



Everything You Want Me to Be

Mindy Mejia

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Everything You Want Me to Be Mindy Mejia

No one knows who she really is...

Hattie Hoffman has spent her whole life playing many parts: the good student, the good daughter, the good girlfriend. But Hattie wants something more, something bigger, and ultimately something that turns out to be exceedingly dangerous. When she's found brutally stabbed to death, the tragedy rips right through the fabric of her small-town community.

It soon comes to light that Hattie was engaged in a highly compromising and potentially explosive secret online relationship. The question is: Did anyone else know? And to what lengths might they have gone to end it? Hattie's boyfriend seems distraught over her death, but had he fallen so deeply in love with her that she had become an obsession? Or did Hattie's impulsive, daredevil nature simply put her in the wrong place at the wrong time, leading her to a violent death at the hands of a stranger?

Full of twists and turns, Everything You Want Me to Be reconstructs a year in the life of a dangerously mesmerizing young woman, during which a small town's darkest secrets come to the forefront...and she inches closer and closer to death.

Evocative and razor-sharp, Everything You Want Me to Be challenges you to test the lines between innocence and culpability, identity and deception. Does love lead to self-discovery—or destruction?

Everything You Want Me to Be Details

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From Reader Review Everything You Want Me to Be for online ebook

Elyse says

"My little girl is dead. I held her in my hands yesterday, held her sweet bald head and watched her cry for the first time. I taught her how to drive a tractor on my lap with her little pigtails bouncing in my face. I watched her play queen — a queen with all the power and wickedness you could imagine. She owned the stage. She lit up. And I hugged her and told her what a good job she did and I let her go. I just let her walk out of that school and die. And I'll be damned if I'm going to sit around and pick out her funeral dress while her killer walks around free".

"That's exactly what you're going to do".

" Damn it, Del. What aren't you telling me?"

Sometimes an ocean opens up between friends - family - and communities - and they never seem to be able to get on the same side with one another again.

Murder in a small town---splits the community apart ---no matter what the outcome is..... a young girl still died. I found this entire story more sad than I did chilling.

For me - it represented the pressures of life - a teenagers life - a couple's life - family life - school community life - suppressed people going through the motions of daily life more numb than thriving. The author, Mindy Mejjia definitely has talent to get into the heads of her characters--and keep us hooked from beginning to end.

This is a psychological thriller with mystery suspense and multifaceted themes touching on not only whodunit but wounded characters suffused with their own person grief....questioning the purpose of life-dreams- expectations -and desires.

Reads easy - engages us intimately.

Thank You Atria Books, NetGalley, and Mindy Mejjia.

3.6

Debbie says

Wait a minute wait a minute. I'd usually be all judgmental and negative about the situation the characters find themselves in (before the murder), but oh no, the writer, with her knack for creating sympathetic characters, tricked me into accepting—hell, into liking—what's going on here. When a book challenges my morality, I know it's a good one. But it's the superb mystery that is the star here, not morality, so get over it I tell myself.

I'm sort of brutal when it comes to reviewing mysteries. I scream I don't buy that, or man, that's too predictable, or why do the characters have to be so shallow? But with this book, I don't need to scream. This is a tight, believable story with good writing and characters you care about.

I can't go so far as to say this is a wow, but it is a first-class murder mystery. I'm always a sucker for people living double lives, and that was part of the intrigue here for sure. I don't like to talk plot because I prefer to go into a book cold and I figure it's the same for others. Let me just say there are three narrators: a teenage

girl, a teacher, and a cop, all of them well-drawn. There are a couple of minor characters who are really well-drawn too. And lo and behold, the story takes place in a small town, yet I still liked it. (Small towns often bore me or make me claustrophobic.) My ability to accept the small-town locale could be based on the fact that the main character, Hattie, wanted to get out of Dodge. And she had set her sights on New York, which for some reason is a city I idealize myself.

The story is told in flashbacks, and the style is effective in painting the story of what was happening before the crime. I'm usually not crazy about cop talk, and here, the cop was my least favorite character. He just seemed blah, and every time I got to him, I was annoyed I had to leave the other two narrators. I can see why the author threw in a cop, though, because it was handy to have someone trying to figure it all out.

But boy was I bummed that Hattie died. I grew more and more attached to her. Hattie is brilliant and angsty and passionate and has so much hope for the future. Did the author really have to make her so damn likeable and mesmerizing? Luckily, we learn right away that she dies, so I knew that rooting for her wouldn't work. Plus, by having her death over with, the author didn't make me endure the shock and dismay of a cool person dying right after I got to know her.

