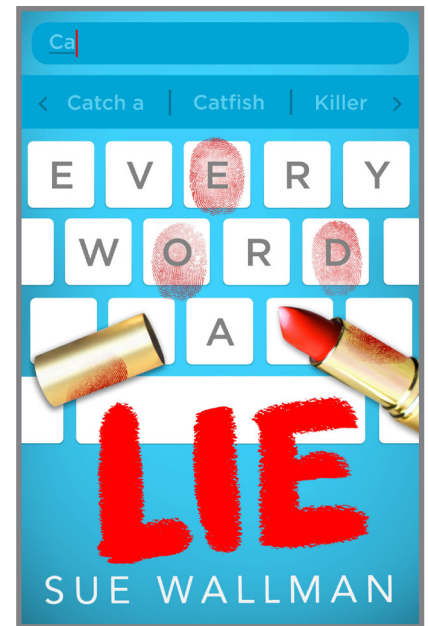


Every Word A Lie

AUTHOR

SUE WALLMAN



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RECOMMENDED FOR: Mid to Upper Secondary
(Violence, Sexual References)

SYNOPSIS

Someone is catfishing . . . to kill. Two friends, Amy and Stan, plan revenge on their prankster friend Hollie by catfishing her as her crush. They only mean to do it for a day or two—but then Hollie ends up dead. As the catfish continues to strike others, Amy needs to find out: who is really in control of the catfish? Can she trust anyone? And is she the killer's next target?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sue Wallman is a former magazine journalist who now combines writing with being a secondary school librarian. She won The Woman's Prize for Fiction First Chapter Award in 2013 and has gone on to win many other awards for her young adult thrillers, the first of which, *Lying About Last Summer*, was selected for the WHSmith/Zoella book club.

Find out more information at suewallman.co.uk.

STUDY NOTES

- Before reading the story, as a class discuss the front cover and title. Some things to include in your discussion could be:
 - What do you think the cover art represents?
 - Why do you think the illustrator and graphic designer chose this type of layout for the title and cover art?
 - What do you think the other words on the cover represent, and why might they have been included?
 - What genre do you think this book is most likely to be, and why?
 - Before reading the back cover, what do you hypothesise is likely to happen in this story?
 - What types of events and characters does the title of this book make you think of?
 - What does the phrase 'every word a lie' mean?
- Before reading the back cover of the book, read the first two chapters of the novel, and as a class, discuss what you think is likely to happen next. What things can you predict as being likely to occur?
- After reading Chapter Six, discuss how accurate or inaccurate your earlier hypotheses about what was likely to happen in the book were. What new hypotheses do you now have about the likely course of events?
- Amy and her friends enjoy playing pranks on each other. As a class, discuss the difference between a prank or joke, and bullying. What are some clear ways to differentiate between the two, and why and when do people get this wrong and inadvertently cross the line?
- Do you think that the prank where Jada and Hollie signed Stan and Amy up to help with the Big Tidy Up was funny, or

do you think it was mean? Why do you think this, and what evidence is there in the text to support your supposition?

- Some people consider that social media is the biggest danger to the mental health and wellbeing of young people these days. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why/why not? In small groups discuss the risks, dangers, and benefits of being constantly connected to your peers and the wider world via social media, and make a list of things you can do to protect yourself from the worst effects. As a class, collate everyone's recommendations into a master list of guiding principles for staying safe on social media, then, in small groups use the class list to create posters sharing your ideas. Display your posters around the school for everyone to read and think about.
- Everyone knows that it is potentially dangerous to interact with and arrange to meet a stranger online. As it happened, Hollie was actually interacting with her friends (who meant her no real harm) online, rather than someone she had never met, yet she still ended up in a dangerous situation. As a class, discuss what some of the other, possibly less obvious, dangers of chatting to people online can be. Individually, write a brief opinion piece sharing what you see as the three greatest risks of online interactions for young people today.
- As a class, work through a module surrounding online safety issues, cyberbullying, and catfishing that has been recommended by your local department of education. Include your learning from this module in your discussions about the online interactions and behaviours of the characters in the novel.
- As a class, discuss the different ways in which the author has built tension throughout the novel. Consider in your discussion the variation in tension levels throughout.
- What do you think is the single hardest event in the novel for Amy to cope with? Write a brief analysis of the challenges and difficulties she faces as events unfold, arguing for which specific occurrence she found the most distressing to handle, and why you believe this to be the case. Include evidence from the text to support your assertions.
- What genre would you classify this novel as and why?
- Re-read the description of Ms Reid on p 25. Do you agree with Amy about these things making a good teacher? Why/why not? What do you see as the single most important quality or attribute for a teacher to have, and why?
 - As a class discuss the character of Ms Reid and the role that she plays in the novel overall and in the lives of Amy and her peers. Do you see her influence on the young people as an overall positive one? Why/why not and in what ways?
- Amy and her friends are in charge of fundraising for charity within the school. As a class, plan and stage a charity fundraiser of your own to help support a local community charity or initiative. You might like to borrow some of the ideas from the book to use, or you can think of some new and inventive activities of your own.
- What do you think that Amy, her friends, and her school year group are likely to do differently in the future when it comes to social media interactions?
- Do you think Jada's reaction to discovering that Amy and Stan were catfishing Hollie is justified? Why/why not, and in what ways? Write an email, or sequence of emails, from Jada to a friend at her old school sharing her thoughts and feelings surrounding the events that took place during the novel. Include in your email details about how and why Jada forgave Amy for her role in Hollie's death, and which of Amy's behaviours helped Jada find sympathy and forgiveness for her.
- Given the way Harry so quickly and easily went on his murdering spree, and the way he managed to hide his real feelings from everyone, do you think that it was inevitable that he would one day take someone else's life? In small groups discuss whether he might never have murdered anyone if Hollie had never been catfished in the first instance. Be sure to consider evidence from the text to support your assertions.
- If *Every Word a Lie* had a moral at the end of the story, what would it be?
- Create an artwork using acrylic paint that represents your emotional response to the novel.

AUTHOR OF NOTES

RAE CARLYLE