

Reviewer Name: Anonymous

Grade: Junior

School: Yorba Linda High School

Book Title: It Starts With Us

Author: Colleen Hoover

Rating: 3.5

*It Starts With Us* can be considered both a sequel and a prequel to the first novel in the duo, *It Ends With Us*. Continuing the story a couple of years after readers left off, we resume in both Lily and Atlas' perspectives. Atlas has opened up his second restaurant and Lily has found a decent co-parenting pattern with Ryle. New beginnings and stories left unfinished flow throughout this novel. Atlas and Lily revive their buried love, but Ryle remains an, unfortunately, major part of Lily's life. Wishing to relive the love they once experienced, Lily and Atlas attempt to navigate a connection while worrying over Ryle's actions. Ryle continues to blame Atlas for the termination of his and Lily's marriage, creating a plethora of problems for the two. Will their love persevere through these hardships?

I thought this book was a nice, light read. Although it deals with incredibly sensitive topics, the tone of this story is rather uplifting compared to that of "It Ends With Us." I enjoyed the hopefulness of the novel and the underlying message entailing that there is always a way out. On the other hand, I found that the overall plot of the book lacked at times. There could have been a more concrete point of climax in the story. Atlas Corrigan was my personal favorite character in this novel, similarly to how I felt about the first book in the duology. Reading "It Starts With Us" filled me with happiness and blissfulness as Lily's story continued on a more comfortable and radiant life. There were a couple shocking turns in events that I hadn't expected to occur, yet nothing that brought down the character of the novel.

I would highly recommend this book if you've read "It Ends With Us." Of course, it can only be understood after reading the first novel, but it is also a lovely closing to Lily's story. It closes off a heavy and grueling tale with the promise of new, untroubled beginnings. It fails to particularly remind me of any other book, although it does resemble Colleen Hoover's additional works. If you enjoy Colleen Hoover then you'll have no problem with this more recent book.