



Trauma, Identity, and Isolation: Exploring the Psychological Effect of Patriarchy on Evie Porter in First Lie Wins by Ashley Eston

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Abstract

This study examines the psychological and emotional impact of patriarchal structures on women, focusing on the character Evie Porter in Ashley Eston's *First Lie Wins*. The research explores the relationship between gender, trauma, and identity crisis, investigating how societal dominance and gender-based mistreatment contribute to mental disturbance and isolation in women. Through a textual analysis, the study highlights the emotional and psychological consequences of living in a male-dominated society, particularly the effects of societal expectations and gendered treatment on women's well-being. Cathy Caruth's trauma theory frames the research, offering a lens to comprehend the psychological scars left by oppression. This descriptive qualitative study emphasizes how identity transformation, driven by patriarchal pressures, exacerbates Evie's trauma, leading her to adopt the role of a con artist—societally condemned yet shaped by her experiences. The findings underline the detrimental effects of gender inequality on women's mental health, shedding light on the complexities of self-perception and identity within a patriarchal context. In conclusion, the study suggests that patriarchal systems significantly shape Evie's psychological health and identity, with far-reaching consequences for her sense of self. This research offers insight into the long-lasting impact of societal gender norms on women's mental and emotional well-being.

Keywords: Identity, Isolation, Trauma, Mental health, Cathy Caruth, Patriarchy.

Introduction

Psychological trauma is the widely used word in the medical field. The medical field encompasses not only physical health but also mental health. Mental health for any individual is always an effect of past incidents. And these incidents of childhood and adulthood lead to trauma. The word "trauma" was widely used in the medical field as a separate term after the late 19th century to describe emotional and psychological wounds caused by distress experiences. The word trauma came from the Greek word, which means 'wound'. Sigmund Freud first used it in his theory of psychoanalysis. Later in 1960, it emerged as a new term. An open study of trauma came under the table when in 1996 Cathy Caruth used the term trauma in her book *Unclaimed Experience*:

Trauma, Narrative, and History. In this book, she refers to trauma as a wound that affects an individual's mental health. Trauma is a deep effect on an individual's mind that comes along with permanent or temporary personality destruction. It causes mental instability and harms one who suffers from it. It has been effect on an individual's daily life, behavior, outlook, or any other important task of life. It disrupts an individual's identity as a result of childhood trauma, failure, or physical or mental abuse. It left permanent scars on one individual's existence. Language cannot adequately describe trauma (Cathy Caruth, 1996). Cathy asserted that language fails to convey the impact of trauma, revealing it solely through the victim's actions and behavior. Caruth applies Sigmund Freud's concept of consciousness and unconsciousness and she asserted that trauma manifests only in an individual's unconscious behavior. Trauma manifests itself in an individual's behavior towards others and society. For understanding the idea and effects of trauma, the best way is to read anyone's behavior. A wide range of literature is available that helps one understand trauma and its effects on identity. There are a number of writers who like to bring social issues to light through fantasy stories. Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison, and Lisa Genova present the theme of PTSD that causes identity deformation in their novels with a romantic storyline. Ashley Elton, for example, employs a captivating narrative that explores the horrific past events that led to identity destruction. One who cures identity destruction succeeds in maintaining a new identity. Only some people can do that, but recovery is a competent of trauma. Ashley Elton is an American author renowned for her adult thriller novel. She also worked as a wedding photographer before turning into a writer. She lives in Louisiana with her husband and three sons. In these thriller characters, we also see a component of identity crisis: living with their own perfect world effect on their identity. She writes a novel with Series named as "Rules" as The Rules of Disappearing and second is The Rules for Breaking. Due to these series of rules, she was awarded the Thriller Writer Award for best young adult novel. She has also authored standalone novels such as This Is Our Story, The Lying Woods, 10 Blind Dates, and 10 Truths and a Dare. Both young and adult audiences appreciate Elton's writing for its suspenseful narratives and well-developed characters. She is considered one of the best writers of this time.