I loved trying to figure out who the murderer was, and I loved it that I was wrong. The book is twisty at the end, sending me down several wrong roads. A good mystery, fast-paced plot, and well-drawn characters, combined with smooth, no-nonsense no-fluff writing, really made the book delicious. I couldn't put this one down. I'll be on the lookout for the next book by this new writer, I promise you.

Thanks to NetGalley for the advance copy.

A totally silly aside (a global complaint board entry):

Sorry to be obnoxious, but I have to complain about the trend in titles these days. Just look at how many books have "you" or "me" in their title—this book has both! And then there's the ever-popular "everything," and yep, that's here too! Add four teensy (2-letter) words, 6 words altogether, and you have a title that doesn't come rolling off your tongue or that is memorable in any way. I guess I should be happy that the title doesn't have "girl" in it. Now authors, can you please send us back to the good old days and start giving us shorter, simple noun or noun-and-a-verb titles? These "phrase" titles with a bunch of miniscule words are driving me nuts!

karen says

from the publisher:

Full of twists and turns, *Everything You Want Me to Be* reconstructs a year in the life of a dangerously mesmerizing young woman, during which a small town's darkest secrets come to the forefront...and she inches closer and closer to her death.

High school senior Hattie Hoffman has spent her whole life playing many parts: the good student, the good daughter, the good citizen. When she's found brutally stabbed to death on the opening night of her high school play, the tragedy rips through the fabric of her small town community. Local sheriff Del Goodman, a family friend of the Hoffmans, vows to find her killer, but trying to solve her murder yields more questions than answers. It seems that Hattie's acting talents ran far beyond the stage. Told from three points of view—Del, Hattie, and the

new English teacher whose marriage is crumbling—*Everything You Want Me to Be* weaves the story of Hattie's last school year and the events that drew her ever closer to her death.

Evocative and razor-sharp, *Everything You Want Me to Be* challenges you to test the lines between innocence and culpability, identity and deception. Does love lead to self-discovery—or destruction?

there are people who will read that synopsis of this book and understand where the story is going just by the list of voiced characters. and then there are people who will only register what's written there without clocking the subtext. there's no right-or-wrong, better-or-worse distinction between the two groups; it's just a quirk of perception. i am in the former group, because my brain automatically registers likely scenarios, just like it effortlessly solves word jumbles or dominates at boggle <--- which is definitely a better-or-worse distinction - do not come at me with boggle; you will be defeated.

long, rambly, bogglebraggy* preamble just to say that what i consider spoilers and what other people consider spoilers will differ, but since most of the reviews up here so far seem to be dodging a plot point that isn't explicitly stated in the synopsis, but which i'd considered a given before reading it, i will err on the side of caution, since i hate people yelling at me over the spoiler issue.

review starts...NOW!

this is damn good. it's a murder mystery, but even more than that, it's a fantastic character study of hattie hoffman - a girl from a small midwestern town who learned the art of manipulation at a very early age, and by the time she turns eighteen, it has become as natural as breathing to her. "manipulation" may be too loaded of a word - she's not a sociopath; in fact, her manipulations are frequently grounded in empathetic concerns - she has an impressive knack for perceiving what will be most pleasing or attractive to each person in her life, and she chameleons into that personality for their benefit, while suppressing her more natural impulses. her friends, her parents, her teachers, her co-workers all see an idealized version of her; tailor-made for them. but that kind of constant self-regulation is exhausting, and when hattie finds something she wants more than anything else, she uses her considerable talents to construct her most intricate persona yet, and she is doing exactly what she wants for the first time in her life. and then she is brutally murdered.

the three voices driving the story are hattie's (before her death - there's no ghostie narrative here), sheriff del goodman, who is heading the murder investigation, and hattie's english teacher mr. lund; both men who knew a different version of hattie.

i mean, obviously this sounds a little twin peaksy; a small town setting where everyone knows everything about everybody and yet discover they knew not one thing about the popular girl revealed to be full of secrets after her murder. however, hattie's secrets, while not inconsequential, do not come anywhere near the seedy double life of laura palmer, and she's a much more sympathetic character for it. she's just a girl who dreams of getting out of a town she's long outgrown, of making her way to new york and becoming a broadway star. and unlike so many, she might have actually achieved this goal, with her formidable powers of adapting to characters not her own, and the single-minded energy and optimism of youth.

