



You

Caroline Kepnes

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When a beautiful, aspiring writer strides into the East Village bookstore where Joe Goldberg works, he does what anyone would do: he Googles the name on her credit card.

There is only one Guinevere Beck in New York City. She has a public Facebook account and Tweets incessantly, telling Joe everything he needs to know: she is simply Beck to her friends, she went to Brown University, she lives on Bank Street, and she'll be at a bar in Brooklyn tonight—the perfect place for a “chance” meeting.

As Joe invisibly and obsessively takes control of Beck's life, he orchestrates a series of events to ensure Beck finds herself in his waiting arms. Moving from stalker to boyfriend, Joe transforms himself into Beck's perfect man, all while quietly removing the obstacles that stand in their way—even if it means murder.

You Details

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From Reader Review You for online ebook

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

Before I even get started, let me say this is not a book for everyone. Hell, it might not be a book for anyone except for Snotchocheez and myself. There is no middle-ground to be had here. This book is offensive and the characters are all vile and I expect opinions to be extremely polarized. And I totally respect that . . . but please have the decency to not troll my review and tell me how wrong I am or that I'm a pscyho. I'm already aware of those facts. Now on with the show . . .

You walk in to the bookstore where I work. Rather than picking up the shitty Dan Brown's and other bestsellers that all the no-brainers are reading, you choose Spalding Gray and Paula Fox. You're not only attractive – very reminiscent of Natalie Portman – you're also intelligent. And as we exchange pleasantries while I'm checking you out (your books, that is), you prove to be witty as well. *“If we were teenagers, I could kiss you. But I’m on a platform behind a counter wearing a name tag and we’re too old to be young. Night moves don’t work in the morning, and the light pours in through the window.”* So you take your bag and go on your way . . . and I take a glance at your credit card receipt before shoving it through the cash drawer. “Guinevere Beck” – an usual name. *“You are Charlotte’s Web and I could love you.” “The internet was designed with love in mind. It gave me so much of you . . .”*

So there you have it. Joe is a stalker - a textbook example of the scariest version of one at that. He sets his sights on Beck and is willing to do anything to make her his. And I *really* loved him. No, not in the “boy do I wish I had some fucked up weirdo in my life who would break into my house and sniff my underpants” (I’ve been married to **that** guy for a long time now *rimshot*) kind of love him, but I couldn’t stop reading his story. Caroline Kepnes managed not only to write the most revolting character I’ve ever loved (move over, Herman Koch, you ain’t got nothin’ on this gal), but on top of it all she wrote the book from Joe’s perspective. I **hate** that . . . but I loved this book.

Kepnes even managed to make me forget Joe was a total psycho on occasion. At times he was so relatable, and his opinions were spot-on . . . like when he and Beck went on an IKEA shopping spree together:

“Life at IKEA is not like life at IKEA in the movies. It’s a dystopian nightmare come true where all furniture is cut from the same hunk of cheap-ass wood, where all rooms were furnished with items that came out of the exact same factory at the exact same time. It smells like body odor and Febreze and baby shit and farts and meatballs and nail polish and more baby shit – doesn’t anyone get a babysitter anymore? – and it is loud.”

Joe is the only man I know who not only willingly references *500 Days of Summer*, but dreams he could have a magical IKEA moment like JGL and Zoey Deschanel had in that movie . . .

Through all the crazy (and let me tell you there is **A LOT** of crazy), I held out hope for Joe – just like he held out hope for himself.

“Happiness is believing that you’re gonna be happy. It’s hope.”

And for a bit it looked like things might work out (after all – Beck was no prize in the normal department herself).

“We are a dream couple, we are what happens after Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks finally kiss, after cancer-free Joe Gordon-Levitt and sweet shrink-in-training Anna Kendrick eat their pizza in 50/50. We are Winona Ryder and Ethan Hawke after U2 finishes singing 'All I Want Is You'.”

But then Beck discovers his secret . . . in the form of a used tampon he saved - along with other not-so-normal keepsakes - and I realized there was never going to be a normal. And that I'm probably going to be considered certifiable for even admitting I enjoyed this book – let alone wishing for some kind of happy ending. I admit it. I'm nuts. This book made me crazy. It turned wrong into right and bad into good and I couldn't stop reading it. I was mesmerized. It gets 5 Stars and it's easily going down as one of the Top 10 books I read in 2014.

All I can think now is that it's weird enough to admit to loving a story like this, but to be Caroline Kepnes and actually have this thing COME OUT OF YOUR BRAIN???? Oh, she has to be the most delicious weirdo I'd ever care to meet. Her writing is brilliant and I can't wait to see what she comes up with next.