First Lie Wins (2024) written by Ashley Elton in which she describes the identity crisis through a thrilling storyline. In her novel First Lie Wins (2024), the protagonist, Evie Porter (real name Lucca Marino), resides with her boyfriend in Northman City, America. She was living the perfect life of an ideal girl. She had a caring boyfriend, a close-knit group of friends, a beautiful home, and a job, but as the novel progresses, we uncover a strange and potentially secret aspect of her life. Evie Porter, who was initially thought of as a home girl, eventually revealed herself to be a con artist. She was assigned the task of uncovering Ryan's secrets. Her boss, known as Mr. Smith, was the one who gave her a different identity and task, which she has to fulfill at any cost. As the identity revealed we also came to know about her past. Evie Porter's real name was Lucca Marino, a college girl living with her mother. This identity reveals the presence of a girl named Lucca Marino. From here, we see a number of secrets in this so-called perfect relationship. Evie Porter's real identity was Lucca Marino, a girl who was leaving Eden, North Carolina, with her breast cancer-stricken mother. Lucca Marino was busy preparing for the birthday party, but in reality, she was a thief. During the party, she gained access to every room and stole every piece of jewelry. She manages to evade detection. Later, she was working in a club as a waitress. She gets a copy of the customer's credit card and uses it later in a small transaction. Not a big amount that raises a question. She was outstanding in her skills, but she gets caught. The club manager summoned the

police, who apprehended Lucca Marino but did not identify her as the culprit. There was a suspicion that Lucca might be the card thief, but there was no concrete evidence to support this theory. When the police got him with her, a detective came and helped Lucca Marino come out this problem. From here on, the real problem starts. The detection work is being done with an organization of con artists, and their boss has requested Lucca Marino to join them. Firstly, Lucca hesitated but then turned into a professional con artist. She gets different assignments with different works. She takes the risk of death during these assignments. In her first assignment as Izzy William, she was a nanny. Her work was to get a USB flash drive and put another in its place. She has developed a habit of spending time with Mile. While getting out of this assignment, she was feeling awful due to that little boy. These things affect her identity and feelings. Although she came out of this while sitting alone, she remembers them. This recall is similar to one of her previous assignments, where she served as the secretary to the incoming governor of Tennessee. She was here to uncover any secrets about Marshall Andrews, the presumed winner of the gubernatorial election. Andrew was a man of tongue and a loyal person toward her wife. Evie felt guilty for putting something dirty on him. This was also a feeling of sadness. She was a free girl, but working for Mr. Smith made him bound. He expected her to perform all the dirty work he assigned her. In her present time with Ryan, she felt like a beautiful person and felt like home. In her previous assignments, she failed to fetch data from a girl who died in a fire attack. Mr. Smith was being angry with Evie, which put her in difficulty. Mr. Smith provided the police with information that implicated Evie in the murder of Regina. She felt betrayed and lonely. These feelings of Lucca Marino show her identity's destruction. These feelings of Lucca Marino show her identity's destruction. These changes affect her badly, and due to this, at some points she feels isolated and betrayed. Her boss, who had previously saved her, betrayed her. She feels isolated and betrayed due to this. At a point in the novel, when she thinks she is also used by her boyfriend, it makes her more devastated and lonely, so she cries a lot.

Problem statement

The transformation of Evie Porter from a typical girl to a con artist reflects the profound emotional and psychological impact of living in a male-dominated society. This article examines how Evie's experiences of loneliness and isolation shape her identity and daily life, while exploring the broader implications of how women navigate societal challenges and gender dynamics. It seeks to understand the psychological toll of surviving in a patriarchal environment, and how these pressures affect women's roles, mental health, and sense of self.

Significance of the study

The study's significance lies in examining character and identity crises within a society dominated by men. Examining this novel through the lens of trauma theory allows us to understand the various factors that can destroy an individual's identity and transform them into a completely different person. This study on one hand adds to the literature of trauma and on the other hand allows researchers in the field of literary studies to understand how to apply trauma theory on literary texts.

Research objectives

To determine the effect of patriarchal society on the identity of Evie Porter in the novel *First Lie Wins* (2024).

To evaluate how identity changes are causes of isolation and trauma in the character of Evie from First Lie Wins (2024).