There was something about her: a brightness, a presence... This was a girl who hadn't made any mistakes yet, one who recognized the world as only a giant cupcake for her careless sampling.

she's charismatic - people are drawn to her (or the "her" with whom they are presented), but there's also a danger to her self-construction, once her mysteries begin to unravel:

... this girl who kept shedding masks like a matryoshka doll, each one more audacious than the last, a psychological striptease that racked me with the need to tear her apart until I found out who or what was inside.

mr. lund is an equally fascinating character - a young teacher, new to the profession, he has all the energy and enthusiasm of the best kinds of teachers: close enough in age to know how to relate to his students, refreshingly honest and unafraid to poke a little at the almighty canon, especially since i agree with his pokes:

"Every book changes you in some way, whether it's your perspective on the world or how you define yourself in relation to the world. Literature gives us identity, even terrible literature. Moby-Dick, for example, defined how I feel about rope. I don't know how anyone can write pages and pages of thinly veiled rope metaphors. If there are any Melville fans in the room, I might have trouble passing you."

also, he's not too hard on the eyes, as one of his students gushes:

"Kind of skinny, but hot, like library hot. Sweaty in the stacks, you know what I mean?"

"library hot" is such a perfect description that i will be using from now on.

but mr. lund is dealing with his own life's problems - recently transplanted from minneapolis to his wife's tiny hometown so she can care for her ailing mother, he's feeling the loss of the cultural opportunities city life affords, and is becoming increasingly isolated from his wife, who is so capable at tending to the farm's duties and so devoted to her mother, he feels extraneous, and is frequently a hindrance to her. vegetarians vs. the realities of farm life = always funny.

the third narrator - sheriff goodman, is less psychologically developed than these two, and his purpose in the story is to supply the details and discoveries of the investigation. he's more than just a tool for that job; as an old friend of hattie's family, he has some personal stake in the case, but he's less defined as a character, so less interesting to me.

but the investigation itself is quite good - there are excellent twists and red herrings and false assumptions distracting the reader from the killer's identity, and while the "solving the murder" parts were not what excited me the most about this book, they were well-written and suspenseful.

for me, it's all about character here. i love unreliable narrators and how big a role perspective plays in our perception of an individual, and how this perception can be controlled by someone who doesn't want to be seen. this theme permeates the entire book - not just the way hattie is seen by the other two narrators, but in the smaller moments of her story, in the ways she interacts with her peers, her parents, her boyfriend. the gulf between what they see and what she is thinking - it makes for a lonely, but powerful girl.

this book also has some marvelous phrasings:

She probably thought there were only a few years between us, but it was a lifetime - dark, undiscovered caverns of disappointment and compromises. She was the adult idealized. I was the adult that really happened.

so this is definitely one to check out if you're into character-driven mystery stories or if you are in the mood for a psychologically-rich story with lots of seeecrets.

and although their characters are completely dissimilar, the structure here reminds me of *The Life and Death of Sophie Stark*, with its examination of the life of an enigmatic woman through the eyes of people who only

knew pieces of her, and i think it would be a fine readalike to that book.

*my spellcheck says NO to braggy, but accepts bogglebraggy without a fuss. go figure.

come to my blog!

Luffy says

I thought that the character named Hattie was so sturdy that she would never die. In a way she is alive through the investigation that is conducted after she died. I kind of expected the multiple POV that gives us glimpses in the fictional world of Hattie. It has become - for the better or the worse - a staple treatment.

I decided in the end that Hattie 'worked' as a goody-two-shoes. We constantly hear about how nice she is, and how much is she sought for her company. It's a new thing for me to read about murder the way it is depicted in the book. It makes for a nice change of lieu from books ranging from thrillers to chick lits.

In the end the ambition of the book exceeds its value. But I liked it enough to give it 4 stars because I'm still new to this psychological malarkey and it's a novelty that I welcome. Have you ever microwaved a couple of frozen vegan hot dogs and received a burst of flavor because you were hungry? It was the same for me for this book.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

Mom warned me that I had a lot to learn about the world. I wished she would've mentioned how much the learning was going to hurt.

This book was perfection..for me anyways.

It's one of those that you know you should look away from but it wraps it's twisted little story around your mind and you just can't look away.