Colleen Hoover says

I don't normally review books when I've personally slept with the author, and this time is no different. I have never slept with Caroline Kepnes.

You should read YOU.

See what I did there?

No?

That's because you can't read, then!

Kristin (KC) - Traveling Sister says

Full review posted

4 stars for plot--5 stars for writing

It's been 16 minutes and 4 hours since I've finished reading this lunatic of a book—and although I am scared and disturbed and feeling straight-up *icky*, I'm also outrageously impressed.

With the exception of certain scenarios appearing just a bit *too* fitting and orchestrated (e.g. multiple persons failing to put pass codes on their phones so a certain stalker can do his job with ease), I think this book was pretty damn amazing.

For me, it was the writing. This author has captured the nature of a stalker (from what I can only assume, since I am not one), **brilliantly**.

We are wedged straight inside the head of **Joe**, whose internal dialogue aims to make your skin crawl and eyes widen in disbelief. And yet...he can be slightly charming at times, and his psychotic thoughts—although choppy and drenched in delusion—are often hilarious.

However, make no mistake—this is not a romance novel. And Joe is *not* sexy, at least not for me. But he is so real and convincing and **constant**. His character continues to sink in a downward spiral until there is nothing more left to pity. His issues are not glamorized, and neither are the deep-rooted flaws of the rest of the cast.

This story isn't one I'd revisit in the future, although I am glad to have read it. It left me in a sort of dark mood for hours after reading, but emotional side effects are the marks of a job well done. Would definitely recommend to readers who are in it for thrills, not frills! ;-)

Raeleen Lemay says

4.5/5

THIS WAS GREAT. So freaky and messed up, just what I was in the mood for! I'm so very excited for the sequel (which apparently is up on NetGalley for anybody who can't wait).

Edward Lorn says

First and foremost: THIS IS NOT A ROMANCE. This book is to romance what *The Shining* is to self-help books.

The titular You is Guinevere Beck (aka Beck, or simply B.), and our narrator is the uber disturbed Joe Goldberg. These two are fucked up beyond all repair and damn fun to read about. If you're a bit demented, that is. Me? I love reading about broken, warped, or all around shit human beings. They don't need to redeem themselves for me to enjoy their stories, but I must understand them. I understood Joe and Beck's motivations. And, funny enough, I liked both of them for different reasons at different times. Kepnes did for me what Gillian Flynn has yet to do: made me care about irredeemable characters. There's no forgiving Joe and Beck (mostly Joe... yup, mostly him), but they're engaging and eerily lovable. I hated myself for feeling bad for these two shits and wanting both of them to come out unscathed. I couldn't help it. This is damn, damn, damndamndamn good writing, folks.

YOU has its predictable moments, but that doesn't lessen the impact. The ending is quite powerful, and will probably make it into my top ten endings of all time. Tears were shed. Feels were thunder-kicked into oblivion. This book got to me.

Finally, I don't give a flying fuck on hot asphalt what other reviewers say about the pop culture references. They work here. They work to give you a sense of character and place. Yes, pop culture prematurely dates many a work of fiction, but it also helps to cement a feel for the time in which the book was written. Get over

it.

In summation: If you're a fan of characters who no amount of therapy can cure, you need to read this book. You are being compared to *Gone Girl*, but in my opinion, Kepnes is a far better writer than Flynn. Flynn might give you characters you can hate. But Kepnes will make you fall in love, and then hate yourself for falling. Highest possible recommendation.

Matthew says

I finished this book while recovering from surgery. I was medicated and kind of loopy. Considering how weird this book is, it is kind of perfect!

Not for the faint of heart! This book is demented and twisted. You will feel uncomfortable that the words on these pages came from someone and were actually published. You will feel guilty for being enthralled by the madness and behavior of the narrator. You will start to question your own sanity as you realize you are not quite sure who you are cheering for.

For lovers of twisted horror that touches on the potential insanity of the human psyche, this book is for you! If you read my review, and then you read the book and you are grossed out, disturbed, or upset by the content, don't blame me! You can only blame YOU!