Research Question

1. How male patriarchal society effect on identity of Evie in First Lie Win (2024)?
2. How does identity change as a con artist give isolation and trauma to Evie from First Lie Wins (2024)?

Literature review

The storyline and style of First Lie Wins (2024) he storyline of First Lie Wins (2024) is thrilling, yet it instills a sense of suspense and isolation in the main character. A critic of Book Press in 2024 wrote about First Lie Wins (2024). In which the critic stated that “Evie Porter doesn’t exist. She’s a Con Artist.” This statement sheds light on Evie's identity, which is not a character but rather a fabricated identity, complete with a fictitious name and a fabricated life. Everything here looks fake, but the feeling of loneliness and isolation was real. “also to keep her real identity CLEAN” this statement shows about her desire to be clean, a girl with no criminal record, an innocent girl of north who will made a home for herself. She was feeling isolated because of this fake identity. She wants someone who knows her, from her past to present. These feelings destroy her identity. And these incidents gave her trauma in the form of isolation. A critic in 2024 named Lex Ng wrote in the Medium paper about First Lie Wins as a thriller and suspenseful novel, but not even a single critic talked about the identity issues and feeling of isolation the main character has, “She dies in a car crash.” The critic used this statement in her review: By looking deep into this incident, a feeling of fear and betrayal came into the character. Evie and that girl were under the same boss; a person who can kill that girl can also kill her. This feeling also showed a form of fear; every twist in her life brings a new fear, even if it is the girl with the same identity as she or the feeling of being betrayed while investigating by police. The entire incident opens a new identity for Evie in front of us. Moussa's 2016 article, Memory and Catharsis in Octavia E. Butler's Kindred, explores the impact of traumatic incidents on the characters' lives and their ability to confront and process their histories. Through a detailed analysis, Moussa illustrates how Butler employs the concept of time travel not only as a narrative device but also as a means for characters to confront their past traumas and seek healing. This study focuses on the trauma due to slavery. The main character faced the slavery of humankind as animals. Their master treats them as animals. Moussa not only focused on the trauma and its effect, but his main focus was on recovery. The main character makes a small effort to forget the painful event, hoping to become so engrossed in the moment that she is unable to think about the past. All these efforts help her recovery. The focus of this study is on an African woman who was considered the property of her wealthy master. This person treated these women as animals. And this slavery left an impact on the lives of these women. The feeling of loneliness that arises from recalling the entire incident in one's mind is a common effect of PTSD. A sudden feeling of sadness and loneliness can be seen. “Adding more pain to existing pain brings about more painful effects like anger, revolt, intolerance, and scorn.” This statement shows how trauma and its memories affect the identity of any person. Recalling a painful incident will add more pain, but it will never help in recovering. Trauma is something we cannot overcome by living in a closet space. The findings of this paper are to focus on recovery and come out of this trauma by embracing healing practices and fostering supportive environments. It is essential to acknowledge the pain without allowing it to define us and instead seek pathways toward understanding and growth.

An article entitled *Trauma in Toni Morrison's Beloved: An Analytic Study* by Dr. Naveen Samir Mohamed in 2020 explores the haunting memories of the past that cause trauma. Memories associated with a troubled past contribute to the development of PTSD. Past events of the main character of this novel always haunt him as flashbacks. A fear of being in the cage and slave of a person who will again treat him like an animal always led the main character in fear. Especially for a woman who sacrificed her own daughter in order to escape, the horror of the past is unbearable. She incurred a significant cost for her escape from her family. The main character's struggle with the traumatic memories has different categories, such as flashbacks, fear, and sudden grief. She cannot recall all the past memories, even though she has witnessed the horrible event; the fear of these memories always follows him. Physical and mental abuse never let her free from a haunted past. All the cage memories affect her in the form of PTSD, which destroys her identity and gives her trauma. She never forgets anything, and these unforgotten memories plunged her into trauma and PTSD that seem inescapable. Each day, she battles against the weight of her experiences, struggling to reclaim a sense of normalcy while the shadows of her past loom large, threatening to engulf her once more.

