

Swear on This Life: A Novel

By Renée Carlino



Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino

Booklist, Top 10 Women's Fiction of 2016

Goodreads Best Romance of August

Redbook.com's "20 Books by Women You Must ReadThis Fall"

Popsugar's "21 Fiction Reads to Add to Your Fall Reading List"

Bustle's "11 New Romance Books Perfect for Summer Beach Reading"

Brit+Co's "16 Must-Read Adult Books Out in August"

Sunset magazine's "Bookmark this: Your ultimate summer reading list"

From USA TODAY bestselling author Renée Carlino (*Before We Were Strangers*), a warm and witty novel about a struggling writer who must come to grips with her past, present, and future after she discovers that she's the inspiration for a pseudonymously published bestselling novel.

When a bestselling debut novel from mysterious author J. Colby becomes the literary event of the year, Emiline reads it reluctantly. As an adjunct writing instructor at UC San Diego with her own stalled literary career and a bumpy long-term relationship, Emiline isn't thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of a young and gifted writer.

Yet from the very first page, Emiline is entranced by the story of Emerson and Jackson, two childhood best friends who fall in love and dream of a better life beyond the long dirt road that winds through their impoverished town in rural Ohio.

That's because the novel is patterned on Emiline's own dark and desperate childhood, which means that "J. Colby" must be Jase: the best friend and first love she hasn't seen in over a decade. Far from being flattered that he wrote the novel from her perspective, Emiline is furious that he co-opted her painful past and took some dramatic creative liberties with the ending.

The only way she can put her mind at ease is to find and confront "J. Colby," but is she prepared to learn the truth behind the fiction?

<u>Download</u> Swear on This Life: A Novel ...pdf

Read Online Swear on This Life: A Novel ...pdf

Swear on This Life: A Novel

By Renée Carlino

Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino

Booklist, Top 10 Women's Fiction of 2016

Goodreads Best Romance of August

Redbook.com's "20 Books by Women You Must ReadThis Fall"

Popsugar's "21 Fiction Reads to Add to Your Fall Reading List"

Bustle's "11 New Romance Books Perfect for Summer Beach Reading"

Brit+Co's "16 Must-Read Adult Books Out in August"

Sunset magazine's "Bookmark this: Your ultimate summer reading list"

From USA TODAY bestselling author Renée Carlino (*Before We Were Strangers*), a warm and witty novel about a struggling writer who must come to grips with her past, present, and future after she discovers that she's the inspiration for a pseudonymously published bestselling novel.

When a bestselling debut novel from mysterious author J. Colby becomes the literary event of the year, Emiline reads it reluctantly. As an adjunct writing instructor at UC San Diego with her own stalled literary career and a bumpy long-term relationship, Emiline isn't thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of a young and gifted writer.

Yet from the very first page, Emiline is entranced by the story of Emerson and Jackson, two childhood best friends who fall in love and dream of a better life beyond the long dirt road that winds through their impoverished town in rural Ohio.

That's because the novel is patterned on Emiline's own dark and desperate childhood, which means that "J. Colby" must be Jase: the best friend and first love she hasn't seen in over a decade. Far from being flattered that he wrote the novel from her perspective, Emiline is furious that he co-opted her painful past and took some dramatic creative liberties with the ending.

The only way she can put her mind at ease is to find and confront "J. Colby," but is she prepared to learn the truth behind the fiction?

Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #39376 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 2016-08-09

- Released on: 2016-08-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x .90" w x 5.31" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages

Download Swear on This Life: A Novel ...pdf

Read Online Swear on This Life: A Novel ...pdf

Download and Read Free Online Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino

Editorial Review

Review **Praise for** *Swear on This Life*:

"*Swear on This Life* is Renée Carlino at her finest. Raw, real and gripping; I read it in one sitting." (Colleen Hoover, #1 New York Times bestselling author of It Ends With Us)

"This bestselling author knows how to deliver a literary punch, and *Swear on this Life* is her strongest yet." (*Redbook.com*)

"Mysterious and compelling, Swear on this Life is the epic love story your summer needs." (Bustle)

"Carlino fans will love this one, and so will readers who have not yet made her acquaintance. The tale is engaging and paced to keep the pages turning long after the lights should be out." (*Kirkus Reviews*)

"[Readers] will find themselves simply smitten by both the novel in front of them and the story within the story. Romance readers and women's fiction fans should snap up this charming love story." (*Booklist*)

