



# The Truth

*Jeffery W. Johnston*

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**Lie, torture, kill—there's nothing Chris and Derek wouldn't do for their younger brothers...**

When Chris wakes up tied to a chair in a dark basement, he knows that he's trapped—and why. He shot and killed Derek's little brother. He had his reasons, but no matter how far Derek goes to uncover the truth about that night, Chris's story won't change. It can't. There is far too much at stake...

Derek is desperate to prove his brother didn't deserve to die. And if kidnapping his brother's killer is the only way to the truth, than he'll go to extremes. But Chris's truth is far more dangerous than Derek could have imagined, and knowing could cost both their lives...

## The Truth Details

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Author : Jeffry W. Johnston

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# From Reader Review The Truth for online ebook

## Melissa says

This was a quick and easy read, but the truth is - it was way too predictable. I wanted to like it more than I actually did.

The story starts off in an interesting way, one that grabbed my attention for sure. Chris, a sixteen-year-old boy wakes up duct-taped to a chair. The brother of the boy he shot, in what seems to be self-defense, is demanding answers. He wants the truth about what really happened the night his brother was killed and he's willing to use garden shears to get the answers.

Aside from being predictable, I found some aspects of the story way too unbelievable to accept. After being kidnapped, the cops aren't going to just drop you off in front of your house and drive away like nothing happened. They're going to bring you to the police station and question you. I don't see a sixteen-year-old outsmarting the police with a hidden tape recorder either. And what about forensics?

About the only thing I did appreciate was the connection the two brothers shared. They were willing to do anything, even lie, to protect one another.

*\*Complimentary copy provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.\**

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## Lectus says

I cannot say that I didn't like it, but I can't say I like it either. I like that it is a book for boys (we need more of those). I guess this book kind of shows you how the system (life) can mess up sometimes.

It deals with issues of abandonment (as in the father preferring one sibling over the other) and it is very heavy on sibling responsibility. Actually, I felt kind of exasperated with Chris' mom and Chris himself because everything revolved around Chris' brother. Chris gave up his dreams/life to take care of his brother. Well, hello! That's what you mother is for!!

I found kind of absurd that a boy is kidnapped and the police was never involved. Well, maybe Chris told Derek the whole story in two hours? Derek was a very exasperating character. A lot of threads about cutting fingers and never actually did something.

The end was interesting because it aroused some questions that I cannot post because it would give away the plot.

Over all, I didn't find any connection with the characters. Derek's kidnapping of Chris served like a kind of therapy for Chris to come to terms with his father's dead and his feelings. It also served as therapy for Derek so, there, some psychologist just lost two clients.

The story got boring at times with Derek insistence of wanting to know the truth. Hmm? I got it the first time, Chris was to tell you the truth.

Thank you Netgalley for providing me with a free copy of this title.

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## **Shelley says**

\*\*\*I received a copy of this book from Goodreads Giveaways\*\*\*

If you are looking for a fast paced book that will keep you guessing from the beginning then this is the book for you. This book is a mystery that is aimed toward the young adult male audience.

When any book starts out with someone being held hostage and having someone threaten to cut off their fingers one by one if they lie, well let's just say I am hooked. I mean, what truth could possibly be worth losing fingers for and you can't help but wonder what you missed even though you just started the book!

The pace of this book stays the same throughout. I worried that it would taper off once it got started but the writer did an excellent job of planning this out and not making anything too obvious. I don't want to give much more away in the review because I don't want to ruin it for anyone. The book did have some language but other than that it was something that anyone of YA age level could handle. Give this book a try, I was pleasantly surprised.

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## **Miranda says**

I have just recently finished a book called *The Truth* by Jeffry W. Johnston. As I was in Barnes and Nobles looking at all the different young adult books, this one caught my eye. Not just because of the amazing cover, but as I was reading the back, the story seemed to jump out at me. "The Truth" is based in Pennsylvania, which I can relate to a lot. This book is an exciting page turner that is filled with a lot of action and mystery. As I was getting into the book, I was definitely expecting some awesome action parts, which I got. I thought I would see more of things that I could relate to, knowing that the main character is 16 years old. I didn't really get that as I was reading.