An article by YANG Chun in 2014 entitled *Exploration of Trauma Narrative in the Kite Runner* explores how trauma helps in understanding Afghan history and the lives of people. It evaluates how Afghans suffer from haunting events and how they affect the minds of young children. Instead of focusing on the main character or any specific character, this study examines how all characters, after experiencing hardship, behave and respond to society. The past always left marks on individuals; by looking deep into the study, we came to know about how every Afghan suffers, even if they are a young child or an aged man. They feel a deep sense of guilt and shame towards Amir for betraying his friend, who was also their servant son. This study focuses on how a young child survives physical abuse and its effects. Hassan always became a table talker due to his mother and servant father, but he never behaved abruptly, and all these incidents affected his mental health. Yang in this paper also talks about recovery. In this paper, Yang discusses how a young child can recover from physical abuse, specifically the type of abuse described above. The impact of these traumatic incidents shatters their lives, making it difficult for them to leave the place where they play and grow up. Amir and his father suffer from this, and later it was difficult for Amir to recover from memories that always haunt him through nightmares and flashbacks. Even after recovery, PTSD consistently leaves scars, as the past and history remain indelible. They experience identity destruction, making it challenging for them to embark on a new life.

An article by Neha Chatterjee in 2016 entitled *Trauma, memory, and identity in Kamila Shamsie's Burnt Shadow* explores how past memories affect Hiroko, the main character of the novel. Hiroko's past memories are unreasonable; she left her native country, but still, it was difficult for her to forget what happened. She lost her love in an explosion that shattered her world, forcing her to confront the complexities of identity and belonging. As she navigates her new life, the haunting echoes of her past continually shape her relationships and her understanding of self, illustrating the profound impact of trauma on memory and identity. Her memories haunt her on a daily basis. Trauma lies in her ongoing life. It was difficult for her to come to terms with the death of her beloved and her forceful displacement from Germany. After coming to Pakistan, she still thinks about her home and life. An incident shattered her life, leaving her in shattered pieces. Trauma and PTSD make marks on her identity. The Nagasaki bomb attack initially triggered her trauma,

followed by the 9 November incident, which resulted in the loss of her only son. She cries and cannot do anything. This research finds how incidents like war and bloodshed make people suffer. She experienced loss and violence, all of which gave her trauma. After leaving everything behind, she embarked on a new life with a Muslim man, but subsequent incidents led to further losses in her life. She never fully recovers from her past, and the loss of her son only intensifies her suffering. It was not only Hiroko who suffered but also her son Raze. He suffered from a hybrid identity, as his father was Muslim and his mother was Japanese. He had a deep affection for women, but when they rejected him due to his mother's identity, he became an outcast. All incidents led to a trauma that remains with her her whole life. Afghans have a very different behavior toward him; he was also arrested in America for murdering an American man. Hybrid identity makes his life difficult. The trauma of receiving ill treatment remains with him. The researcher in this paper used both male and female characters to illustrate how trauma and PTSD can arise from hybrid identities and past traumatic memories.

Research methodology

This research paper employs a qualitative and descriptive design, focusing on the textual analysis of *First Lie Wins* by Ashley Eston. The study aims to explore the underlying themes and narrative techniques employed by the author, as well as the impact of these elements on the reader's perception of truth and deception in contemporary society. By examining character development and plot structure, this paper seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the work's significance within the broader literary landscape. The primary data source for this study is the novel itself, supplemented by secondary sources such as articles, websites, and books. Drawing on Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experiences* (1996), this paper applies her trauma theory to analyze the character of Evie Porter, particularly in terms of identity crises and isolation. By using psychoanalytic theory as outlined by Caruth, the research aims to explore how Evie's actions and dialogue reveal the psychological impact of living in a male-dominated society. Through the lens of trauma theory, this study will examine how male dominance shapes Evie's identity and how this influence affects her mental and social life. The research aims to highlight how male figures in the narrative contribute to female trauma, offering a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional dimensions of Evie's character and her response to societal pressures.