Theresa says

Joe Goldberg is looking for true love. Joe is pretty sure he's found it with Guinevere Beck. Too bad Joe is a creepy, delusional, obsessive stalker! "You" by Caroline Kepnes is an addictive, riveting, and fast-paced novel. The writing is filled with dark humor. I loved Joe's wicked sense of humor. He is a riot! I found myself rooting for Joe even though he's a bad, bad man. Beck is one of those characters you will love to hate. She's a compulsive liar, reckless, manipulative, hypersexual, and a walking contradiction (I believe she's suffering from borderline personality disorder). I think it's hilarious the way Joe is smitten with Beck. One minute he puts her on a pedestal, and the next he thinks she's a cold-hearted bitch. I loved the hilarious banter between Joe and Benji (Beck's casual boyfriend). I couldn't stop laughing. Even though Joe does some horrible things to try and win Beck's affections - you can't help but feel empathy for him. He's a charming, visceral, and whip-smart sociopath. "You" is not for the faint of heart. Contains explicit sexual content, vulgar language, and violent themes. Caroline Kepnes' writing style is disturbing but incredible beautiful. One of the best psychological thrillers I've read since Gillian Flynn's, "*Gone Girl*". The ending of "You" is absolute perfection. I'm looking forward to reading the sequel, "*Hidden Bodies*". Enjoy! :)

Favorite quote:

"I have taken you places better than the Upper West Side, superior to Turks and Caicos and Nicky's beige room. I have taken you to France, to the chalice, to the moon, and you cease to move and a smile rolls over your entire body, and you're a lily pad, sun stroked and floating, rooted to the floor of the lake, me, dark, above you."

Candace says

Brilliant! This book was unlike anything I've ever read before. I enjoyed every minute of this deranged story.

Welcome to the mind of Joe, a seemingly normal guy that works in a bookshop. However, there is nothing normal about Joe. His mind is a fascinating place to be, turning brief encounters into meaningful events and even, obsessions. He's a stalker, a murderer and the most candidly honest character that I've ever crossed.

The thing about Joe is that his craziness sucks you in. I loved Joe and all of his totally inappropriate behaviors. I found myself laughing my ass off at his brutally honest inner monologues on people and society in general. I kept thinking, "Am I supposed to be laughing so much?"

As Joe fixates on Beck, he finds ways to infiltrate her life. He stalks her, invades her most private moments and thoughts. He even eliminates those that would bring her down.

There's no denying that he's bat-shit crazy. However, I still loved him. I never thought I'd be able to connect with a character like Joe, but I couldn't get enough of him.

I listened to the Audible version and it was phenomenal! The narrator did a superb job. I'm not sure I would've loved it as much if I had read the kindle version. He really brought a lot to the story.

It did take me a little time to get into this book. Joe was unlike any character I'd ever encountered and his inner rants took some getting used to. He grew on me quickly though, becoming a favorite character of mine in no time.

If you're looking for something suspenseful, creepy, mysterious and a little quirky, look no further! This is a great read!

Steph Sinclair says

I don't even want to know what kind of research needed to be done to write this novel. The ending left a pretty big plot berg, but YOU was strangely addictive. What's even more strange was how Kepnes somehow got me to both root for Joe and be disgusted with him and myself simultaneously. Excuse me, I need to shower.

※?Nani※? says

4.5??

My favourite nutcase in non-fic lit.

Yup, it happened. I finally found a character who makes all the other sociopaths I read about seem like the most stable and sane guys.

Told from Joe Goldberg's perspective, a normal —so he thinks— Manhattan bookstore employee, who gets dangerously obsessed with Beck at first sight and the rest, as they say, is history.

The narrative is structured like a long monologue to “You”: Guinevere Beck, who becomes the object of his obsessive affection. The second person narrative fits the creepy tone of the book as it allows the reader a greater insight into Joe's mental state and thought processes more intimately.

YOU was an absolute page-turner. I've never been so terrified and completely captivated by a character like I have with Joe. I was cringing, unnerved and gasping at every turn - screaming WTF, is he for real?

This is a 100% character-driven book and if sarcasm, snark, explicit scenes/language and dark humour is not your thing, you might want to steer clear. Really, don't even look back.

Holly crap, Joe, how do I even begin describes him?... he's messed up to the bone with a charming disposition —which makes him even more dangerous—, calculating, extremely terrifying and utterly fascinating.

His inner monologue and his social commentary on the world and pop culture are absolutely hilarious and getting inside his head and learning the inner workings of his thoughts and emotions is what kept me glued to the pages.

He's also extremely well-read and frighteningly meticulous in his 'endeavours' (stalking the shit out of Beck) but what sets this book apart from others with a similar plot is that, here, both the stalker and the stalked are completely narcissistic and both are SUPREMELY messed up. While he does what he does in the name of his own distorted version of 'love', she lies and manipulates her way through life.

The author does such a great job of putting the readers so deep into Joe's head that, as disturbing as his behaviour is, there are various moments where he becomes a sympathetic character. He is charismatic and surprisingly sensitive that, even when he goes completely off the rails (and boy, does he ever), there's still something about him that touches a chord with the readers.

Kepnes pulls this trick off so well and makes you question your own state of mind as to why you find yourself so drawn to this lunatic of a character, be it reluctantly or otherwise.