Hattie Hoffman is in high school and has always been one of the top of the food chain girls. She gets the leads in the drama plays, she has the best friend that adores her, she has parents that would move the earth for her.

But girlfriend..it's all a farce.

Hattie is whoever she thinks someone wants her to be. She acts the role of the perfect student, daughter..yada yada.

But what does she really think and feel?

This is not a spoiler since it's the whole basis of the book..so don't whine. Hattie is found brutally murdered

in a small town barn. Who would have hurt everyone's princess?

You get to find out. The book is told by several viewpoints including Hattie's. She is a controlling little shit..but for some dang reason I actually liked her.

Hattie dreams of leaving small town life because she is so much better than that. (She is a pretentious little shit but that's beside the point.) She is all over a website that features theater life in New York, because she knows she is going to be bigger than life one day. On that site she finds someone who really 'gets her'...and then finds out it's the new high school English teacher. Who is married.

He really tries to put some distance between them when he finds out that it's Hattie who he is talking with, but Hattie is not that easily distanced.

She even thinks of the perfect way to hide their affair. She'll just be the girlfriend of that dumb football player.

If I was a normal girl with normal dreams, I would have been giddy about Tommy Kinakisis hesitant touch. I would have giggled over him with all my girlfriends and pulled him closer instead of ducking my head and turning away. I would have been so much simpler and I took a moment to mourn for what I could never be. No matter how well I played the part, I would never become the role.

This is Lolita for 2016 on steroids. ALL THE STARS!!

She had multiple personalities; it was the only explanation. She was dangerous, calculating, diabolical, and..brilliant. She was fucking brilliant.

Booksource: Netgalley in exchange for review

Diane S ? says

I had pretty much given up on this kind of book, they all started blending together, deciding to stick to my police procedurals and straight out mysteries. The plot of this one sounded like more of the same, high school girl from a small farming town found dead, but..... so many of my trusted friends were giving this four or more stars so I decided to give it a shot. Started reading and the name of the town, Pine Valley jumped out at me, All my Children, soap opera of many years, thought to myself, Please to not let this be soap operish. It. wasn't.

The character of Hattie, thespian, so good at so many things, pretending to be whoever the person she was with wanted her to be, beloved of her parents, her dad in particular, how could someone have killed her? Narrated in turns by Hattie herself and two others, we learn of the events leading up to her murder.

This was so much more than I expected, better than most I read last year. Hattie herself, such a brilliant characterization, full of teenage angst, but in many ways older than her years. I wanted to dislike her, but couldn't, I understood her, the things she wanted out of life, so much more than that found in her small town. She made for fascinating reading. The other characters, the family friend, police officer, the high school English teacher who wants to be elsewhere, compelling.

So I surprised myself by also giving this a high rating, this author can write but more importantly she can put together a story.

ARC from Netgalley.

Larry H says

I'd rate this 4.5 stars.

Hattie Hoffman is a talented, intelligent, beautiful high school senior who wants more out of life than her small Minnesota hometown can offer. She dreams of becoming an actress, of moving to New York City just after graduation. She already has a plan, even if she doesn't know anyone or have much money. She has the talent and she has the drive, but no one around her, not her friends or her family, really understand why she wants to leave, nor do they want her to go.

As her high school career comes to an end, her crowning achievement is starring as Lady Macbeth in her school's production of the Shakespearean tragedy. Her opening night performance was fantastic, and for the first time, people actually started to believe she could make it in New York. But what happened after she left the school after the play? How did she end up murdered?

Hattie's small town is rocked by her murder. Things like this just don't happen in this town, which throws Del Goodman, the local sheriff, for a complete loop. Hattie, the daughter of his fishing buddy, is a girl he has known and adored since she was born. As he investigates Hattie's murder, he uncovers as many unanswered questions as he does facts. Was this, as her best friend has suggested, caused by the famous Macbeth "curse," or was someone (or more than person) responsible for snuffing out this promising life?

What Del discovers as he digs deeper into the case is that Hattie was not only a talented actress—she was talented at being exactly who everyone needed her to be. The slightly rebellious yet loyal daughter, the perfect girlfriend, the exceptional student, the patient listener and friend, the talented actress. But who was Hattie really, and was this mercurial nature responsible, at least in some way, for instigating her death?