Discussion and Result

First Lie Wins by Ashley Eston is a thrilling novel of women who survive in a man-dominated society. A woman works in a man-dominant society and comes out of all the difficulties and challenges man creates in her way—a novel about how man-dominance makes a woman suffer and destroys her identity. The main character of the novel is a girl named Evie Porter living with her boyfriend Ryan and having a joyful life with her boyfriend's friends. But later, when the story started going forward, we came to know about some secrets, as Evie is not for joyful family or love but for some interest. She wants some secrets from Ryan that are basically important to her boss. Evie was working as a con artist under a man named Smith, who was her boss. She never sees this man personally, but she has to fulfil all his orders, even if she doesn't like them. This man's dominance has a significant impact on her identity. Walking fast in my tight black dress and four-inch heels, I almost drop the metal cup with the letter E that is slick with

condensation. I nearly fall onto women as I close in on the ridiculously nice portable bathroom station that was brought in for the event. (First Lie Wins, 2024, P. 36)

Evie's past was a secret, but these lines show how she shuddered after getting a glimpse of it. A girl bearing Evie's real name and identity approached her. That girl showed up at a party where all of Ryan's friends were present. Evie's behavior shows how much she felt disturbed. Her words, as well as her behavior, reveal the depth of her distress: "He is not good." This is not good. This is not good. She is not from Eden, North Carolina—I am. Her mother didn't die from breast cancer—mine did. Her name is not Lucca Marino—mine is" (p. 37). She keeps repeating her own words, either to convince herself or because she is unsure if they are true. As Cathy described it, Evie suffers from PTSD, also known as post-traumatic stress disorder. We don't know what happened in her past, but her behavior suggests that something traumatic is still present. "PTSD seems to provide the most direct link between the psyche and external violence and to be the most destructive disorder" (Caruth, 1996, p. 58). Cathy explains that a person's behavior plays a significant role in understanding her trauma. Behavior and discourse are the keys to understanding trauma and identity destruction in any person. As we looked deeply into Evie's behavior and discourse, we learnt about that. Her behavior after seeing the girl with her name shows her identity being destroyed—she went straight to the bathroom while she was going to stab a woman, even when she dropped her cup. Evie says, "I give myself thirty seconds to live in the world where this is real. In this world, my boyfriend openly expresses his love for me in front of everyone present. There is no doubt about who I truly am or what my motives are (P. 51). These words show there is something that is missing. Her words show she wants to live peacefully, considering it as lovely as it is, but she cannot. Her wish for these moments to be real shows how much she loves to be with someone who admires her. She worked on a team that was in charge of party preparations. However, it wasn't just part of the preparations; it was also a dark side. She also stole diamonds and jewellery from the owner of the house. She worked with so much perfection that it became impossible for someone to catch her. At this point, her dark past begins to unravel. Her motive for doing this was solely to obtain money. Money was the only thing she needed for her mother's treatment of breast cancer. "The girl at the flower store has different hair, different makeup, and answers to a different name" (P. 43). She changes identity for her work. At first, she takes it as fun, but when she starts working under a man, it becomes difficult to overcome all identities. Her willingness was not necessary to Mr. Smith; he just wanted her to be on his team, for which he blackmails her with her past dark work. Lucca agreed and began working with him. Mr. Smith was the one who gave her a different identity, and Lucca does what he wants. Her first identity as a con artist was Izzy William, a babysitter of a five-year-old boy named Miles. She had grown too accustomed to her new identity. She felt guilty for betraying them, but Mr. Smith forced her to do her work. According to Mr. Smith's order, she has to fetch a flash drive and replace it with a duplicate. Jenny, wife of the house owner, sees him while stealing the flash drive. But she suddenly slipped and lost consciousness. "What about the Miles?" (P. 93) She was on the verge of catching up, but her concern for the small boy kept her from doing so. She felt sad for leaving the boy behind, and from then on, the guilt of joining Mr. Smith began to consume her. "Get out of there now! You cannot remain there in this state. Matt screams so loudly it echoes in the room. "Get your ass out of that house" (P. 93). These words show manly dominance over

women. Even Smith and his other team find her life a little bit difficult. Gave her a different assignment just for the sake of entertainment.