And then there's Beck. *LONG SIGH*. As I've said above, this is in no way your usual stalker+naive sweet stalked girl story. No, Beck is the definition of utter detestable. She lies incessantly (almost pathologically), she's manipulative, flighty, extremely needy, self-obsessed, Incredibly pretentious, desperate and quite literally represents everything Joe loathes in society. And as we delve deeper into the story, we find that she has her own dark side to her that only the readers are aware of because Joe is simply blind to her flaws and worships the very ground she walks on. Seriously, nut jobs match made in hell. ????

This book is also a startling lesson on just how much a person can find out about another through credit/debit card, social media and other means of search engines. The way he so easily invades her life and takes complete control of every aspect of it by constantly monitoring her Tweets, texts and emails and she's none the wiser for it makes you want to examine your own web/social media presence.

Adam Silvera says

THIS BOOK WAS SO ADDICTIVE. I have been in a huge reading rut all year and this is the first book that I started and finished within a week. I HIGHLY recommend the audiobook.

Esil says

Oh, you are clever, aren't you, Ms. Kepnes. Clever like a fox. But I've got your number. I'll be watching you. That little book you wrote "You" is really not my kind of book – and you knew that. A book written from the perspective of a male stalker? Please! So trashy, so icky. There was no way I was going to read that book. But then you started setting traps to lure me. You planted some Goodreads reviews written by some of my friends – people you know I trust and respect. You had them raving about your book; they talked about how surprised they were at how much they liked it and they even confessed to having sympathy for Joe the stalker. They gave it 4 stars and even 5 stars. Have you no shame? How could you manipulate people like that? But of course you have no shame. You preyed on my weaknesses. You cast Joe as a bookstore clerk – giving you lots of room for literary references – and even some film references for good measure. And you added plenty of satirical humour – mocking the young overeducated underemployed New York crowd that Beck – Joe's prey – hangs out with. You made Joe so hapless that it was hard not to have a twinge of sympathy for him. And you knew I would shut my eyes tight if there was too much graphic violence -- so you really toned it down and kept it light. And the killer is that, knowing one of my particular idiosyncratic weaknesses, you wrote "You" from a second person perspective. Your wily tricks got me this time Ms Kepnes, but, as I said, I've got your number now. I'll be watching you. I won't let you get away with it next time. Yup, I'll be reading your next book just to make sure you're not up to your sneaky ways again.

karen says

...the problem with books is that they end. They seduce you. They spread their legs to you and pull you inside. And you go deep and leave your possessions and your ties to the world at the door and you like it inside and you don't want for your possessions or your ties and then, the book evaporates.

this was recommended to me by eeeeeveryone a few years back when it seemed a little cult was being formed around this book, and i'd been meaning to read it for a long time; so long, in fact, that i'd forgotten i had already bought a digital copy on my NOOK and then much later went out and bought a paperback copy like a fool. and when i found myself conscripted for jury duty and in need of something that was going to be entertaining enough to block out the noise of the game shows they play so loudly in the jury duty waiting room (WHY DO YOU DO THIS, JURY DUTY, WHYYYY??), i figured this would be a good choice, and i could finally see what all the fuss was about.

and it absolutely delivered what i needed - family feud did not stand a chance against this extremely immersive tale of obsession and crime and unpleasant people colliding.

however, all of you people who told me i was going to "fall in love with joe," you have officially lost all rights to set me up on blind dates should i ever require that sort of service. and if you yourself fell in love with him, i think i should stage an intervention on you. because while he is certainly ... *devoted* to the object of his desire, he's pretty shitty boyfriend material. yes, i appreciate that he's a bookperson, and there's appeal to someone whose declarations of love are so in line with my own interests:

I want to bring you all the books in the world...

and i appreciate some of his observations and attitudes, but all the window-peeping and social media violations and kidnapping and murder and desperate neediness tied to email and text response-time - those are less attractive qualities when i'm looking for a mate.

although he's not wrong about some things, and we could probably be friends, if not lovers:

-Work in a bookstore and learn that most people in this world feel guilty about being who they are.

-If people could handle their self-loathing, customer service would be smoother.

-Life at IKEA is not like life at IKEA in the movies.

-What's the only thing more sexless than lunch? Brunch, a meal invented by rich white chicks to rationalize day drinking and bingeing on French toast.

although i had to HHMPH at his comment about rhode island:

(nowhere is far from anywhere in a state this small)

i also really like the fact that he has no illusions about beck; he acknowledges her many flaws and his 'love' for her is clear-eyed without any pedestal idealization:

-You tweet more often than you write and this could be why you're getting your MFA from the New School and not from Columbia.

