

One True Loves

by Taylor Jenkins Reid · Language: EN

Summary by booksummaryai.com — <https://booksummaryai.com/country/en/one-true-loves>

Overview

One True Loves by Taylor Jenkins Reid is a contemporary romance novel that explores the complexities of love, grief, and identity. The story follows Emma Blair, who at twenty-two marries her high school sweetheart, Jesse, and they build a life full of adventure and travel. When Jesse's helicopter goes missing over the Pacific Ocean, he is presumed dead. Emma spends years mourning him, eventually moving back to her hometown and reconnecting with an old friend, Sam. She falls in love with Sam and they get engaged, finding a new, stable, and comforting kind of love. However, just as Emma is about to marry Sam, Jesse is found alive, having survived the crash and spent years on a deserted island. Emma is suddenly torn between two loves: the passionate, adventurous love she had with Jesse and the steady, supportive love she has built with Sam. The novel delves into her emotional turmoil as she navigates the impossible choice, questioning what it means to truly love someone and whether love can be divided or if one must choose.

The book is a profound exploration of the idea that love is not a finite resource but can exist in different forms for different people. Emma's journey forces her to confront her past, her present, and her future, and to decide what she truly wants for her life. The narrative is told from Emma's first-person perspective, allowing readers to experience her raw emotions, confusion, and eventual clarity. The story is not just about a love triangle but about self-discovery and the courage to make a choice that aligns with one's authentic self. Taylor Jenkins Reid crafts a deeply emotional and thought-provoking tale that resonates with anyone who has ever wondered about the paths not taken or the possibility of loving more than one person. The novel's significance lies in its nuanced portrayal of grief and the way it can shape our decisions, and its honest depiction of the messy, complicated nature of human relationships.

Key Takeaways

- Grief is not linear, and moving on does not mean forgetting the person you lost.
- Love can take many forms, and it is possible to love two people in different but genuine ways.
- Choosing a partner is about choosing the life you want to live, not just the person.
- It is okay to prioritize your own happiness and well-being when making difficult decisions.
- The past can haunt you, but you have the power to define your future.
- Communication and honesty are essential in navigating complex emotional situations.

- Sometimes the bravest thing you can do is to be true to yourself, even if it hurts others.

Chapter Summaries

Part One: The Life Before

Emma Blair narrates her life with Jesse, from their high school romance to their marriage at twenty-two. They are adventurous, moving frequently and living for the moment. Emma describes their deep connection and the way they complemented each other. The section establishes the intensity of their love and the foundation of their relationship, setting the stage for the tragedy to come.

Part Two: The Loss

Jesse's helicopter goes missing, and he is presumed dead. Emma's world shatters as she navigates the immediate aftermath of grief. She describes the numbness, the disbelief, and the slow, painful process of accepting his death. This section details her mourning, her family's support, and her eventual decision to move back to her hometown to start over.

Part Three: The New Life

Emma reconnects with Sam, an old friend who is now a successful teacher. Their friendship gradually deepens into a romantic relationship. Emma finds comfort in Sam's stability and kindness, and they fall in love. The section shows Emma healing and building a new, different kind of life, one that is rooted in safety and mutual respect. She eventually accepts Sam's proposal, believing she has found her second chance at happiness.

Part Four: The Return

Just as Emma is preparing for her wedding to Sam, she receives a phone call that Jesse is alive. He has been found on a remote island and is returning home. Emma is thrown into a state of shock and confusion. The section explores her immediate reaction, the media frenzy, and the emotional turmoil of seeing Jesse again after years of believing he was dead. Her world is turned upside down once more.

Part Five: The Choice

Emma is torn between Jesse and Sam. She spends time with both, trying to understand her feelings. Jesse is the same adventurous, passionate man she loved, but she has changed. Sam represents the life she has built and the person she has become. The section delves into her internal conflict, her conversations with both men, and her attempts to reconcile her past with her present. She realizes she must make a choice that will define her future.

Part Six: The Resolution

Emma makes her decision. She realizes that while she will always love Jesse, her life is now with Sam. She chooses the person who has been there for her in the present, and who aligns with the person she has become. The novel ends with Emma and Sam getting married, with Emma at peace with her choice. She acknowledges that loving Jesse was a part of her, but her future is with Sam. The final scenes show Emma embracing her new life, having found her one true love in the present.

Themes

- Grief and healing
- Love and identity
- Choice and commitment
- Past vs. present
- Self-discovery

Notable Quotes

- "I had loved Jesse with my whole heart. I had loved Sam with my whole heart. And I had loved them both at the same time." — Emma reflects on her dual love for Jesse and Sam, a central theme of the novel.
- "The person you are at twenty-two is not the person you are at thirty-two." — Emma realizes how much she has changed since her marriage to Jesse, influencing her final decision.
- "I was not the same person I had been. I was someone else now. And I had to live my life as that person." — Emma acknowledges her personal growth and the need to honor her present self.
- "You can love two people at once. You can love them both with your whole heart. But you have to choose one." — Emma's internal realization about the nature of love and the necessity of choice.
- "I had to stop thinking about what I wanted and start thinking about what I needed." — Emma shifts her perspective from desire to necessity, guiding her decision.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is One True Loves about?

One True Loves is a contemporary romance about Emma Blair, who loses her husband Jesse in a helicopter crash. Years later, she falls in love with and gets engaged to Sam, her high school friend. Just before their wedding, Jesse is found alive, forcing Emma to choose between her past love and her present one. The novel explores themes of grief, love, and personal growth.

Is One True Loves worth reading?

Yes, if you enjoy emotional, character-driven romance novels. Taylor Jenkins Reid's writing is engaging and the premise is unique. The book offers a deep exploration of love and grief, and the moral dilemma is compelling. Fans of Reid's other works, like *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, will likely appreciate her style. It's a quick, heartfelt read.

How does *One True Loves* end?

Spoiler: Emma chooses Sam. She realizes that while she will always love Jesse, her life and identity have evolved, and Sam is the person who fits her present self. She and Sam get married, and Emma finds peace with her decision, understanding that loving two people doesn't diminish the love she has for her chosen partner.

Who should read *One True Loves*?

Readers who enjoy contemporary romance with emotional depth and moral dilemmas. Fans of Taylor Jenkins Reid will find this a satisfying read. It's also suitable for those who appreciate stories about grief, second chances, and self-discovery. If you like books that make you think about love and life choices, this is for you.

How long does it take to read *One True Loves*?

One True Loves is about 320 pages long. At an average reading speed of 250 words per minute, it takes roughly 5-6 hours to read. Most readers finish it in a few sittings, making it a great weekend read.