Evie suffers a lot due to her gender as well. Those vulgar words make anyone angry, as the manager of Mr. Smith was using. His language shows how much tough time he gave to the girls who work under him. As the time passes, Evie also feels sorry for being with him. Evie at that time is suffering herself, as she doesn't know what to do next. She called for an ambulance and left the place. She was disheartened; she doesn't want to leave Miles like that. While living with that small boy, she felt attached toward him, but she was unable to live more with Miles in his house. "I feel like a ghost navigating through my own existence." The only one who cares about me is me. The only person who is going to make sure I survive is me" (P. 96). Her words show how lonely she feels and how disappointed she is that she considers him a ghost. She came and passed, and no one will remember her. As Cathy described, loneliness can be associated with trauma, and her feeling of being lonely and ghosted in her own life shows how much she felt being left alone. She was suffering in patriarchal society due to gender inequality. Working under a person who treats you like a robot without giving importance to your feelings makes her suffer and gives her trauma with isolation and loneliness. And gave her different assignments just for his fun and interest, even though it was dangerous. Later, when she finds out a girl with the name Lucca Marino was sent by her boss, she gets angry, but when the news of her death comes, she suddenly feels fear. She came to know a person who can kill other girls who work under him and can also kill him. "My boss's displeasure over my performance on my last job led to the disappearance of that woman, who is now dead" (P. 111). He killed a girl without any hesitation; a girl worked under her. Her words reveal her self-centeredness and fear of retaliation for killing that girl. The empowerment of men to kill a girl under their supervision instills in her a fear for her life and future. This toxic dynamic creates an environment where silence becomes a survival strategy, forcing women to navigate a treacherous landscape fraught with danger and manipulation. The ruthless desire for power and control overshadows the value of human life in such circumstances. Men who have the power to kill a girl who works under them also instill in her a fear for her life. She was drawing dirt on Andrew, allowing her guilt to bubble to the surface (P. 127). She was feeling guilty for making these things. "If given the opportunity, Andrew will not cheat on his wife. It doesn't matter how beautiful he is; he is not a cheater" (P. 126). Her remark about Andrew shows why she admires him and why feeling awful and being guilty is a betrayal to an honest person like him. She expressed regret for going through all these experiences. Reading all these comments helps us understand her current situation. Her feeling of betrayal toward an honest person leaves her guilty for her entire life; that is why she feels lonely. Cathy described a term, "Survivor Guilt," in her book *Unclaimed Experiences* (1996); this term shows how the guilt of being alive left people with a feeling of betrayal, the same way Evie, whose real identity was Lucca Marino, felt. She feels betrayed by a person. According to Cathy, this feeling of guilt led to trauma, made things unforgotten, and made the memory a part of a traumatic life. Cathy's guilt is considered the main reason for her trauma and suffering. This was also the case for Lucca Marino, who was experiencing the same guilt and suffering in her current life. The fear of exposure was causing her immense distress. Being a con artist, she feels very lonely, as she cannot open her real identity to everyone. She calls herself a ghost to show how much she feels lonely after changing identities again and again. "Smith's greatest achievement is keeping everyone under him" (P. 135).

