



Thaw

Satya Robyn

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Ruth is thirty two years old and doesn't know if she wants to be thirty three. Her meticulously-ordered lonely life as a microbiologist is starved of pleasure and devoid of meaning. She decides to give herself three months to decide whether or not to end her life, and we read her daily diary as she struggles to make sense of her past and grapples with the pain of the present. "Thaw" explores what makes any of our lives worth living. Can Red, the eccentric Russian artist Ruth commissions to paint her portrait, find a way to warm her frozen heart?

Thaw Details

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From Reader Review Thaw for online ebook

Nancy Brady says

Thawing out...

Or does she? Ruth is planning on killing herself. In ninety days unless she changes her mind. Journaling her life, the good days and the bad, she connects with new friends, Zoe, Mary, Sarah, and Red. Especially Red, who paints her portrait, and becomes more than that.

She reconnects with her aunt and father, too.

Is this enough? Is her sadness too overwhelming, or will she find the strength to continue? Follow Ruth's journey through her words, follow her thoughts as the time ticks down to her decision. A profoundly illuminating look at those self-harm and why a person might.

Kenetha Stanton says

I read this book in one sitting because I grew to care so much about Ruth, the main character, that I couldn't stand the suspense of wondering what she would decide at the end of her three months. Ruth is portrayed in an honest and heartbreakingly way as we explore her past wounds and the challenges those create in her current life through her eyes. Her slow reveal of her story in her journal makes her sympathetic and astoundingly real.

The other characters that populate Ruth's life are also drawn in realistic ways with all of the complexities that real people in real life bring to the table. There are no people who are all good or all bad, and there are no fairy tale endings. Just real people doing their best to muddle through life.

This is a beautiful story that takes on a tough subject with all of the complexity of real life, but it's told in a honest but compassionate way that will make you care deeply about the characters. The ending is absolutely perfect, and the story and its characters have stayed in my mind well beyond the end of the book. Really great writing!

Julie Gengo says

Lots of great conflict in tone and story context that keeps you guessing the entire time. The ending is perfect as well leaving you perplexed yet satisfied -- if that is at all possible.

Sharon says

I couldn't put this one down. Ruth is so real and tragic she made my heart hurt. Some books stay in your head

and heart forever, and this is one of them. Profound.

Kristi says

Thaw was a powerful and emotional journey. The story that Ruth told the reader through her private journal was so real that I almost felt as if I was invading her privacy. She was a deeply depressed character, and at first the premise that she was spending three months trying to decide if she would end her life was troubling for me. However, after reading several days worth of her thoughts, I was caught up in her life and her thoughts of why she might want to end it.

Fiona Robyn created a haunting picture of Ruth's character and all of the individuals in Ruth's life that helped to support her and cause her pain. I especially enjoyed how Ruth shared three memories that haunted her so much that she was reluctant to share them, even in her private journal. I had to keep reminding myself that I was reading fiction, because the journal seemed so much like a memoir - like I had glimpses of the struggles and thoughts of a real person.

Ruth's character was very real and the journey that she took was very moving. I felt that she challenged herself to make the most out of the three months: she included additional people in her life, she attempted to mend severed relationships, and she pursued new adventures - all to see if she would come to feel that her life was worth it.

I enjoyed Thaw very much and felt that I came to know Ruth, and maybe even a few things about myself that I didn't know before. Robyn's writing is powerful and emotional and she has a true gift for creating genuine and believable characters.

I recommend this novel for lovers of women's fiction and memoirs as well.

The Rainbow Zebra says

Currently reading the online/blog version of "Thaw"--it is amazing and such a clever way for the author to make this novel accessible to everyone. GREAT format! About a week to go...

This review refers to the online version at read-thaw.blogspot.com.

I LOVED Thaw. I've never read a novel online. I'm an old-fashioned girl who likes to hold a book made of paper, carry it around with me.