Everything You Want Me to Be is a fascinating, suspenseful portrait of a girl torn between what she wanted and what she thought everyone else wanted her to be. The book is narrated by Hattie, Del, and Peter Lund, Hattie's English teacher, who is reasonably new to town, and it shifts between the months and days leading up to Hattie's murder and the investigation.

Mindy Mejia throws in lots of twists and turns, and while the cynical, frequent-mystery-reading me suspected absolutely everyone, I really liked how she let the story unfold. This is a tragedy on many levels, and Mejia's storytelling hooks you from the start and doesn't let you turn away until you see how the book ends. I really enjoyed this and would have devoured it a lot quicker was I not cooking Thanksgiving dinner for 30 people this week!

This is definitely a book to pick up, because even though we've seen elements of this plot before, Mejia makes it seem fresh and makes you care about her characters.

NetGalley and Atria/Emily Bestler Books provided me an advance copy of the book in exchange for an unbiased review. Thanks for making this available!

See all of my reviews at <http://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blo....>

Christine says

Wow, wow, wow. This book was much more than I expected. *Everything You Want Me to Be* is an exceptional debut novel by Mindy Mejia. It's hard for me to categorize it into a single genre. It has bits of suspense, psychological thriller, police procedural, YA, and family drama, all wrapped up in a big ball of rapid page-turning unputdownability.

This is a story told from 3 points of view and in two rather close time frames. We have Hattie, a very unique and quite brilliant high school senior; her AP English teacher, Peter Lund; and sheriff Del Goodman. In chapter 2, someone is found dead. The rest of the story centers on who committed the murder and why it happened. This is NOT, as mentioned above, a simple police procedural; this is an intricately woven tale of love, deceit, loss of control, remorse, sorrow and issues with self-identity (note the title). I was really wrung out at the end of this, in a good way.

The characters are wonderfully drawn, especially Hattie and Peter, but the more minor members of the cast are also well characterized. There also are not that many people to keep track of, which is always a plus. The setting was especially meaningful to me--southeast Minnesota, where I have lived for the last 36 years. On many occasions I could clearly visualize where the action was occurring—even that “dirt road off the highway just south of Zumbrota.”

The plot mesmerized me. I couldn't stop turning the pages, not because of unbearable suspense, but because of sheer intrigue. How was this all going to shake out? And even more importantly, what would be the consequences to all involved? Plenty of little bombshells were dropped along the way to blow up my ever-changing theories. And so much to think about as this all played out, including what would I do if I were in the positions some of these people found themselves in.

The only thing I can think of to criticize is that at times I got confused as to when in the timeline a specific event occurred. This is a minor complaint.

Bottom line is I enjoyed the heck out of this book. It left me with a lump in my throat and much to consider. I highly recommend it to all readers who are looking for a good story. I eagerly await the author's next offering and will be first in line to grab it.

Many thanks to Net Galley, Atria Books, and Ms. Mindy Mejia for providing me with an ARC of this book. The opinions expressed above are mine alone and not biased in any way.

Iris P says

Everything You Want Me to Be

★★★★ 4 Stars!

"You say you're just acting, but you're fracturing yourself into a thousand pieces, and every time I see another piece, you're gone again. You turn into someone else, a crowd of someone elses, and it makes me wonder if there's any such thing as Hattie Hoffman".

From Everything you Want Me To Be

I received a free advance e-copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review, thank you!

The narrative of this novel revolves around a crucial question: Can we truly get to know someone, or at least a person that is really close to us?

At 17, Henrietta (Hattie) Hoffman is one of those precocious teenagers who, in the cusp of adulthood believes she has everything figured out. On the surface Hattie appears to be a well-adjusted girl about to graduate high school. She is talented, popular and looking forward to starting life after school pursuing her dreams of becoming a professional actress.

But Hattie possesses two very distinctive qualities: she is a masterful manipulator and is capable of transforming herself into anyone and anything people want her to be. It is not surprising then that Hattie chooses to become an actress: the theater provides the ideal platform to make use of her talents.

By the time the curtain of the second chapter opens though, we learn that Hattie's promising life has been tragically cut short. Her body is found in an abandoned barn a few hours after her last performance as Lady Macbeth at her high school auditorium.

Everything You Want Me To Be is set in a small town in Minnesota. The story is told in the form of flashbacks narrated by three protagonists: Dell Goodman is the sheriff in charge of investigating the murder, he is also a close friend of the Hoffmans, Peter Lund is Hattie's literature and drama teacher and someone with whom she becomes involved via an internet chat room, lastly Hattie herself is the third narrator.

