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Entertainment WeeklyOnlineYou'll tear through this juicy, super-fun (if murder can ever be fun?) thriller."Bustle "A whodunit with a Breakfast Club twist...following four unique voices on a chase to find the killer, this one will keep you guessing until the very, very end."Popcrush"Twisty plotting, breakneck pacing and intriguing characterisation add up to an exciting, single-sitting thrillerish treat."The Gleadiem ordinary whodunit, especially and relevant."Readers will have a hard time putting this clever page-turner an addictive, devon only-sitting thriller with so many twists and turns you'll be wondering until the very end. Who really killed Simon?Kara Thomas's author of The Darkest Corners and Little Monsters"[As] McManus's intense high mystery unfolds...each character becomes more complex and nuanced, adding richness and depth to the suspense." VOYAFast-paced blend of Gossip Girl, Pretty Little Liars, and classic John Hughes will leave readers racing to the finish as he try to unravel the mystery on their own."Kirkus Reviews"One of Us Is Lying is flat-out addictive. [McManus] weaves an authentic, suspenseful mystery that readers can imagine taking place at their very own high school."A smart, twisted, and unpredictable YA mystery that will have readers guessing until the very end.""An engaging, enticing look at the pressures of high school and the things that cause a person to lose control."Booklist Karen M. McManus earned her BA in English from the College of the Holy Cross and her MA in Journalism from Northeastern University. She is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of One of Us Is Lying, its sequel One of Us Is Next, Two Can Keep a Secret and The Cousins. Her work has been published in more than 40 languages. To learn more about Karen and her books, visit karenmcmanus.com, or follow @writernc on Twitter and Instagram. Chapter One Bronwyn Monday, September 24, 2:55 p.m. A sex tape. A pregnancy scare. Two cheating scandals. And thats just this weeks update. If all you knew of Bayview High was Simon Kellehers gossip app, youd wonder how anyone found time to go to class. Old news, Bronwyn, says a voice over my shoulder. Wait till you see tomorrows post. Damn. I hate getting caught reading About That, especially by its creator. I lower my phone and slam my locker shut. Whose lives are you ruining next, Simon? Simon falls into step beside me as I move against the flow of students heading for the exit. Its a public service, he says with a dismissive wave. You tutor Reggie Crawley, dont you? Wouldnt you rather know he has a camera in his bedroom? I dont bother answering. Me getting anywhere near the bedroom of perpetual stoner Reggie Crawley is about as likely as Simon growing a conscience. Anyway, they bring it on themselves. If people didnt lie and cheat, Id be out of business. Simons cold blue eyes take in my lengthening strides. Where are you rushing off to? Covering yourself in extracurricular glory? I wish. As if to taunt me, an alert crosses my phone: Mathlete practice, 3 p.m. Epoch Coffee. Followed by a text from one of my teammates: Evans here. Of course he is. The cute Mathlete-less of an oxymoron than you might think seems to only ever show up when I cant. Not exactly, I say. As a general rule, and especially lately, I try to give Simon as little information as possible. We push through green metal doors to the back stairwell, a dividing line between the dinginess of the original Bayview High and its bright, airy new wing. Every year more wealthy families get priced out of San Diego and come fifteen miles east to Bayview, expecting that their tax dollars will buy them a nicer school experience than popcorn ceilings and scarred inoleum. Simons still on my heels when I reach Mr. Averys lab on the third floor, and I half turn with my arms crossed. Dont you have someplace to be? Yeah. Detention, Simon says, and waits for me to keep walking. When I grasp the knob instead, he bursts out laughing. Youre kidding me. You too? Whats your crime? Im wrongfully accused, I mutter, and yank the door open. Three other students are already seated, and I pause to take them in. Not the group I would have predicted. Except one. Nate Macauley tips his chair back and smirks at me. You make a wrong turn? This is detention, not student council. He should know. Nates been in trouble since fifth grade, which is right around the time we last spoke. The gossip mill tells me hes on probation with Bayviews fines for ... something. It might be a DUI; it might be drug dealing. Hes a notorious supplier, but my knowledge is purely theoretical. Save the commentary. Mr. Avery checks something off on a clipboard and closes the door behind Simon. High arched windows lining the back wall send triangles of afternoon