Thaw changed all that. I owe it mostly due to Fiona Robyn's brilliant style for this novel--in diary form, one post on Blogspot for each chapter of the main character's diary--Ruth. Ruth is 32 and has given herself 3 months to decide if she wants to continue living. The story is told through her voice, one that is hurting but open, blunt, honest.

Over the course of the months I felt like Ruth was a real person, again I credit the format.

While there is mature content, I felt confident enough to share it with my 15 yr old. There are lessons to be

learned. I learned, I listened, and I felt connected. I can't ask for more from a novel that moves me to tears and not out of sentimentality.

The only glitch I will note is that sometimes Blogger didn't have the dates in a uniform order. At times you could read top to bottom, others bottom to top (typical for Blogs).

I look forward to reading more from Robyn. I will truly miss reading about Ruth every day.

Kathleen says

I identified with Ruth in many ways, though not, thank God, the cutting.
Still, in many ways we are much alike, sometimes, it was scary.
I am so glad it was a happy ending for her, at least for awhile. And so, too, with me.
Great book.

Redheadjen says

Received this in a goodreads giveaway and immediately wanted to follow Ruth's story. As Ruth's story unfolds, you realize why she feels the way she does about life. I really like how her decision has freed her to try new things in life. When my son was diagnosed with cancer, we started realizing how many things we had been putting off or not doing that would make us happy - what are we all waiting for?

I wish I could see Red's paintings - powerful idea - what a way to make you see in the mirror.

Natalie Richards says

This is a really emotional read. Satya Robyn has written a book that I'm sure many people could identify with, I certainly did. Who doesn't wonder "what is it all about?". The writing is so beautiful in places; one part in particular is haunting to me "What sums do you do to find out whether it's worth it in the long run, all the hurt? How do you work out whether it's worth making friends with the snowman before he melts?".

Dawn says

Following this woman's tragic & lonely life through her journal. The reader is pulled into this book from the very beginning. A very tragic story.

Jennifer says

I actually give this a 3 1/2 star rating but can't figure out how to give a 1/2 star LOL. Good read but not sure I actually "loved" this book. I think, if we are being honest, we all can relate to this book at times in our lives.

Not sure that's such a good thing, but I am being truthful in saying it.

Kate Hewitt says

This is one of the best books I've read in a long time. It's utterly riveting, even though not a lot happens. I ached for the narrator, absolutely ached for her. Definitely recommended!

Nur Fatin Atiqah says

Originally, I gave a 3-star rating for the book, but I changed my mind and gave it two. Why though?

WARNING, CONTAINED SPOILER BELOW!

Fiona Robyn's (or in Goodread, she's better known as Satya Robyn) writing is beautiful and immaculate. I love how she plays with words, her sentences flow perfectly. She is a master in telling stories, and know how to reach her readers' heart. I fall in love with her writings from the first page, boy, I was hooked!

BUT, the big but here is the main character in this story. Her overall personality. The tone of this book. It is so, so, SO DEPRESSING, I could not force myself to finish it. I hate Ruth and her thinking. I hate all her actions. I hate how selfish she is with other people who truly cares for her.

And the ending, God! How easy it is for Ruth to change her mind at the very last minute. I know this is a happy ending, but how can she changed her mind that easily? She was so depressed and sad, and was so sure and adamant about ending her life. Yet, it only took just one polaroid of her portrait to change her mind out of suicide.

I was like, ehhh... For the 290++ pages I believed through and through that Ruth would definitely end her life but at the final 3 pages, she did not carry on with her initial plan. Just the final 3 pages, and not because she was touched by the love she received from others or she comes to care for others, NOPE. Just because she looked at her portrait, then she saw a fire burning in her eyes. Like whatttt??? That's it???

I end up frustrated with the book, and feel a little bit of depressed. Seriously, getting to know Ruth had that effects on you. She's so selfish, she's self-centered, she's everything she said she's not and constantly played as victim that the world is not fair to her. Wake up, wake up Ruthie, THE WORLD IS NEVER FAIR TO ANYONE BUT WE SUCKED IT UP AND LIVE WITH IT!