I thought Mejia skillfully made use of this three-part narrative, which not only complement each other but also give the novel a balanced and riveting pace. All three of these characters have distinctive and unique voices, but is no doubt Hattie, who from the very beginning has our undivided attention.

The relationship we develop with her is, to put it mildly, complicated. No sooner are we amused by one of her pranks or charmed by her wit and shrewd sense of humor, than we find ourselves appalled by the great lengths she is willing to go in order to get what she wants.

The challenge for an author writing a *whodunit* is keeping readers engaged once they know what the outcome of the story is (in this case we've learned very early that Hattie is dead). But as suspects emerge, new motives are considered and secrets get revealed, Mejia challenge us with a few morally ambiguous questions.

Was Hattie's own arrogance and penchant for conceit the culprit of her own demise? Is she the victim or the villain of this story? At what age is someone completely responsible for her actions?

I thoroughly enjoyed the author's sardonic sense of humor as well as the literary references she uses, giving the novel a quirky and charming quality. (As a side note, I think fans will be delighted by the author's obvious reverence for the oldest Brontë sister and her shout out to *Jane Eyre*.)

There are lots of mysteries thrillers to choose from these days, a plethora of which seem to include the word "girl" on the title. And of course by now it has become a cliché to name every new thriller the next *Gone Girl*, but this is one instance in which I think the comparisons to Flynn's über popular novel might be actually warranted.

Everything You Want Me To Be is one of those deliciously twisted stories that allow us to indulge our morbid tendencies without feeling too guilty about them. So kudos to the author for writing a highly addictive crime mystery that manages to entertain without insulting our intelligence.

One final note for my fellow audiophiles, the audiobook introduced me to three new voices. I especially liked the performances of the two male narrators. The novel's easy-to-follow format and fast pace made for a breezy and enjoyable listening.

Navidad Thelamour says

There's a lot to be said for being a teenager today. Of course, every era has its modern innovations and social expectations to contend with, but it's rare that we get to see this from the inside looking out, through the eyes of a teenager living in the center of it all. What do they see and how do they feel about it? Does that societal pressure produce a diamond, as the saying goes, or does it crush us under the weight of its expectations?

Everything You Want Me to Be aimed to be that mirror for us, to shine a light in the dark recesses of the life of a teen-aged girl who was struggling to have and be it all, to exude perfection while finding what it was in life that mattered to her most. At any age, that's a tall order, but Mindy Mejia's *Everything You Want Me to Be* strives to take us there, to put us front and center in that girl's shoes. However, I didn't find it to be all that it was cracked up to be, and it wasn't nearly all that I'd hoped.

The entire novel was about playing a part, pretending for onlookers and living a secret life that no one knows about, yet it didn't delve deep enough to evoke any real feelings about it for me. Honestly, Miss Hattie Hoffman didn't seem to be going through much more than the average city teenager, and the small-town aspect wasn't brought to life nearly enough to truly juxtapose this in some startling way. And even that would have been completely fine if Hattie's layers had been more defined, more fine-tuned, peeling deeper down. But I always felt that I was just skimming the surface of this girl behind the smile. She started out a Mona Lisa, and while we learn what she was thinking behind that sly smirk, true enough, I didn't feel affected by the truths and realizations once Mona Lisa had been unwrapped. I didn't feel the tension that the author was going for. The countdown to 18 seemed uneventful and rushed so that, when it came, I was underwhelmed and unimpressed for most of the read. The last fifth of the novel picked up, but it didn't make the previous 80% feel especially worth it for me.

What I will say is that Mejia did a good job of affecting a high schooler's voice. Hattie came off as genuine; her voice was completely plausible. Her needs and desires totally matched that of a seventeen-year-old girl. And for this, some will love following Hattie. They'll even find her particular brand of drama to be shocking and stimulating, but *Everything You Want Me to Be* didn't peel down deep enough for me. It didn't set Hattie apart from every other girl yearning to leave the small town and hit the big city. (view spoiler) And the other characters didn't live up to their own potential either. They were less well-rounded, affecting and impactful than they could've been by a long shot. *Everything You Want Me to Be* somehow managed to read both melodramatically and underwhelmingly simultaneously. Yet, in the background was a story that was decent. A story with an interesting premise that could've been richer, that could've been...more. The highs and lows melded together to end up being a bit blah with just a hint of salt to season it here and there.

