



Will She be a Victim Too or Will She Fight Back?

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ABSTRACT:

Literature has always been a channel for writers to communicate their creed, notions and sentiments. Writers own the power to reconstruct the planet for good. One such startling writer is Colleen Hoover. She touches upon sensitive subjects such as domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse. Writing in the first person narrative Colleen solidifies a sense of union between her and the reader. Which otherwise is a weapon to impact and inspire the reader. Domestic violence is a vicious act and every second millions of voices are muffled. Domestic violence is the cause of many divorces, miserable families and psychologically affected children. It has far-reaching implications for the child who witnesses it and the woman who is prey to it. Lily Bloom the protagonist of the Novel and her mother Jenny Bloom are the victims of domestic assaults and violence. Every woman has a humongous amount of strength within her. But it takes a massive amount of courage for her to voice out and set herself free from a life-threatening situation.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Mental Trauma, Sexual assault, Gender discrimination, Freedom.

“..but Sometimes the things that matter to you most are also the things that hurt you the most”(Hoover, 2016, p. 280).

Women have always been in one or another way suppressed and disregarded. Most of the time women are objectified and considered to be weak. They are deemed to be fragile and submissive. Every year, every day, every minute and every second a woman becomes a victim of domestic violence be it sexual or psychological. Patriarchal society is the main cause of domestic violence. To assert their power over women some use force (i.e. Violence). Some women lack the motivation to fight against it and remain tortured. A Handful manages to escape the situation because of their decision and willpower. It is reported that in most cases a woman decides to go back to the abusive environment just because she loves her man. Growing up in an abusive household can have a great impact on the child. There have been numerous writers who have brought this issue to the limelight through their writing. Nevertheless, even after so much battle and awareness were created, domestic violence is still prevalent in society. Colleen Hoover, an American novelist is one such writer who writes with a view of enlightening every individual about the pangs of a woman. In her novel, *It Ends with Us* (2016), Hoover depicts the life of the central character Lily Bloom.

Lily Bloom is 23 year old who holds a graduate degree in business and lives in Boston. She desires to become a florist someday. It is through her diary we come to know that this joyful woman has a traumatic past and a vulnerable side. Her writings are addressed to Ellen DeGeneres, a comedian and famous TV show host. “I feel like everyone fakes who they are when deep down we’re all equal amounts of screwed up” (p.16). When in Plethora, in her teens she had witnessed her dad abusing her mom and then he would spend the following weeks doing things to neutralize his actions. Lily felt guilty about not helping her mother. But she would wonder why her mom couldn’t leave her dad. She wasn’t mature enough to understand her mother’s situation. She found solace in Atlas Corrigan, a homeless guy who also had shared experiences of growing up in an abusive household just like her. Atlas was her first love and soon he left for Boston her making a promise. “When my life is good enough for you to be a part of it, I’ll come find you. But I don’t want you to wait around for me, because that might never happen” (p. 213).

When she first met Ryle Kincaid, a neurosurgeon he was venting out his aggression on a patio chair. That was her first sign but she misreads it and ultimately falls in love with him. The series of what her dad used to do with her mother was so deeply rooted in her that she always wished not to have a husband who would resemble her dad. “As his daughter, I loved him. But as a human, I hated him” (p. 15). Andrew Bloom, Lily’s dad, was the mayor of her hometown of Maine, Plethora. To the people of the outside world, he was a Philanthropist. At home, he was neither a good husband nor a good father. She was happy with Ryle until one day when her fear turned into reality.

“Ryle’s arm came out of nowhere and slammed against me knocking me backwards.....When I lost my footing, I hit my own face on one of the cabinets of the door handle as I came down.....My tears, my heart, my laughter, my soul. Shattered like broken glass, raining down around me” (p. 185).

Loving someone doesn’t give you the authority to hurt them. Ryle maybe wasn’t aware of this fact. He takes Lily out for dinner along with Marshall and Allysa. He accidentally burns his hand because Lily childishly laughs at it. Her laughter enrages him because his career depends on his hands out of the blue he hits her. When he apologizes all she hears is “I’m sorry Jenny. It was an accident. I’m so sorry”(p.186). All of those scenes of her father abusing, hitting and cussing her mother flashes in front of her eyes. She wanted to have a decent married life. She couldn’t bring herself to think that Ryle hit her.

Her inner voice spoke to her, "He's not like my father. He can't be. He's nothing like that uncaring bastard" (p.188). In the span of those fifteen seconds, she doubted if she knew the man she loved. It takes only a few seconds to build something marvelous and a lesser time to annihilate things.