As you get to know Ruth, you'll also realized that she had NONE of the major losses or failure in life to make her so f***king depressed and miserable. Okay, I got it that her mum passed away when she was 14 due to cancer, but so what? Some people end up orphaned way before they got to say their first word!

Hence the reasons why I feel that Ruth is just a stucked up b***ch who's bitter for no reason at all. She's the one who created all the dramas inside her head, and refuse to be an adult and make things right. She was like, "Oh poor me, nobody loves me yadda yadda yadda."

Apart from being annoyed and irritated with Ruth, I really feels that Fiona Robyn is a great writer. I might

look up for her other books to read through definitely. I hope that the other books are not as depressing as Thaw though.

Erin Lee says

I loved and hated the ending of this book in pretty much equal measures.

Christine Bode says

Stars: 5.0

British author Fiona Robyn has written a visceral, poignant, and often agonizing story of a young woman named Ruth White who at 32-years-of-age doesn't know whether she wants to be 33. Her small life is unfulfilling, seemingly void of love or meaning, and the death of her mother when she was a young girl haunts her still.

Her relationships are strained and awkward and her self-esteem is almost non-existent, even though she is well-educated and works as a microbiologist. Ruth is very good about saving her money and compulsive about keeping a tidy flat, in which she harbors her deep, dark secrets. Ruth has decided to give herself three months in which to make up her mind about whether she will commit suicide. In her daily diary entries we unravel the mystery of her past, bear witness to her present, and ultimately root for her future.

Robyn shares Ruth's tale in a first person narrative of magnificent prose. In a very clever form of self-marketing, she created a blog for the book that was launched on March 1, 2010 and posted an entry every day for 3 months. She also used Facebook to spread the word and created a remarkable reading event for those of us willing to take the ride with her. She is an excellent, courageous writer who has created one of the most honest and truthful characters I have ever come across. I care about Ruth more than I've cared for any fictional character in a very long time. She is embedded in my consciousness. Fiona Robyn has written something painfully beautiful.

She has also written about depression with much clarity and compassion. I fell in love with Ruth and found myself hoping for her happiness and wanting her relationship with Red, the Russian artist who paints her portrait, to blossom into a love she could find redemption within.

In Thaw we meet Ruth's father and his second wife, Julie, her aunt Abbie, her equally depressed co-worker Mary, and her friends Zoë and Sara and each character is written with subtle nuance.

"I spoke to Dad today. I thought I ought to call him to keep things moving after seeing him last week. It was a difficult conversation. At least before, I was able to talk to him about surface things and he'd let me... Now he keeps asking me silly questions like, 'How do you really feel about Julie?' or, 'Tell me the truth about what it's like to work at the hospital.' I kept taking the conversation back to where it should have been. Then out of the blue, he said that I should look after my own money if I want to. I said, 'No, I want you to,' and he said, 'Really? You're sure?' with a warm glow in his voice. I did want to look after it myself. But it was an important transaction between us, that he did it and that I was grateful. Like when a friend is known for making good soup, and everyone always says, 'Good old Pete and his amazing soup.' And the soup is good

but not really amazing. But Pete likes to mention it himself every so often, and his friends really do care about him, soup or no soup, so the soup becomes the symbol. There's a place for that. We don't have to tell the truth all of the time."

I knew someone who committed suicide and I know the pain that her decision caused for her loved ones. She hung herself and left a note. She'd done all the research so she would know how to do it effectively and on the last few days of her life seemed to be more calm and happy than she had been for a long time. She'd already made peace with her decision and she knew she wouldn't have to endure the pain anymore.

It really does take more courage to live than it does to die. If Ruth goes through with it, I'm going to be heartbroken, I must say. But then again, this is a heartbreak story. I've never witnessed pain being written about in such an exquisite way.

There are only a couple of journal entries left on Fiona's/Ruth's blog and I don't know how it's going to end yet but I decided to post my review now anyway. I'm praying for a happy ending even though that I know that in real life, things don't always turn out that way.

Fiona Robyn has a fan in me, for life.