I recently said to someone, "It's so true that we rate books based on how they make us feel, and how they make us feel is based off of our own life experiences," and this is a novel that makes that statement truer than ever. I didn't see the drama of the "fractured" pretender that Mejia was trying to paint. Instead, I saw a

normal girl, written by the hand of an author who wants to assume that all kids are just kids, that they aren't complex or individual in their own way, thus making Hattie some remarkable mystery (which, to me, she wasn't). (view spoiler) Maybe this novel should've been set in the 50s, so that the "innocent girl with a secret" plot would be more poignant.

The entire time that I read Mejia's *Everything*, I could see where she was trying to take her reader; I just never quite got there. Often this novel was on the verge of being adrenaline-inducing, but it was always just shy of the mark for me, and for that I give 3 stars ***

* I received an advance-read copy of this book from the publisher, Atria/Emily Bestler Books, via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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Deanna says

My reviews can also be seen at: [https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress...](https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress.com)

High school senior Hattie Hoffman is good at being good. The good student, good child, good friend, good actress, etc. So when she's found brutally stabbed to death after her opening performance at her high school play, no one can believe it. The question on everyone's mind is...

Who killed Hattie Hoffman?

The story is told from three points of view—Sheriff Del Goodman, Hattie Hoffman, and the new English teacher, Peter Lund. Just like any other small town, Pine Valley has its share of secrets. The story is told from the three perspectives back and forth over the last year. Showing us everything that happened leading up to Hattie's death and the aftermath.

Local Sheriff Del Goodman is a friend of the Hoffman's so he is even more invested in finding out what happened. He finds it hard to look his good friend Bud, Hattie's father, in the face as he tries to find who is responsible for this horrific act.

Hattie felt like she spent her life playing parts, molding herself into being what everyone wanted her to be. She was tired of being what everyone else wanted her to be. Playing all those different roles can be exhausting. Whether it was pretending to be fearless to ward off an older brother's teasing when she was little to pretending to be interesting in football or the other things her friends were interested in.

Deep down she just wanted someone to like her for who she really was. She kept putting on the show waiting for her real life to begin one day.

I am going to stop there. Not because I don't have a lot of thoughts about the book, but I just feel like saying much more than I have, would lead to spoiler territory. In this case, with this book, it almost does feel like the less you know the better. I was glad I didn't know much more than this before I started reading.

I thought this was a great read...an easy and entertaining read with some great twists and turns that made it hard to put the book down. I liked having no idea what was going to happen. Then all of a sudden I was

positive I knew what happened! Oh I thought I was such a smarty pants.... but I was so wrong. This novel had complex characters that were able to bring out many different feelings in me as I read.

"Everything You Want Me to Be" is a compelling psychological thriller. Surprising and suspenseful with a strong character driven plot. I really enjoyed it and I am looking forward to more from Mindy Mejia.

Thank you NetGalley, Atria Books, for providing an advanced readers copy of this book for me to read in exchange for my honest review.

Kristin (KC) - Traveling Sister says

3.5 stars

An interesting read surrounding the murder of a girl who completely lacks a self-identity. *Hattie* is excellent at playing the role of whomever she is “expected” to be, switching from one persona to the next as a chameleon changes colors. To say Hattie is misunderstood would be an understatement—she’s sort of a contradiction.

There isn't a single person Hattie won't alter herself to please, yet she's very self-aware and knows exactly where her choices will lead her.(Well, almost.) She is young and erratic, talented and relentless, and she's harboring one killer of a secret.

This story is told in first person and alternates between three narrators, Hattie included. The transitions are smooth and the characters distinct. The plot takes a slow and steady path that leads up to Hattie's death, offering some well-played out twists along the way. I appreciated its focus of self-discovery and self-destruction, and I'd definitely give the ending a mental fist pump. All-in-all, a GOOD read—I liked it, I did. But I can't help feeling that the actual “idea” of this captivated me just a little bit more.

Although I wouldn't necessarily call this an edge-of-your-seat kind of thriller, I do feel most fans of the genre will enjoy this one! Plus, it's hard to pass up that boding title and beautiful cover. I mean, I couldn't...