"We have a garage, but only one car fit in because of all my dad's stuff. My dad keeps his car in the garage and my mom keeps her car in the driveway....I'm not sure what happened when she went back outside. I heard a crash, and then I heard her scream..." (p.109).

15-year-old Lily records an episode in her diary stating that day her mother parked her car in the garage so that it would be easy for her to get all the groceries into the kitchen. When all of a sudden her dad appeared in his car and started honking recklessly. Her mother jostled to move her car but before she could. Andrew hit her and started choking her. Hearing a loud noise and her mother screaming, Lily ran to help but was pushed away. Her head hit and she had to get nine stitches. Soon after that, her father left. She was heartbroken because it was her dad who hurt her and he didn't even stay back to check on her. She was determined that this was final and her mother would leave her dad for good. She felt betrayed when her mother told her to say she fell on the eyes when enquired about her scar. Atlas was the one to notice and he could see through her lie.

"Then he pulled up the sleeve of his shirt and held out his arm. Ellen, my stomach dropped. It was so bad all over his arm he had these small scars. Some of the scars looked just like someone had stuck a cigarette to his arm and held it there.....I used to fall a lot, too, Lily" (p.112-113).

Years later Lily meets Atlas and as promised he was laboring hard. He owned the best restaurant. The second instance, when Ryle is harsh to her is when he finds that she had Atlas's number. It was written on a paper that was in her phone's back case. He suspected her and he never allowed her to justify herself. When Lily ran behind him, he pushed her and she fell off the stairs and had a concussion. "You pushed me, I say through tears. It's all I can think or say or see" (p.232). Lily was stunned, alarmed and hurt. She loved him and she knew he loved her too. Somehow she ignores this bad day too. She knew Ryle would never hurt her purposely and so she forgave him. She realized that Ryle was more humane and caring than her dad. She was now mature enough to understand why her mom despite so much anguish her husband gave her continued to stay with him. She knew she had evolved to be like her mother. Being a Woman Allysa, Ryle's sister didn't take Lily's stance. Rather, she was trying to rationalize her brother's action.

"His eyes fall to his hand and I notice he's holding the Boston magnet. I brought it from the old apartment and stuck it on this fridge when we moved in....The last thing I want to do is tell him that magnet came from Atlas on my Sixteenth birthday. It would only bring up an already sore subject..." (p.260).

There is a limit to everything. Right from the first time, Ryle hit Lily she knew that she was not in a safe place. But it was her love for him that kept her going. He had done it not once but twice now. Lily was strong, unlike her mother. When Ryle found the magnet he had been enquiring about it to an extent that Lily had sensed something terrible was going to happen. And so it did. Ryle's rage led him to sexually assault her. He gets to know that Atlas Corrigan, a two-time award-winning chef named his hotel based on the time he had spent with Lily. "It was a homage to someone who had a huge impact on my life. Someone who means a lot to me. She still means a lot to me". After this horrific episode, Lily is hurt and rejected and she leaves the house. She doesn't know where to go and then she quickly dials Atlas Corrigan's number. He knew she was hurt. Soon after which she gets admitted to the hospital and realizes that she is pregnant with Ryle's Child. She knew that she had to make the decision or her child would face the same fate as she did. She names her daughter Emerson. Everything about Ryle was amazing but he losing temper and being abusive was what she hated the most. There was no way she was going to let Emerson go through hell. Examining all of the possibilities she decides to end her relationship with Ryle.

"My mother went through it. I went through it. I'll be damned if I allow my daughter to go through it. I kiss her on the forehead and make her a promise. It stops here. With me and you. It ends with us" (p. 361).

It took an astronomical amount of pain and courage for Lily to voice out. She refused to be like her mother. She knew the horrors of being in an abusive household and so she put an end to the cycle. Her decision was a life-changing one. She continued to be cheerful and was a successful mother and a florist. She lived a happy life with Atlas. Just like Lily Bloom, numerous women undergo so much torture but they choose to remain quiet. They prefer to silently suffer. "If you want to be heard, you must make noise". Lily made that noise and it served as a voice for millions of women. It is not necessary to remain shut about the violence one faces. There is always a way to conquer catastrophe and live an incredible life. Violence of any kind is condemned. Lily shows that no woman is weak, if she wills she can earn herself a better life. Hurting and loving has a difference, one must not misread it. Lily was psychologically affected during her teen years the entries that she made in her diary proved it. Colleen Hoover herself grew up in an Abusive household. She understood that unless someone wrote about the traumas a woman goes through; there will be no remedy for the problem. And so she created the Character "Lily Bloom" who served the purpose rightfully.

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