-...I know you so well, Beck. You are charisma, you are sick, and for some reason you are a magnet for weak, spineless people...

the best thing about this book is its breezy tone. it's not an intense nailbiting horror story of an innocent woman victimized by a deluded stalker who believes they are cosmically meant to be. beck is such a shitty person, you never really see her as a victim, and since this is told in second person, through joe's perspective, it's easy to sympathize with him despite his many transgressions. even in its darkest scenes, it's a funny book, very reminiscent of bret easton ellis, who is winkingly referenced within the text along with many many other books; another reason this is so popular with all the booknerds. we do love our own kind.

apart from the humor and the booksnark, i enjoyed kepnes' treatment of social class and stratification. i know, zzzzzzz, right? and it's only a minor point, but i was struck by beck's sort of trickle-down slummery; she's from nantucket, known for inspiring rude limericks and, like most island or coastal locales in new england, home to a wildly uneven distribution of wealth between its townie and tourist populations. beck is one of the former:

*You hail from farmers and you're fond of saying that you don't have "a place" on Nantucket, but that your family made a **home** there.*

and yet her friendships and relationships are with those far wealthier; toxic people like peach and benji, who embody the "careless people" that populate The Great Gatsby:

You are the townie and Benji is the tourist who literally enters you and uses you as a vacation from the wear and tear of the artisanal club soda business only to dump you before Labor Day... Your emotional livelihood

is a demented seasonal economy where Labor Day is every other fucking day.

and

He rents you out, the same way he rents loft space on SoBro (South Bronx to those of us who don't need to make up bullshit pet names for neighborhoods where we're not wanted.)

but with joe, the solidly middle-class beck is the one dating down - with a bookstore clerk from bed-stuy sneered at by peach for his humble background:

"I read that people are starting to move there," she says. "I hope gentrification doesn't destroy all the local color."

wealth isn't a major preoccupation in the book, but it surfaces in interesting ways, particularly for those of us all-too-familiar with the careless values of the easily-monied young new arrivals to these fine boroughs, foisting their pickleback shots and novelty club sodas upon us and steadily driving up our rents. and joe's... interactions with them are wholly satisfying and another reason to applaud this antihero.

it's a really fun book. i don't think i loved it *quite* as much as the rabid joe cultists, but it was very engrossing, darkly funny, surprising, and truly entertaining.

it was also much more erotic than i'd been anticipating, which became a bit awkward when i realized the woman sitting next to me in our jury duty limbo was totally reading along with me during one of these saucy parts and i wanted to shout "IT'S NOT PORN!! IT'S JUST THIS ONE PART!!! JUST WATCH THE FAMILY FEUD, YA PERV!"

i'm looking forward to reading *Hidden Bodies*.

come to my blog!

Emily May says

I'm not sure what crazy people shelved this book as "romance". *You* is romantic in the same way that *Lolita* is romantic. In other words: an **insane, obsessive and manipulative** romance from the perspective of a charming psychopath.

It's a fucked up tale told from the POV of a stalker who obsesses over and spies on a young woman. He gradually plants himself into her life and seeks a relationship with her, whilst simultaneously hacking her emails and following every little thing she does. If you're looking for a creeptastic story just in time for Halloween then you need look no further.

What is perhaps most unsettling about our narrator is how closely he resembles some of the love interests in YA and NA romance books. Telling his unreliable tale, Joe truly believes that he and Beck are meant to be. His narration is completely insane, horrifying and - at times - beautiful.

He is a fantastically unreliable narrator, made more so by the charm and humour he uses to engage the reader. Like Humbert from *Lolita*, Joe's intelligence, wit and candor make it easy to sympathize with him, even though we are aware of how twisted he really is.

The novel evades the boundaries of genre; not quite a contemporary, maybe, but also unlike most psychological thrillers, creating something new and complex - quite unlike anything I've ever read before. Being inside Joe's head is a poisonous but admittedly fascinating place to be. Through him, the author examines the games people play with one another and the gentle manipulation that even the most innocent of us are capable of at times:

You also offers an interesting look at stalking in the digital age. Joe is able to commit his crimes through the use of email, Facebook and Twitter; finding out huge amounts of information about Beck without even leaving his house. It made me incredibly aware of how visible we all are these days and had me almost looking over my own shoulder as I was reading it.

A random spur of the moment read that really paid off.

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Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

There aren't a lot of Guinevere Becks in the world-just the one. The first thing I had to find was your home and the Internet was designed with love in mind. It gave me so much of you, Beck.

So starts Joe's little love fest with Beck. After she comes into the bookstore that he works at he feels their connection so strongly that he knows she feels the same. Even if she hasn't realized that fact yet.