sun splashing across the floor, and faint sounds of football practice float from the field behind the parking lot below. I take a seat as Cooper Clay, whos palming a crumpled piece of paper like a baseball, whispers Heads up, Addy and tosses it toward the girl across from him. Addy Prentiss blinks, smiles uncertainly, and lets the ball drop to the floor. The classroom clock inches toward three, and I follow its progress with a helpless feeling of injustice. I shouldnt even be here. I should be at Epoch Coffee, flirting awkwardly with Evan Neiman over differential equations. Mr. Avery is a give-detention-first, ask-questions-never kind of guy, but maybe theres still time to change his mind. I clear my throat and start to raise my hand until I notice Nates smirk broadening. Mr. Avery, that wasnt my phone you found. I dont know how it got into my bag. This is mine, I say, brandishing my iPhone in its melon-striped case. Honestly, youd have to be clueless to bring a phone to Mr. Averys lab. He has a strict no-phone policy and spends the first ten minutes of every class rooting through backpacks like hes head of airline security and were all on the watch list. My phone was in my locker, like always. You too? Addy turns to me so quickly, her blond shampoo-ad hair swirls around her shoulders. She must have been surgically removed from her boyfriend in order to show up alone. That wasnt my phone either. Me three, Cooper chimes in. His Southern accent makes it sound like thray. He and Addy exchange surprised looks, and I wonder how this is news to them when theyre part of the same clique. Maybe berpoular people have better things to talk about than unfair detentions. Somebody punked us! Simon leans forward with his elbows on the desk, looking spring-loaded and ready to pounce on fresh gossip. His gaze darts over all four of us, clustered in the middle of the otherwise empty classroom, before settling on Nate. Why would anybody want to trap a bunch of students with mostly spotless records in detention? Seems like the sort of thing that, oh, I dont know, a guy whos here all the time might do for fun. I look at Nate, but cant picture it. Rigging detention sounds like work, and everything about Nate—from his messy dark hair to his ratty leather jacket—screams Cant be bothered. Or yawns it, maybe. He meets my eyes but doesnt say a word, just tips his chair back even farther. Another millimeter and hell fall right over. Cooper sits up straighter, a frown crossing his Captain America face. Hang on. I thought this was just a mix-up, but if the same thing happened to all of us, its somebodys stupid idea of a prank. And Im missing baseball practice because of it. He says it like hes a heart surgeon being detained from a lifesaving operation. Mr. Averys rolls his eyes. Save the conspiracy theories for another teacher. Im not buying it. You all know the rules against bringing phones to class, and you broke them. He gives Simon an especially sour glance. Teachers know About That exists, but theres not much they can do to stop it. Simon only uses initials to identify people and never talks openly about school. Now listen up. Youre here until four. I want each of you to write a five-hundred-word essay on how technology is ruining American high schools. Anyone who cant follow the rules gets another detention tomorrow. What do we write with? Addy asks. There arent any computers here. Most classrooms have Chromebooks, but Mr. Avery, who looks like he should have retired a decade ago, is a holdout. Mr. Averys crosses to Addys desk and taps the corner of a lined yellow notepad. We all have one. Explore the magic of longhand writing. Its a lost art. Addys pretty, heart-shaped face is a mask of confusion. But how do we know when were reached five hundred words? Count. Mr. Avery replies. His eyes drop to the phone Im still holding. And hand that over, Miss Rojas. Doesnt the fact that youre confiscating my phone twice give you pause? Who has two phones? I ask. Nate grins, so quick I almost miss it. Seriously, Mr. Avery, somebody was playing a joke on us. Mr. Averys snowy mustache twitches in annoyance, and he extends his hand with a beckoning motion. Phone, Miss Rojas. Unless you want a return visit. I give it over with a sigh as he looks disapprovingly at the others. The phones I took from the rest of you earlier are in my desk. Youll get them back after detention. Addy and Cooper exchange amused glances, probably because their actual phones are safe in their backpacks. Mr. Avery tosses my phone into a drawer and sits behind the teachers desk, opening a book as he prepares to ignore us for the next hour. I pull out a pen, tap it against my yellow notepad, and contemplate the assignment. Does Mr. Avery really believe technology is ruining schools? Thats a pretty sweeping statement to make