In this story the author did something that you don't see very often, he switches from past and present in the main character's life. Chris is 16 years old and has a 10 year old brother named Devon. Their dad passed away and it was just them and their mom. Once their dad died, Chris felt like he had to step up and take care of Devon because their mom worked a lot. One night there was an intruder in the house and Chris being the man of the house decided to go see what it was. Next thing he saw was the intruder on the kitchen floor with blood surrounding them. Following this incident, Chris found himself strapped to a chair by the intruders brother. Derek the intruders brother, wanted to hear every detail about what happened that night.

Throughout the story you see Chris face many challenges from talking to the police, hearing everyone at school talk about him, to trying to remember every detail about what happened so he doesn't get hurt, and even being blackmailed to save the people he loves. Sometimes there were ups for him like finding a girl, seeing his little brother win some baseball games, and finding out who his true friends are. Although Chris has an enemy, he does have an ally too. Detective Fyfe is always there for Chris trying to help him get through everything. He not only works at the police station, he was one of Chris's dad's friends. My favorite character in the book is Chris because he really stepped up in so many ways. He is a very brave character and that is why I believe people should look up to him. I can't really relate to what he did but I can relate to how he felt. He just wanted to protect everyone he loves and in doing that means he had to make sacrifices

sometimes. Towards the end of the book, I found it very thrilling to read about how everything unfolded. The truth did come out and the whole book was so interesting I couldn't put it down at times.

That being said, occasionally the book was a little slow, it felt like it wasn't going anywhere. Once you got to the better parts it felt as if you were in the story with Chris. The detail is pretty solid and the story line is impressive. On the other hand, I might change the word choice. Make it more young adult, then a book I would read in 7th grade. There were some parts where it felt boring to read, but other than that it's a great book, I really enjoyed it overall.

In conclusion, I would highly recommend this book to teenagers because it is a great thriller and it showed me that sometimes you have to overcome challenges to be happy. If you enjoyed reading this book then you might like *The Last Thing I Remember* by Andrew Klavan. It has a similar plot where someone is strapped to a chair. Jeffery W. Johnston also has a book called *Fragments*, which I might be interested in reading. *The Truth* was a wonderful book to read, I would rate it an 8 out of 10. Thank you for reading my review, I hope it was helpful in making your decision about reading this book.

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**Ashley (TheNerdyBookmark) says**

**Actual Rating: 2.5/5**

*\*\*I would like to start off by saying that I received *The Truth* by Jeffery W. Johnston for free via Sourcebooks Publishing in exchange for a review. Although I am super grateful and excited for any opportunity at receiving a book for free, I am also very strict with being honest. That being said, giveaways do not impact my reviews.\*\**

This book wasn't **HORRIBLE** - but it was a little predictable and I just clearly couldn't relate (besides the main thing happening here, I also dislike most sports SO sitting through all of the baseball parts was a bit of a struggle, I really didn't care), nor was I feeling any emotion the author was going for. I didn't feel sad/scared/anxious/sympathy... I really just wanted to see how the book ended. And yes, it made my eyebrows rise, it was worth reading once, but then I threw it to the side and **probably won't ever touch it again.**

I don't typically like these type of stories, but if there's a **HUGE** twist in the end that blows my mind, then of course I'm gonna love it! But this just didn't have that and it just felt kind of flat. ***I personally wouldn't hand this out as a recommendation.***

**\*\*To See My FULL Review Visit: [The Nerdy Bookmark: A Not-So-Serious Book Review Blog](#) \*\***

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**Elly says**

**\*\*\* I received an ARC of this book from Sourcebooks and NetGalley in exchange for a honest review. However, this does not influence my opinions in any way.\*\*\***

I really enjoyed this book. I was a little skeptical going in, but I fell into the rhythm of the story so quickly. The book constantly jumps back and forth between two timelines and they work together beautifully. The

whole book read seamlessly and you would get so into it that you don't realize how quickly you are moving through it. If anything that just shows how clever Johnston's writing is and how easy the book itself is to follow.

More than anything, it is easy to see how everyone is damaged in some shape of form and how everyone's corruption drives the story. I naturally clung to the story and my emotions followed swiftly. You even feel badly for the antagonist and want him to have his happily ever after too. However, this book is also quick to tell you that there is no happily ever after or perfect ending. Shit things always happen, especially to good people, and there is nothing you can do about it except keep trucking on and working to protect the ones you love.

Overall, I probably would recommend this book to anyone who wants a quick read that is different from the norm. It doesn't follow normal standards and touches on realistic subjects that are normally overlooked.