Joe might be a tad psycho. That's okay though, he is the best stalker psycho I've ever had the privilege to read about!

(Like you guys ever thought I stopped to hide my crazy)

Joe must get this love story rolling so he makes sure to get hold of Beck's phone. Hey, he has to be able to keep up with how their relationship is going to go. Or how she still feels about that pesky, now missing boyfriend of hers.

I think of the way you e-mailed your friends about me, the way you talked more about the fact that I rescued you than the fact that you're obsessed with me, so obsessed that you had to pretend you didn't remember me.

She was pretending Joe. I know it.

Now who else but someone that truly loves Beck is going to make sure her best girl friend that wants to put the moves on her is watched? Doesn't she know she is using her?

Who else is going to watch Beck as she continues to throw herself at men and lie to people? (Little Beck is

not so perfect herself.)

Then when Beck finds that used tampon that Joe saved because he loves her so..well that's just crazy that she thought he was nutso.

I almost hate to admit how much I loved this crazy ass book, but I'm doing it. My freak flag is flying high. I liked Joe much better than I did his whiny ass victim too! There, I said it.

I mean dang..Joe admits that Prince is one of the world's greatest poet's!! How can you not love him?

Pre-read rant here:

My normal besties that do buddy reads with my hateful arse have already read this one without me..yes I'm always the bridesmaid and never the bride..You can troll their reviews for me here read without shelby number one and read without shelby number two

James says

4 out of 5 stars to You, the first of a two-book thriller and suspense series, written in 2014 by Caroline Kepnes. All I can start out with is wow - I loved it! I've tried to pull out all spoilers, but I do give a little bit of the high-level plot and antics away, as I think it will make you want to read it more.

Why This Book

My friend Medhat asked if I'd be interested in a buddy read with him and proposed 5 different books. I'd read 1 already, didn't have an interest in 1 of them, and 2 were a re-read for him, which left this one as something new for both of us. So we went with it... I knew nothing about the author or the novel prior to him bringing it up, and I'm grateful he did. I had been in a slight reading slump and this book was extremely refreshing and strong, directly in my sweet spot as far as genres and styles go. Please go check out Medhat's profile and look at his review of this book.

Plot, Characters & Setting

Joe runs a bookstore on the Lower East Side of NYC, sort of inheriting it from the man who basically adopted him as a boy from parents who weren't doing a very good job at raising him. Joe's witty, sarcastic and on the edge of being a little psychotic for his 25-30ish years. Guinivere Beck, known simply as Beck, stops in his store to make a purchase, and Joe immediately falls in love.... No that's not the right word... obsession, yeah... falls into an obsession...that's the right word... with her. He stalks her social media profiles, learns everything he can about her, then engineers the downfall of her on again / off again jerk of a boyfriend. He tries to isolate Beck from her friends and create situations where they keep running into another until she finally decides to pursue him. They begin dating for a few weeks and have a very peculiar relationship where they take steps to get closer, then she pulls away and looks for her ex-boyfriend. After a few weeks of the back-and-forth, some major event take place that show Joe's true colors... and eventually we learn just how broken Beck also is. When one of them attempts to break off the relationship, the other

goes berserk and takes the situation to an entirely new level of crazy. As the book comes to an end, a dramatic conclusion forces a major plot change and probably begins the focus for the second book in the series, which as a nice little teaser for you... is called *Hidden Bodies*. {Phew... this is a hard one to describe without giving any spoilers}

Beyond Joe and Beck, you've got an ex-girlfriend of Joe's and an ex-boyfriend of Beck's. Beck's psychiatrist enters the picture for a good chunk of the book, as well as her friend, Peach. Peach is an annoying and pompous witch (I have another word in mind but I'll be nice today) who is almost more psychotic than Joe. Joe's got a few workers at the book store who interact from time to time, as well as a cop intervening for a few chapters.

The action mostly takes place in NYC, but there are a few short trips to Rhode Island and other parts of the immediate vicinity. It all takes place in current times, where social media and technology are very important to the plot and character actions.

Approach & Style

The book is told from Joe's point of view, as he is the narrator which means it's told in a first-person perspective. However, the big difference in this book is that Joe is telling the story as if the reader is Beck, constantly referring to her as "You" throughout the book. As a reader, you start feeling like everything he's doing, he's doing to you. And when your character, Beck, makes decisions or reacts in an unexpected way, it's a roller-coaster of fun trying to balance your amusement and your frustration with your anger and your confusion. All in a good approach. I haven't really read much else using this perspective, and it was done in a very strong way.