over a few contraband phones. Maybe its a trap and hes looking for us to contradict him instead of agree. I glance at Nate, whos bent over his notepad writing computers suck over and over in block letters. Its possible Im overthinking this. Cooper Monday, September 24, 3:05 p.m. My hand hurts within minutes. Its pathetic, I guess, but I cant remember the last time I wrote anything longhand. Plus Im using my right hand, which never feels natural no matter how many years Ive done it. My father insisted I learn to write right-handed in second grade after he first saw me pitch. Your left arm gold, he told me. Dont waste it on crap that doesnt matter. He hoists it onto his lap and peers inside. Where the hells my water bottle? No talking, Mr. Kelleher. Mr. Averys says without looking up. I know, but—my water bottles missing. And Im thirsty. Mr. Averys points toward the sink at the back of the room, its counter crowded with beakers and petri dishes. Get yourself a drink. Quietly. Simon gets up and grabs a cup from a stack on the counter, filling it with water from the tap. He heads back to his seat and puts the cup on his desk, but seems distracted by Nates methodical writing. Dude, he says, kicking his sneaker against the leg of Nates desk. Seriously. Did you put those phones in our backpacks to mess with us? Now Mr. Avery looks up, frowning. I said quietly, Mr. Kelleher. Nate leans back and crosses his arms. Why would I do that? Simon shrugs. Why do you do anything? So youll have company for whatever your screw-up of the day was? One more word out of either of you and its detention tomorrow, Mr. Avery warns. Simon opens his mouth anyway, but before he can speak theres the sound of tires squealing and then the crash of two cars hitting each other. Addy gasps and I brace myself against my desk like somebody just rear-ended me. Nate, who looks glad for the interruption, is the first on his feet toward the window. Who gets into a fender bender in the school parking lot? he asks. Bronwyn looks at Mr. Avery like shes asking for permission, and when he gets up from his desk she heads for the window as well. Addy follows her, and I finally unfold myself from my seat. Might as well see whats going on. I lean against the ledge to look outside, and Simon comes up beside me with a disparaging laugh as he surveys the scene below. Two cars, an old red one and a nondescript gray one, are smashed into each other at a right angle. We all stare at them in silence until Mr. Averys lets out an exasperated sigh. Id better make sure one was hurt. He runs his eyes over all of us and gestures at the parking lot. Well, that was anticlimactic, Simon says. He heads back to his desk and picks up his cup, but instead of sitting he wanders to the front of the room and scans the periodic table of elements poster. He leans out into the hallway like hes about to leave, but then he turns and raises his cup like hes toasting us. Anyone else want some water? I do, Addy says, slipping into her chair. Get it yourself, princess. Simon smirks. Addy rolls her eyes and stays put while Simon leans against Mr. Averys desk. Literally, huh? Whatll you do with yourself now that homecomings over? Big gap between now and senior prom. Addy looks at me without answering. I dont blame her. Simons train of thought almost never goes anywhere good when it comes to our friends. He acts like hes above caring whether hes popular, but he was pretty smug when he wound up on the junior prom court last spring. Im still not sure how he pulled that off, unless he traded keeping secrets for votes. Simon was nowhere to be found on homecoming court last week, though. I was voted king, so maybe Im next on his list to harass, or whatever the hell hes doing. Whats your point, Simon? I ask, taking a seat next to Addy. Addy and I arent close, exactly, but I kind of feel protective of her. Shes been dating my best friend since freshman year, and shes a sweet girl. Also not the kind of person who knows how to stand up to a guy like Simon who just wont quit. Shes a princess and youre a jock, he says. He thrusts his chin toward Bronwyn, then at Nate. And youre a brain. And youre a criminal. Youre all walking teen-movie stereotypes. What about you? Bronwyn asks. Shes been hovering near the window, but now goes to her desk and perches on top of it. She crosses her legs and pulls her dark ponytail over one shoulder. Something about her is cuter than the others, maybe? Longer hair? All of a sudden, shes kind of working this sexy-nerd thing. Im the omniscient narrator, Simon says. Bronwyns brows rise above her black frames. Theres no such thing in teen movies. Ah, but Bronwyn, Simon winks and chugs his water in one long gulp. Theres is such a thing in life. He says it like a threat, and I wonder if hes got something on Bronwyn for that stupid