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## **sue says**

My Kindle said....approx time of read 3 hours.

So not a long book to read **but cor blimey was it packed with everything**

The author has crammed in a lot of interest, lies, secrecy, discovery, and awesomeness into this book. But its not rushed, its not so 'crammed' that you feel its lacking something, its really **not**

Its a tale of a young lad whose Police father was dead.  
His death leaves the Mother, his younger brother Devon and himself.

Now HE has to step up to the mark and look after his family, his brother especially.

But he is taken hostage.  
Why?

The story unfolds with him sat in a chair and and recounting life to the person whose held him captive. Hes tied.

The captor holds a pair of shears who taunts him to tell **The truth <.b> or he will loose one finger at a time.**

**Its not a horror story, you can keep your eyes wide open.**  
**All the person wants is The Truth** and hes hungry to get it.

But through him telling the truth, what is the truth?  
What will it discover?

I learn of some open family dysfunctions that can take place through this revelation.

And I learn that sometimes The Truth is not always as we see it, but as others may see it.

Will The Truth be a good discovery?

Will The Truth free each of them?

Most of all, should The Truth have been told?

This is a wonderfully well written piece of work that I read last night before sleep. It has a quick turn of events that really gut you.

At the end of the day, what is family?

My thanks to \*SOURCEBOOKS Fire via Net Galley for my copy

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### **Batool says**

**Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for providing me with an ARC of this novel. *This has in no way affected my review.***

Honestly, i thought this book was okay. It reads more like a middle grade book rather than a young adult, which made me really confused when i went into it.

Mr. Johnstons writing is very simple which made the story fast paced and keeps the reader turning pages after pages without realizing they're suddenly 100 pages in.

Overall, I wouldnt call this a bad book, I would just say it was very predictable and not my type.

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### **Barb says**

Anybody else worried that the kid will become a serial killer?

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### **Richard Knight says**

As a teacher of seventh graders, I have a lot of students who just flat out DON'T READ. In fact, just yesterday, I had a student-a bright student, no less-who told me they hate books. I said "hate is a very strong word," and she said, "But it's the truth, Mr. Knight." (And I swear. Pun not intended). Jeffry Johnson's book, also called The Truth, is definitely not boring, and I'll be giving copies out to some of my students next year who are adamant on their feelings that reading=boring. The Truth is immediately interesting and maintains that pacing all the way through. In fact, when it's nearly over, it's ratcheted up to a point that I was literally flipping ahead to see, wait, how is this going to end? It is surprisingly complex for a YA book, and the male characters are a lot more sensitive than you often see in this medium. A five star book, and enjoyable for adults as well teenagers. Give it a read.

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## Anastasia says

### 4/5 stars

Disclaimer: I received a free ARC copy from Natgalley in exchange for an honest review.

***Trigger Warning: Murder, kidnapping, and off the page rape.***

The Truth is a young adult murder mystery that will keep you wondering "what really happened" until the very last word.

When Chris wakes up in a dark basement tied to a chair, he knows that he's trapped-and why. Eight nights ago a burglar broke into Chris' home. Eight nights ago Chris did what he had to do to protect his family. And eight nights ago a 13-year-old runaway bled to death on his kitchen floor. Now Derek wants the truth about what happened that night. He wants proof his little brother didn't deserve to die. For every lie Chris tells, he will lose a finger. But telling the truth is far more dangerous...

This was my very first Jeffry W. Johnston read and it did not disappoint. He creates the perfect setting for a thriller, that has just enough confusion to keep you interested until the last page. This book was only 200 pages but it packed a huge punch.

I absolutely loved the relationship between Chris and Devon, his younger brother. Whether they were hugging or fighting I was smiling because of how well developed it was. At the age of 11 Chris had to become the father figure in Devon's, only 7 at the time, life. Their father who was a local police officer was shot in the line of duty. He went against the police officers cardinal rule, *never set down your weapon* to save a young girl held captive by her father. Chris, now 17, and Devon, 11, have an amazing relationship. Chris goes to every single baseball game Devon has, they play board games, and take care of each other without a second thought. So, when Chris hears a sound downstairs his first thought is to protect Devon. You were able to see the love they had for each other and how Chris would do anything for Devon. After Chris shoots Derek's brother, Caleb, his relationship with Devon becomes strained. Devon pushes Chris away and starts to lash out during baseball games.