The book is about 400 pages and broken into about 50 chapters, so each one is relatively short but consistent in its narration, style and language. The language is a bit convoluted at times, as they are both avid readers and writers, work in a book store and get quite philosophical. It's definitely a 17+ book in the sense that there are many 4-letter word bombs and extensive sexual content. Some will find it on the vulgar side, and while it certainly had a few moments where it was on the edge, I thought the author only included such content when it felt appropriate.

Strengths

Due to the style, you are immediately drawn into Joe's psychotic attraction and dangerous personality. However... there is something so wonderful and charming about him, you want to look past the stalker he becomes, as he has a heart of gold. And when Beck begins to show signs of being venomous, you almost don't mind some of the things he does to or against her, in spite of their growing attraction and relationship. It's truly like watching a train wreck, knowing you can't really stop it, but kinda wanting to see every little gory detail as it unfolds.

Joe is so crystal clear, you would think he's standing right next you. Beck is almost as real as he is, but given Joe narrates the story, you tend to feel closer to him. For an author to make you almost root for the bad guy, it's a good book. The interaction, the imagination, the internal thoughts, the passive-aggressive behavior... it's all so spot-on, I can't even begin to explain how real this situation seems to play out, with the exception of he's a stalker and basically invaded her life. If they had just met and gotten into a relationship, everything from that point on felt 100% real – from their fights to their make-up sessions, as well as from the games they played and the way in which their friends took sides. Amazing slice of life to watch play out.

Concerns

The last few chapters felt a bit rushed. It was quite suspenseful and you could see the whole sequence of events unfolding in real-time before your eyes; however, because it's all from Joe's point of view, I'm unsure exactly how much Beck knows in those last few chapters. She clearly articulates that she was aware of what he had done before she told him she knew about it. But you don't know how much of a preview she had into his psychotic mind, or if she was happy or scared with it. {Again, sorry, don't want to give away any spoilers} For me, I would have loved to read a journal entry she'd written saying exactly what she knew and when she knew it. Otherwise, we're left guessing a little bit, and having that information may help us decide whether or not she's a good person or a bad person.

Joe gets away with a lot. He's sneaky. He's smart. He's vengeful. He's manipulative. But it seems no one picks up on it until too late. I can pretty much buy off on it; however, in the scenes where he is caught, I can't tell if it's remorse or anger. I would love to know if he wanted to be caught, if he accepts the consequences or if he is just growing more volatile. It's a pretty clear ending to the book, so you know when it's done what is going on in his head, but it would have been fantastic to watch him spiral a bit more out of control in the last 20% of the novel.

Author & Other Similar Books

As far as the way the story is told, I can't think of anything. As far as the type of story, perhaps Fatal Attraction? Joe also feels like a diabolical version of a narcissistic Holden Caulfield from Catcher in the Rye. Loveable and annoying, but be careful as you never know what he's truly capable of until after it's already happened.

Questions & Final Thoughts

I need to read the second book ASAP. This is such a different kind of story... one where you may side with the criminal in this story. You see both perspectives. You want him to get everything he deserves – both the good and the bad. And in some strange way, I think I was even attracted to parts of his personality (and that's scary, given how the book ends up). If you need something to pull you out of a slump, this is the book. It's still sitting on my brain, as vivid as though I were reading the words on the page. It's that kind of book... one where you will want to keep thinking about it and talking about it for a long time after you are done.

About Me

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by. *Note:* All written content is my original creation and copyrighted to me, but the graphics and images were linked from other sites and belong to them. Many thanks to their original creators.

[polldaddy poll=9729544]

Maxwell says

Okay, this book is *really, really* hard for me to rate. Because plot-wise it was engaging, addictive, and thoroughly thrilling. I had to find out what happened next. And it was so twisted and sick and entertaining.

But content-wise, there were a lot of problems I had with this book. I have a really hard time with how explicit and violent it was; it makes me hesitant to recommend to people. There were definitely points in the story that I was disturbed and a bit offended. The writing is unique and fits the story really well. It's written in the 2nd person, so it's as if Joe, the narrator, is talking directly to you. But it wasn't at all pretty writing. In fact, there were quite a few times I rolled my eyes at how ridiculous he sounded.

Also, I'm not sure if I was just ill-informed or if the book is incorrectly categorized, but this book definitely borders on erotica at times, which I'm not a fan of. If I had known that, I probably wouldn't have read it, since I'm just not interested in reading that kind of stuff.

So knowing all that, I'd say reading this is definitely up to your discretion. It was entertaining, but I could've gone without reading it at the end of the day.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

This was a re-read on audio and it went from 5 stars to 3 stars for me. And it WASN'T because of the audio! And FYI: This book has explicit sexual situations and other stuff.

I wanted to kill everyone in this book this time around!