app of his. I hate that thing. Almost all my friends have been on it at one point or another, and sometimes it causes real problems. My buddy Luis and his girlfriend broke up because of something Simon wrote. Though it was a true story about Luis hooking up with his girlfriends cousin. But still. That stuff doesnt have to be published. Hallway gossip is bad enough. And if Im being honest, Im pretty freaked at what Simon could write about me if he put his mind to it. Simon holds his cup up, grimacing. This tastes like crap. He drops the cup, and I roll my eyes at his attempt at drama. Even when he falls to the floor, I still think hes messing around. But then the wheezing starts. One of Us Is Lying is a gripping young-adult thriller by Karen M. McManus that dives deep into the mystery of a high school students death. When Simon Kelleher, the creator of a notorious gossip app, dies under suspicious circumstances during detention, four of his classmates become the prime suspects. As the story unfolds through their alternating perspectives, they must confront their own secrets and navigate the complex social dynamics of high school. In the opening of the novel, we meet four Bayview High studentsBronwyn, Nate, Addy, and Cooperwho find themselves in detention with Simon Kelleher, the infamous creator of a school gossip app. Each of them insists the phones they were caught with arent theirs, but their teacher, Mr. Avery, dismisses their protests. During their punishment, a car accident outside grabs everyones attention. In the chaos, Simon suddenly collapses after drinking a cup of water. Nate quickly realizes Simon is having a severe allergic reaction, but crucially, his Epipen is nowhere to be found. Despite their efforts, help arrives too late, and Simon dies. The aftermath is immediate and intense: Simons final, unpublished post reveals dark secrets about each of the four studentsBronwyns academic dishonesty, Coopers steroid use, Nates drug dealing, and Addys infidelity. With their secrets out, they all become prime suspects in what now looks like a carefully planned murder. As the story progresses, we delve into the personal lives of the four teenagers. Addy is under immense pressure from her mother to prioritize her appearance and secure a man to take, re-of her. Nate, on the other hand, has been left to fend for himself after his mothers disappearance, and his fathers descent into alcoholism. Bronwyn is burdened by the expectations of her successful parents while trying to protect her younger sister, who is recovering from cancer. Cooper struggles with the weight of his fathers expectations, as he tries to build a career in baseball. Relationships between the suspects shift in unexpected ways. Bronwyn and Nate grow closer, while Addy is abandoned by her friends after her boyfriend, Jake, breaks up with her in a fit of rage. Meanwhile, Cooper grapples with his own secret romantic life as a series of mysterious Tumblr posts, supposedly from Simons killer, start to appear. In the second part, Hide-and-Seek, tensions rise as the investigation intensifies. Cooper notes the hypocrisy of their peers, who judge Addy despite engaging in similar behavior. Addys sister helps her rediscover herself after her breakup, and Nate challenges Bronwyns remorse over cheating, suggesting she cares more about appearances than the actual act. Meanwhile, Bronwyn is hiding the fact that she once lashed out at Simon after he wrote about her sister, Maeve. As the group gets closer, they discover disturbing truths. Bronwyn uncovers that Simon orchestrated the car accident on the day of his death, and the group begins to suspect that Simons death might have been a twisted act of suicide. They learn that Simon, who felt marginalized and bitter, concocted the plan to frame the others as revenge for past slights. Janae, Simons only friend, eventually reveals that Simon had manipulated Jake, Addys ex-boyfriend, into helping him frame her for his murder. The climax comes when Jake, realizing the truth is about to come out, attacks Addy. In a tense chase through the woods, Cooper intervenes just in time to save her, leading to Jakes arrest. Nate is released from jail but remains distant from Bronwyn, fearing he is not worthy of her. However, in a poignant epilogue, he finally musters the courage to reconnect with her, hinting at a hopeful future despite the darkness theyve endured. Bronwyn Rojas, often labeled as the brain, is a high-achieving, ambitious student who is constantly under pressure from her parents. Her defining trait is her intense drive to succeed, which stems from both internal and external pressures. Bronwyns younger sister, Maeve, recently in remission from cancer, also contributed to Bronwyns sense of responsibility. Bronwyns involvement in Simons death investigation reveals