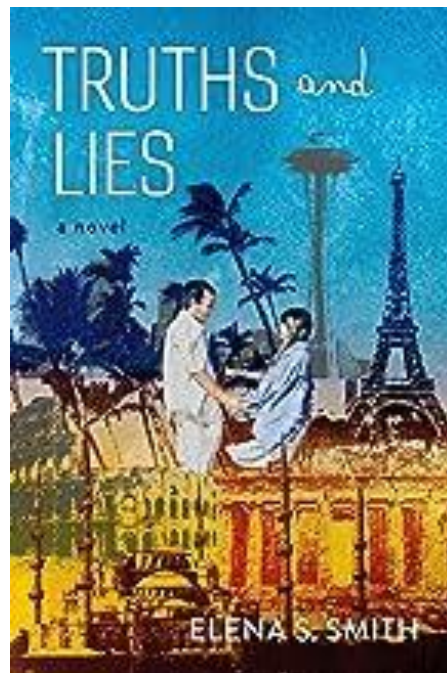


Truths and Lies



By Elena S. Smith

Reviewed by Emma Megan for Readers' Favorite

Truths and Lies by Elena S. Smith is an absolutely enthralling read. Vicki is a university professor and considers herself a lucky lady. She thought her life was over when she got divorced, but now she is happy and enjoys her freedom, independence, and a life free of lies and manipulation. But her best friend, Darlene, is not convinced and decides to make Vicki a profile on a dating site. When Vicki sees the guy she splashed with beer at a Seahawks game a while ago, she decides to give him a chance. Tom is a lonely guy in his late 50s. He has been divorced for almost a decade and stopped taking care of himself. Tom believes he is a decent man who doesn't deserve to be manipulated and deceived. He is afraid of getting hurt again, but after a brief encounter with a woman at a football game, he starts to believe that it is still possible to find a soulmate.

I did not expect such a fascinating and uplifting contemporary romance novel. *Truths and Lies* by Elena S. Smith is the perfect combination of fun, adventure, peace, love, tenderness, care, and intimacy. It's about truths and lies, freedom and commitment, trust, loss, and survival. Elena writes so well that she draws you into her characters' lives. Her characters are realistic and wonderfully flawed. Their fears and experiences with truth and lies allowed me to connect deeply and relate to them. Vicki is now one of my favorite female characters. I highly recommend this moving novel to all readers looking for a mature romance with strong characters.

Reviewed by Mikel Stevenson

Elena masterfully develops a real-life narrative addressing core issues of both life and self. While reading the story, I came to realize she has identified the most important issue — relationship. That life is about relationship, and what is life without relationship? And much of one's character and personal issues are revealed in relationships. Without saying it, Elena shows there is far more to the internal than we perceive from observing the external.

The story has a *realness* to it in expressing the universal human condition. That life has paradox; life has risk; life has potential; we are vulnerable when we love; life has loss, pain, betrayal; fear of being hurt again is universal. They are powerful forces in my psyche. Yet, life is doable for it is formed by our response to what happens to us.

“Is the truth a bitch?” Elena's question is for the reader to answer. Tom, a main character in the book, grappled with truth as truth seemed to frustrate his desires and actions. “I hate this poisonous phrase ‘the truth is’; it always spoils everything” (p. 29). But whether a bitch or not, he finally realized lies are worse: “Yes, maybe some truths will hurt, but lies eventually always hurt more” (p. 43). How and why did Tom come to this conclusion? How did he make this truth a reality in his life? Intriguing, indeed. And all can relate to Tom and the process.

Vikki, the other main character in the book, finally voices to herself the age-old question, “Why is life so unfair?” (p. 156). Elena does not answer the why, but Tom and Vikki show us *the how* to live with it. This includes the courage that is often overlooked, i.e., the courage within the human spirit . . . courage to face reality and accept truth; courage to risk being hurt again; courage to engage the unknown. Elena presents it well.

The rather surprising ending is, like the whole story, real life. Poignant, yes, while comforting and inspiring. An engaging read because I see myself with my thinking, emotions and behaviors living in same circumstance, same experiences, with same issues as Tom and Vikki.

Truths and Lies offers the truth that awareness of shared humanness can cultivate virtues of empathy and compassion.

Reviewed by Esther J. Hildahl

Truths and Lies is the bittersweet love story between Vicki and Tom that had its ups and downs for almost eleven years. Both are divorced. Vicki decided she was through with men because of lies and manipulations she had experienced before. She convinced herself that she was very happy and loved her new freedom of being very independent and doing whatever she wanted. Tom, on the other hand, after his divorce let himself go, gained a lot of weight, was lonely and bored. He got mixed up in one relationship, but it didn't work out because she had a drinking problem. After that, he pretty much gave up.

Then one day on a dating site, Vicki spotted Tom's picture and recognized him as the man she accidentally spilled beer on during a Seahawks football game. She met him and thus, slowly at first, began their relationship.

The author has done a wonderful job creating this story. It is well-written, interesting, and a page turner. The characters are well defined, seem very real, and ones that the reader can easily identify with. I recommend this book for one and all and especially for those who like romance stories.

Reviewed by Bob Manion

Truths and Lies, a trade paperback begins at a professional football game. A spilled beer, an advertent touch and a disappearing beautiful woman.

Tom wonders who the woman is. Vicki is embarrassed and quickly leaves. Alone after a failed relationship, Vicki is distrusting. Tom and Vicki meet and are interested. Vicki is hesitant, afraid, and a weak dating relationship begins. Her doubts are there, but they weaken and begin to fall away.

Truths and Lies is a wonderful story of doubts overcome, a story crafted by a skilled and talented author, a story you will enjoy reading again.

Reviewed by Larry Danek

Truths and Lies, a story by Elena Smith, is a serious look at today's give and take in modern romance. The Author put two people, Tom and Vicki, in contact during a football game and reintroduced them through a dating site. Tom wants to make a commitment, while Vicki isn't sure she's ready. They go through some troubles before finding they need each other.

The author did much research for the background of this story. *Truths and Lies* locked me in about how life treats us and how we may overcome the problems we encounter. I found the book hard to put down, sitting up late one night to finish it.

Reviewed by Joan Kopczynski

Elena's book, *Truths and Lies* surprised me, not only because it's well written but also because English is not Elena's first language, Russian is. Her PhD in Linguistics is evident as most of the dialogue sounded authentic, as if it were written by an American. It also surprised me because Elena's book covers universal themes of love relationships, whether they are in the U.S., Europe or Russia. For example, she writes: "Men want sex no matter when, with whom, and how, while women as a rule want sex with the man they are in love with." While reading her book, I felt privy to gossip about people I knew or had known in real life. Especially about the lies we tell each other.

Vicki, the protagonist, is a university professor who seeks truth in relationships, not lies or manipulation. She is very independent and has a trust problem with men. I sympathized more with and was hooked by her character Tom, a lonely man in his late 50s, who got served divorce papers when he felt nothing was wrong with his marriage and then gained weight and lost all confidence in himself. I liked that Elena's characters were realistic and flawed. Vicki and Tom meet at a Seattle Seahawks football game, and their entwined lives are forever changed.

The book has several twists and turns, and the political ending surprised me. I found Elena's courage to write about the lies Putin told about Ukraine was nothing less than admirable. This book is so much more than a simple romance story; it is a

lesson in the fine art of relationships and the length some people will go to seek the truth. I highly recommend reading it.



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