Chelsea Humphrey says

This will be a tricky review; I refuse to become spoilery and so I will refrain from saying certain things I would like, but just know this book is well worth your time, money, and energy in reading it. This is one of those books that stays with you well after the final page is turned; I've been thinking about this book for days now and am finally composed enough to review it. I'm still not sure why this book hit me the way that it did, as I'm not in any sense relatable to Hattie's stage of life, but this one burrowed deep inside me and refuses to let go. If you are picking this up solely for a cheap, shocking twist on who murdered Hattie-don't. We know from early on that there are few options so your deducing skills will be wasted if that's what you're after. This book was so much more than a psychological thriller and there was no mention of a Girl in the title or comparison to a book mentioning said Girl! I'll try to reign in my thought process as this is one I could ramble on about for days.

This story is told from 3 point of views; Hattie, Peter, and Del (the sheriff investigating Hattie's murder). All have information we need in separate pieces; Mejia does a fine job of spreading these little nuggets around where we discover them at precisely the perfect moment. I could have easily read this book in one sitting; the

pacing is compulsive and the chapters are spaced perfectly apart so that they aren't choppy, but are also not too long. The characters were fleshed out nicely with flaws and issues that were struggled with until the end. The cover was perfect and really drew my eye to it. It's a great length overall for those looking for baby bear perfection of "not too long but not too short". Overall, the construction, writing, pacing, and design were what I would humbly consider exquisite.

I found this book extremely disturbing (YAY!), but not for the reasons you're assuming. This book was actually very tame when it came to graphic violence and trigger worthy content; the disturbing aspect was how deeply moved I was by Hattie's final year and digging deeper into how it all happened. Maybe part of her story was relatable to me, as my husband and I have the same age gap as Hattie and Peter, which made things more realistic for my reading experience. No, he was not in a position of authority over me, and no we didn't start dating while I was in high school or underage, but it still made me think about how a gap of 8 years can seem like a life time between two humans regarding maturity levels, rather than if they had both been, say, in their 30's. You can feel the urgent tension building with each chapter, right up until we learn the killer's identity and find out just what caused everything to fall apart. My heart broke for this young girl who spread herself so thin to be "everything everybody wanted her to be". Most disturbing of all, this book reminded me of the impending death we are all headed for, and how none of us know when it will come. Youth and potential are no defense against mortality and this is the shining theme throughout Everything You Want Me to Be. Overall, this was a haunting story with suffocating tension that will crawl deep beneath your skin without you realizing until it's over. Highly recommended to the fans of a well done psychological thriller; I'm not sure if I should consider this one of my top reads of 2016 or 2017-maybe both!

***Many thanks to Atria Books (go mystery bus go!) for providing my copy for review. It's also currently available on NetGalley for request, so run on over and click that button!**

Melissa says

3.5 stars

There are two questions this story will demand you find an answer to - who is the real Hattie Hoffman and why would anyone want her dead? To her best friend, parents, boyfriend and fellow-classmates; Hattie is a great listener, a wholesome girl, a top-notch student and an aspiring actress. So how did she end up brutally stabbed in an abandoned old barn?

Hattie is the epitome of a master manipulator. **As the reader, you're made privy to the inside scoop, the true reality, the girl behind the many roles she chooses to take on.** Is it all for fun or just a interesting way for her to pass the time? Hattie is a girl dead set on blowing out of the small Minnesota town she calls home, in search of a bigger life and maybe even her greatest role of all. That's until her lies and deception come back to bite her in the ass.

"I'm good at being what people want me to be."

I have to hand it to the author, she did a great job of masking the truth until the very end. In the midst of the story, it seems obvious where things are headed, but don't be so sure. Being told from three very distinct perspectives - Del, the cynical old sheriff in town that's happens to be best friends with Hattie's parents, Peter, the English professor who finds himself trapped in a life he never wanted and Hattie herself, makes for a nice flow. I found myself constantly questioning, even after her bouts of self reflection, did I ever truly glimpse the real Hattie?

Will I go so far to say this is a highly complex or uniquely crafted tale - *no way*. Was it entertaining - *absolutely*. It's an easy read that kept my interest, but honestly it's not one that I would consider a standout, especially among some of the other suspense novels I've read.

**Thank you to Atria/Emily Bestler Books and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.*

Karen says

Wow, I would give a 4.5 rating to this book. I just loved it, it was very hard to put this book down for any length of time. This was is another wonderful debut novel, with a few characters that really stood out as great people.

This story about Hattie, a high school senior, and an obsession that turns to murder and the upheaval of lives in a small town.

Thank you to NetGalley and Atria/Emily Bestler Books for the ARC