her to be morally complex; she cheated in chemistry to maintain her perfect academic record, a secret that Simon intended to expose. Despite her initial hesitance, Bronwyn develops a close relationship with Nate, which challenges her preconceived notions about herself and others. Her journey throughout the novel is one of self-discovery, where she grapples with the balance between her ambitions and her emerging empathy for others. Nate Macauley, the criminal, is portrayed as a rough-edged character with a troubled past. Coming from a broken home with an alcoholic father and an absentee, drug-addicted mother, Nate has been forced to fend for himself. His involvement in drug dealing, a desperate measure to support himself, reflects his harsh reality. Nates cynicism and tough exterior initially conceal his deeper vulnerabilities and capacity for care, especially as his relationship with Bronwyn develops. Nates sense of unworthiness and fear of being judged or abandoned again are significant aspects of his character. Despite his tough persona, Nate shows a strong moral compass, particularly in how he deals with the pressure of being a murder suspect. His eventual refusal to let his relationship with Bronwyn continue when he believes he cannot give her what she deserves is a pivotal moment. Nates character arc is about confronting his inner demons and learning to trust others, particularly Bronwyn. Addy Prentiss, often dubbed the princess, initially appears to embody the stereotype of a pretty, popular girl whose worth is tied to her looks and her relationship with her controlling boyfriend, Jake. Addys identity crisis begins when her infidelity is exposed, leading to Jake breaking up with her and her subsequent ostracization by her social circle. This turning point in the novel forces Addy to reevaluate her self-worth and the shallow values she has been taught. These values are primarily influenced by her mother, who has always emphasized appearance and securing a man as the ultimate goals. With the support of her sister Ashton, Addy undergoes significant character development. She transforms from a dependent and insecure girl into a more independent and self-assured individual. Her interactions with the other suspects and her unexpected courage in the novels climax, where she faces Jakes violence, reveal her inner strength and resilience. Cooper Clay, the jock, is another character who defies his initial stereotype as the perfect athlete. Coopers life has been meticulously planned by his father, who is determined to see his son become a professional baseball player. However, Cooper harbors a secret that he is terrified will destroy his carefully constructed image; he is gay and has been hiding his relationship with a male model, Kris. Coopers fear of disappointing his father and the worlds expectations of him is a central conflict in his character arc. The exposure of his sexuality by Simons posts forces Cooper to confront his fears and eventually embrace his true identity. His journey is marked by a growing sense of self-acceptance and courage, particularly when he stands up for himself and others, such as when he physically confronts Jake to save Addy. Coopers story is one of breaking free from societal and familial expectations to live authentically. Simon Kelleher, the victim whose death drives the plot, is a complex character whose actions reveal a deeply troubled individual. Simon is the creator of About That, a gossip app that has made him both feared and loathed among his peers. His role as the omniscient narrator reflects his desire to control the narrative around him. This desire is driven by bitterness and resentment towards those he perceives as having wronged him. Simons plan to orchestrate his own death and frame his classmates reveals his deep-seated anger and desire for recognition, even in a twisted manner. His actions are rooted in a profound sense of alienation and a need to lash out against a world that he feels has ignored or slighted him. Simons character is a commentary on the destructive power of gossip and the dangers of social alienation. He serves as a dark reflection of the insecurities and malice that can fester in the shadows of adolescent life. Jake Riordan, Addys controlling boyfriend, represents the toxic masculinity and possessiveness that often go unchallenged in relationships. Jake is initially portrayed as the ideal boyfriend, but his true nature is revealed as the plot unfolds. His anger and need to control Addy are symptomatic of deeper issues of insecurity and a desire to assert dominance. Jakes involvement in Simons scheme highlights his willingness to manipulate and harm others to maintain his sense of power. His character serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked control and the harm it can cause in