***"A pair of garden shears. Curved. Sharp. Slowly, even gently, he opens them and slides the little finger of my left hand in between the razor edges. 'One finger for each lie,' he says. 'Do you understand?'"***

The scenes where Chris and Derek would talk, or threaten each other had me uneasy. Ever since the first page I was waiting, dreading, when Derek would use those garden shears. This makes you think of how many lies you tell and how important your fingers are. Even though I didn't 100% love the idea of cutting someone's finger off I definitely understood where Derek came from. If we were in his head I would most likely approve. You want answers, go get them. Derek loved his brother, Caleb, and the thought of not knowing the truth about his death haunted him. The only choice he could see was to take the *truth* by force.

The only problems I had with this book was the pace and the flipping from "now" to "then". There were scenes that seemed like repeats. It didn't really hold new information and it felt as though Johnston was trying to beat the idea into you. Like he wanted you to grasp the meaning behind the words, get his



foreshadowing that was clearly there the first time you read it.

**Now** and **then** didn't really work well. It was a great idea that was poorly executed. I loved how we were told the story with Derek. Pausing when Derek brought us back to **now** and learning more when Chris transported us back to **then** . It just felt very choppy and not consistent. There were times where I felt we didn't need Derek's commentary or questioning, and other times when I just wanted his reactions. If the **then** and **now** had switched every other chapter to give us time to adjust and let everything sink in it would have worked flawlessly.

All in all I really enjoyed *The Truth* and will definitely look forward to anything else Jeffry W. Johnston writes.

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## **Sarah says**

(Source: I received a digital copy of this book for free on a read-to-review basis. Thanks to SOURCEBOOKS Fire and NetGalley.)

*“One finger for each lie,” he says. “Do you understand?”*

This was an okay YA mystery story, with an interesting twist at the end.

It couldn't have been easy for Chris to wake up tied to a chair and threatened with a pair of gardening shears, but he still continued to not tell the whole truth, I'm not sure whether this was bravery or stupidity.

The storyline in this was told in alternating chapters of 'now' and 'then' as we learned what had happened to Chris from the shooting onwards. The mystery element was good, but the pace did drag a bit in places.

The ending to this had a bit of a twist which I didn't see coming, it did shed some light on why Chris wasn't telling the truth though.

6.25 out of 10

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## **Kat says**

Thriller, *check*.

An unknown author, *check*.

Interesting summary that drew me in, *check*.

*The Truth* was another title I received from Netgalley (that website is a privilege, honestly), hoping that it would drag me from the slump I've struggled with for weeks on end. Whether it did, well, you're about to find out the answer. In short, so you needn't bother reading this review, **perhaps you would be better off with reading something else that isn't this.**

Chris, the protagonist — who I'm sorry, once I got inside his head, **sounded like I had entered a parody** — wakes up tied to a chair. He shot and killed Derek's brother, the kid who is holding him hostage and threatens to cut off his fingers if Chris doesn't divulge the truth of why he fired the gun; for very vague reasons, Chris refuses, because knowing could cost both of their lives. In truth, 3/10 is the highest I can go, given the fact for a **YA book, the lack of intensity is something I'm not surprised by, but for a supposed thriller, I am.** Either I was reading a completely different book than what was described, or it just wasn't all that good.

An encouraging concept, which kept me reading (albeit half-heartedly) to the end. Fast pacing, killing and kidnapping, tied off with an explanation as to why these two characters clashed together, is what I expected from this genre. Within the few pages I had a feeling it wouldn't hold out to what was implied. The constant back-and-forth of *then* and *now* **could have been a nice structure, had there been significant events to fill it.** Suspense was hard to come by, as there was hardly any sign of it, aside from when Chris actually shot the brother, giving the slightest indication that more would follow. Alas, none did.

I have my Mom's dark colouring, angular face, and I'm slender, like she is.

**Sentences like these, the end words making it redundant, paired with a bland style, made this story all the more disappointing.** In thrillers, or crime, intensity is needed. It's all well and good to have a conflict, which Johnston successfully opened with, but without that *feel* to it, through **subplots or underlying themes or the detailed and humanised description of a scene** — the things that drive the conflict into climax and a satisfying arc, unfortunately makes it fall flat on its arse. I knew it would within moments; even though I managed to finish it, throughout I thought this was a novel I probably wouldn't recommend. I suppose I finished out of faith, or decency, but either way a chance was all I could give to Johnston.