Mr. Smith's behavior demonstrates the dominance of men over women. "Maybe it was the daydreams that Ryan's home could really be mine, wishing this identity was real" (P. 136); it shows her affection for this identity being real. She wants to live in peace, but her past makes things difficult. Her boss, who really wanted her to complete her job, came back. She even starts considering Ryan's home her own. "Eight years ago, Mr. Smith saved me from potential arrest, and now he's set me up there." (P. 155). Mr. Smith, Lucca's boss, orchestrated the arrest of Evie as a murder suspect. Mr. Smith's actions demonstrate his ability to hold Evie accountable for betraying him. And being betrayed by a man whom she considers will save her from all happening was now the reason for her trouble. This also caused her identity to be shattered. "I don't need saving" (P. 170). Cathy asserts that trauma triggers a delayed reaction. As she claimed, traumatic incidents always showed up in a person's identity later in the form of identity crises, nightmares, isolation, and many other forms. Evie's desire for solitude and her sense of self-sacrifice reveal her deep internal suffering, as evidenced by her statement, "I give myself five minutes to mourn the possibility of us." She dedicates five minutes to lament the potential of our relationship. Five minutes to destroy the idea that it was possible that I was the kind of girl who could live in a perfect house with a perfect guy on a perfect street" (P. 223). Her feeling of betrayal makes her suffer. She feels sorry for herself for being trapped by her boss. Her boss, who first made her work with him, made her suffer through a different identity and now trapped her in a different life, which she dreams to be true. She wants to live a normal life with her boyfriend where there will be no need for any cheating and no secret. But when she knows Ryan is her boss, she feels like everything is over. It was just a mistake that Ryan is her boss, but she doesn't confirm it. Her past left her so shattered and tortured that she now believes in the words and perceptions of others. She was an intelligent girl, but after facing these entire past incidents that made her traumatic, she became a different girl who believed in what people said about her rather than trusting her own instincts. As she navigated the complexities of their professional relationship, doubt and insecurity clouded her thoughts, making her question whether she could ever regain the confidence she once had. All these incidents and identity changes have stripped Evie Porter of her strong identity as she grapples with the constant shifts in her self-perception. Each transformation leaves her feeling more fragmented, as if she is piecing together a puzzle with missing pieces, searching for a sense of belonging in a world that feels increasingly foreign. Living under a different name, with a different past, and deceiving everyone around her has left her feeling isolated and lonely. She cries a lot because of this. "But he was playing with me, while I was ready to risk everything for him" (P. 222). Mr. Smith set up everything because she thinks Ryan is her boss, who was the reason for her suffering. Rather than confronting him about what she perceived as betrayal, Mr. Smith shattered her identity to such an extent that she no longer possessed the courage of a real, strong woman. She says, "And I remember this is not my world" (P. 223). Again, the feeling of being alone rose in her mind. Past identities destroyed her both physically and psychologically. "It hurts to remember the girl I once was. The one who called this place home. That girl was happy here. Really happy. Despite her mother's illness, she remained genuinely happy (P. 230). She visited her native home, a home in which she lived with her mother, and spent many beautiful hours. She feels awful for herself. She feels hurt for thinking of her past. She remembers the time she spent with her mother and under her real name. Her feeling of being hapless in the past still makes her suffer. Being sad and guilty about her work shows how much she suffers after working with Mr. Smith and his team. She makes her way back from Mr. Smith and the murder, but she also takes a step toward her

healing. She left her identity as Lucca. Suffering from Lucca was very much for her to take with him. As Cathy claimed in her book, trauma as a mental wound makes the person suffer. An incident of the past that haunts any human for all of his or her life. Isolation and identity changes while working under a man made her traumatized and destroyed her identity.

Conclusion

This analysis of *First Lie Wins* presents a compelling exploration of how societal pressures, male dominance, and psychological trauma affect a woman's identity, particularly through the lens of isolation and loneliness. It's powerful that the research uses Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory as a framework, especially since it looks at how deep-seated psychological scars can fragment identity and leave lasting emotional damage. In this context, Evie Porter's character seems to reflect the internal conflict many women experience when forced to navigate a world that both demands and punishes them for adopting certain roles, especially ones that require deception and manipulation. The notion of losing oneself, or feeling like a stranger in one's own life, captures the deep alienation and trauma that often results from such survival mechanisms. It's a really poignant commentary on how society's rigid expectations and male-dominated power structures can distort a woman's sense of self. The idea that Evie, who once had dreams of a loving home with her mother, is now a different person altogether, suggests a radical shift in her identity. The psychological effects of her actions, and her struggle with her "new version," speak volumes about how deeply trauma can alter a person's core. The loneliness she feels isn't just physical isolation; it seems to be a profound sense of being emotionally and psychologically disconnected from who she once was, which exacerbates her trauma. The study's focus on how male-dominated society impacts women's roles and the psychological toll that comes with shifting identities, particularly in a high-stakes world of deceit, feels like it could offer some strong insights into broader gender dynamics and their impact on mental health. The trauma theory in this case provides a useful lens to show how trauma doesn't just occur in isolated moments—it often accumulates over time, leading to a fractured sense of self.

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