter, I'll be going to my local library and standing in the library reading it, there'd be like, I'm not even going to the effort of borrowing this. I'm certainly not buying it. I'm reading it right here.

1:08:31

Holly: Yeah. And you can do that because you will read it in about three minutes.

1:08:35

Harley: Yeah. And if it's good, I'll say buy it. If it's not, save your money. You're welcome. Anyway, we hope you enjoyed today's episode. We hope you enjoyed this little bonus rent. Yeah, bonus chapter and if you did enjoy today's episode, please don't forget to like, subscribe, follow, click all the happy positive buttons. Leave us a review on Apple iTunes links to all the things will be in our show notes. They're also available at www.bio.link/bimbo.

1:09:07

Holly: Want to see a little more for exclusive episodes behind the scenes and other random hot-girl shit? Subscribe to our Patreon. Again, that link will be in our show notes.

1:09:16

Harley: Join us again next week for more books, babes, and banter. Bimbos out.