"Hey!" I shout again. "Heeeyyyy!" I try harder to break free. "Is somebody there? Can somebody help me? Please? Please!"

Okay.

Along with the numerous issues above, another was the characters. Out of all of them — and there weren't many — Derek, the antagonist, had the most distinctive voice, but even then he couldn't save the rest of the story. Chris had one strong aspect to his personality, and that was his protection over his younger brother, Devon. That's great, I like it, **but when that was all there was to him, it was terribly one-dimensional and flat;** other subplots, such as romance or the backstory of family, was poorly introduced in the third-half of the book, which I imagined was added purely for filling out the plot or development for his character only. It wasn't spread out over the two-hundred plus pages, either, **so it came off rushed and weak.**

Thirdly, and finally, the *ending*. I won't say what happened, (and the next sentence has no relevance to this book) but what it *was*, was shock-factor. I see this a lot, mainly in TV shows, such as *The Walking Dead*, where they'll kill off a character for no reason whatsoever besides to evoke a reaction from the audience, which usually ends up being *pissed off* and outrage. **That, along with an open ending as well, hit the nail on the head.** So, in this instance, the reaction I was left with was: WTF?

Thus, my conclusion is that I did not enjoy *The Truth*. It wasn't absolutely terrible, I'll give it that, but I've

been left discouraged and almost wary of approaching other thrillers. What if the next one I pick up isn't any different? Can I *ever* trust books again? Questions, questions.

**I hope that, if I were to ever come across more of Johnston's work, that the review that followed would be different.** Something tells me I'll be left disappointed again, but I'm foolishly a believer in hope and second chances.

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## **Morris says**

"The Truth" is a thriller that starts rolling in the first chapter and never gives you a chance to catch your breath until the end.

Told through a combination of flashbacks and current events, the story unfolds in reverse and leaves the reader guessing until the very last page. I pride myself on being able to catch plot twists in books, movies, and television shows, but the author managed to surprise me and catch me off-guard. I only figured out a tiny piece of the puzzle. I wish I could say more about it, but almost anything would be a spoiler, and that would suck the fun right out of the reading experience.

Perhaps the best part of the book is that it is a very quick read that will appeal to even the most reluctant of readers, while still engaging those who are true bibliophiles. There is almost no romance in the story, so those who do not enjoy that will be satisfied. I'm not going to lie, I felt afraid right along with the main character. Any reader who enjoys young adult thrillers will be turning the pages as fast as they can to find out what happens next.

I recommend "The Truth" to anyone looking for a good thriller who is upper middle grade and up, especially reluctant readers.

This review is based upon a complimentary copy provided by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Leah says**

This was an interesting book. It's all about making decisions, especially hard decisions, to protect the ones you love.

Chris is a normal 16 year old high school boy who has been dealt a tough hand. After his police officer father is killed in the line of duty, he is left to take care of his younger brother since now his mom is the only parent. Devon, his younger brother, idolizes Chris and looks up to him as the father figure in his life now that dad is gone. Chris goes to all of Devon's baseball games and even rubs his back until he falls asleep at night. He is the perfect big brother.

One night, Chris wakes up to a noise in the kitchen. After checking on Devon, he grabs a gun from his mom's bedside table and goes to check on the noise. Chris discovers someone in their kitchen burglarizing their house. One thing leads to another and Chris ends up firing the gun and killing the intruder. Once again, he is regaled as an all-star big brother for doing whatever it takes to take care of Devon..... That is until it

comes out that the intruder was a thirteen year old. Just a kid himself.

Now Chris wakes up in a room bound to a chair with the older brother of the boy he killed wanting answers. With the threat of his fingers being cut off by garden shears, Chris has to tell the truth about what really happened that night.

I go back and forth a lot with my rating. Overall, it is a really good book. I enjoyed the unique plot, and I think the author did a great job writing the "Then" and "Now" scenes without it being confusing for the reader. However, the big plot twist was a bit predictable for me. You know something is up from the beginning. Chris isn't telling the how truth about his story and if you are able to put the clues together, the answer is right in front of your face.

I think this would be a great middle grade or young high school book because of the issues it covers.

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