relationships. The climax of the novel, where Jake attempts to kill Addy, starkly contrasts his earlier image and serves as a critical turning point for Addys character, forcing her to fight for her life and reclaim her autonomy. Ashton Prentiss, Addys older sister, plays a crucial role in Addys development. Unlike their mother, Ashton encourages Addy to think for herself and to value her own opinions and desires over societal expectations or the approval of men. Ashton has experienced her own struggles with a controlling husband, which gives her the insight and empathy to help Addy navigate her breakup with Jake. She acts as a mentor and a source of strength for Addy, helping her rebuild her self-esteem and sense of identity. Ashtons character underscores the importance of supportive relationships and the impact of having a positive role model during times of crisis. Maeve Rojas, Bronwyns younger sister, is a character who, despite her secondary role, adds depth to the story. Maeve has battled leukemia, and her experience with illness has made her both resilient and insightful. She shares a close bond with Bronwyn, but unlike her sister, Maeve is more willing to take risks and challenge the status quo. Maevs involvement in the investigation, particularly her technological savvy, is crucial to uncovering the truth behind Simons death. Her character highlights the importance of sibling relationships and the ways in which personal challenges can shape a persons outlook and actions. Maeve also represents the theme of overcoming adversity and the strength that comes from facing lifes challenges head-on. Janae Vargas, Simons only real friend, is a tragic figure in the novel. She is drawn into Simons dark plan out of a sense of loyalty and fear but ultimately regrets her involvement. Janaes character is marked by loneliness and guilt, as she is torn between her loyalty to Simon and her awareness of the wrongness of his actions. Her dynamics play a critical role in shaping the identities and actions of the main characters in the novel. Each of the four central characters is deeply influenced by their familial relationships, which in turn affect how they navigate the challenges presented by Simons death. Bronwyn, for instance, feels immense pressure to live up to her parents high expectations, which drives her to cheat in chemistry to maintain her perfect academic record. The novel poignantly critiques the effects of stereotyping and gossip, which are pervasive forces in the lives of the characters. Simon Kellehers gossip app, About That, is a symbolic representation of how harmful and invasive rumors can be. Through the app, Simon wields the power to control the narratives of others by categorizing them into simplistic labels like the brain, princess, jock, and criminal. These labels not only reduce the characters to one-dimensional stereotypes but also amplify the societal expectations and pressures they face. The narrative reveals the destructive impact that these stereotypes have on the characters lives, trapping them in roles they neither fully embody nor wish to uphold. As the story progresses, the characters struggle to break free from these confining labels, illustrating the broader theme of individuality versus societal expectation. The novel underscores how gossip, once unleashed, has a life of its own, warping perceptions and leading to damaging consequences. Empathy emerges as a vital theme in One of Us Is Lying, particularly as the characters move from viewing each other as mere stereotypes to understanding one anothers deeper struggles. Initially, Bronwyn, Nate, Addy, and Cooper are strangers bound only by their shared detention and their subsequent suspicion in Simons death. However, as they are forced to spend time together and learn about each others lives, they begin to see beyond the facades. The novel illustrates how empathy bridges gaps between individuals, allowing them to connect on a more profound level. Addys transformation is particularly significant in this regard. Once a princess concerned only with her appearance and social standing, she evolves into a more compassionate and self-aware individual, capable of reaching out to others like Janae, who is also grappling with her role in Simons demise. The theme of empathy is further reinforced when the characters defend each other against their classmates and the broader community, signaling a shift from suspicion and isolation to mutual support and understanding. Addys dynamics play a critical role in shaping the identities and actions of the main characters in the novel. Each of the four central characters is deeply influenced by their familial relationships, which in turn affect how they navigate the challenges presented by Simons death. 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