I mean Joe (the stalker is not the only nut job) the girl he latched onto, I hated and I hated her friend! They were all bat shit nuts!! Right off the farm people!

I still have it 3 stars because I think the author did a fantastic job with Joe the stalker. You hated him but you also couldn't get enough of what he was going to do next.

And I didn't like the second book at all. It wasn't like this one. It was kinda tame and pointless. I don't see myself re-reading this book again. My time with Joe is complete. ?

Enjoy!

Mel ♥?

Old 5 Star Review

OMG! This book! Why did I wait so long to read it! It was just sitting there in my stacks for me to pick up!!! And there is to be another one!

Lets start! Joe..... he is a wackadoo! You do not want this guy as a stalker! You do not want to get in the way of this guy if you are a threat to the person he is stalking!

He is in love/lust/stalker mode with Beck and she is a weirdo to start. She has a lot of issues with men, sex, her father. Not sex with her father, just her father not loving her. And Joe stalks the crap out of her until he gets her finally to love him.

But.... she finds out all of these creepy things he has been doing. I'm not giving out any spoilers because whoever is reading my review needs to read this book! Now I am all creeped out thinking more about stalkers and what they can actually find out from you so easily.

Joe knows how to work his way into your life. If he gets something of yours then you are toast. He is in!! He is in all of your stuff! He takes hacking and stalking to a whole new level.

I loved this book and hated it too. I can't even explain it. The book is so well written and just freaky that I am at a loss for words. I mean Joe just gets away with so much stuff and it's all legit. Just read it people, seriously. You may not love it because we are not all the same, but it will trip you out. And you will want to smack a few people, but whatever, just read it :)

I can't wait to read the next one!!!!

Riley says

Video Review: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFFkt...>

This book will not be for everyone. You will either love it or hate it. Obviously I loved it. This book messed with my mind so much and made me see things in a whole new light. We live in an age where our whole lives are one click away on the internet. Anyone can find out anything about you. We have no privacy. Our lives are documented on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, ect. Joe, the main character, uses the internet and social media to his advantage, not only to learn everything he can about a girl he met, but to also insert himself so far into her life that she cannot escape him. This book really made me take a closer look at how much of myself I leave on the internet and how easy it would be for someone like Joe to worm his way into my life.

The characters in this book are what really made it fascinating to me. Every single character is vile. Let's start with Joe. I kind of want to hate Caroline Kepnes for making me love Joe. Yes he is revolting and sick. But I found myself sympathizing with him. And there were entire chunks of the book where I would forget who he really is and find myself thinking he is great. Then BAM! He would break into Beck's house and sniff her underwear. And I think that is what creeps me out most about this book. To everyone around him, Joe is a normal decent guy. But being in his head we get to see every depraved thought he has. In theory Joe could be anyone around you and you would never know.

Beck was a basket-case. And I hated her. I never really understood her motives or her way of thinking. And that's possibly due to the fact that, although Joe thought he knew her extremely well, he really didn't know her at all. And since the book is told from his POV we only see Beck through Joe's eyes. And it's terrible but I hated the way she treated Joe. **WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME.** I know I know. But I found myself thinking he deserved better. Which is insane.

The writing in this book is amazing. It's written in second person, which I have never been a fan of. But I can't imagine this story being told any other way. It is also in present tense, so it feels less like I am being told a story and more like I am actually experiencing it. The genre of this novel is hard to place. It is not a contemporary and not quite a thriller, but something entirely new and amazing.

This story was captivating and something I think will only come around once. **HIGHLY** recommend.

Delee says

You've come home to me, delivered at last, on a Tuesday, 10:06 a.m. Every day I commute to this shop on the Lower East Side from my place in Bed-Stuy. Every day I close up without finding anyone like you. Look at you, born into my world today.

I have only had one other experience reading second person narration (that I can remember) Bright Lights, Big City- I have to say I wasn't a huge fan, and I found myself avoiding anything written in that point of view...until **YOU...**

From the moment Guinevere Beck walks into the East Village bookstore where Joe works- he can think of nothing else- and vows to make her his.

With the help of Facebook, Twitter and a stolen cell phone- Joe is able to hack in to "Beck's" world- Her correspondence, friends, her likes and dislikes, address, her whereabouts at any given moment- Now he is armed with enough information to become a man Beck could fall in love with.

...But while Joe thinks he is holding all the cards- Beck is starting to show some of her true colors...and an interesting game begins...

Ohhhhhhhh YOOOOOOU. What can I say about **YOU?**

The deck was stacked against me enjoying this book from the start. Second person narration...being in the head of a stalker...two raaaaaaaaather unlikable main characters- but all that wrong- added up to a big whopping, kick you in the face, right!!