"Romance fans will find this heartfelt story of resilience and first love hard to put down." (Library Journal)

"Mesmerizing. A story of love and redemption, Renee Carlino's novel is a perfect reason for staying up too late to read." (*Shelf Awareness*)

"Holy schnikes, this book...I love the juxtaposition of the story within a story, and I'm addicted to Emi and Jase's ill-fated love." (*Heroes and Heartbreakers*)

"Easily one of the very <u>best reading experiences</u> I've had all year. I absolutely **loved** every word and highly recommend it to *everyone*!" (*Aestas Book Blog*)

"I know we're only a little more than halfway through 2016 but I'm proclaiming *Swear on This Life* to be a Top Pick of the Year. It has to be, thanks to the incredible storytelling ability of Renee Carlino." (*Harlequin Junkie (Top Pick)*)

"The single most *intoxicating* reading experience I've ever had." (Angie & Jessica's Dreamy Reads (#1 Favorite Read of 2016))

"Renée Carlino is an author whose stories always make the heart grow tenfold, but with this book she brought mine to the point of bursting...[I] cannot recommend it highly enough to anyone seeking an exquisitely-written second-chance romance that will leave you lost in thought for days to come." (*Natasha is a Book Junkie*)

"A beautifully-written second-chance romance that stays with you long after you're done." (*Vilma's Book Blog, 5 stars*)

"Carlino's writing will transport you." (Book Baristas, 4.5 coffee cups)

"Renee Carlino continues to astound me with her unforgettable and unique stories that touch readers' hearts, and I am a FOREVER fan." (*Shh Mom's Reading*)

"Compelling and unique...If you enjoy second chance romances, emotional reads, and books by Taylor Jenkins Reid, Colleen Hoover (and Renee Carlino!) don't miss *Swear on This Life*." (*The Reading Date*)

About the Author

Renée Carlino is a screenwriter and bestselling author of *Sweet Thing, Nowhere but Here, After the Rain, Before We Were Strangers,* and *Swear on This Life.* She grew up in Southern California and lives in the San Diego area with her husband, two sons, and their sweet dog, June. To learn more, visit ReneeCarlino.com.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Swear on This Life

1. He Found Me

In class we say That's too on the nose when someone has written a story or a scene where exactly what you think should happen does happen. Or when the events are too perfect or precise. But in real life we have a hard time recognizing serendipitous moments because we're not making the story up as we go along. It's not a lie—it's really happening to us, and we have no idea how it will end. Some of us will look back on our lives and recall events that were a bit too perfect, but until you know the whole story, it's impossible to see the universe at work, or even admit that there is something bigger than us, making sure everything that should happen does happen. If you can surrender to the idea that there might be a plan, instead of reducing every magical moment to a coincidence, then love will find you. He found me.

"WOW, THE SEAGULLS are going crazy. I think there's a tsunami headed this way," I said, staring out the window of my second-story apartment as I watched the marine layer thicken over La Jolla Cove. The fog was moving fast toward my building as the storm clouds swirled in the distance.

Trevor laughed. "Such a San Diegan, overreacting to the weather." He was sitting on the floor with his back against the overpriced leather couch that my aunts Cyndi and Sharon had bought for me when I first moved in.

"Do you think we need sandbags?"

"No, you're being crazy," he said.

"Crazy or cautious?"

"More like neurotic. It's drizzling. California is still technically in a drought."

I noticed that Trevor had put down the short story I had written so he could continue playing Angry Birds on his phone.

"Trevor . . ." I warned.

"Emiline . . ." he teased back without looking up.

I plopped onto his lap and threw my arms around his neck. "I really want you to read it."

"I did. I read it fast."

"What's it about, then?"

"It's about a girl who discovers an ancient formula for cold fusion."

"So you got the gist. But did you actually like it?"

"Emi . . ." He paused. His eyes darted around the room. When he focused on me again, I saw pity in his face. "I liked it a lot," he said.

"But . . . ?"

"I think you should write what you know. You're a good writer, but this"—he held up the paper—"seems a little silly."

"Silly? Why?" I could feel anger boiling over inside of me. Trevor was honest—it was one of the reasons I liked him—but sometimes he was blunt to the point of belittling.

"For one, it's unrealistic."

"It's science fiction," I shot back.

"It needs more character development." He shrugged as if his statement were obvious.

"Trevor, please don't start spewing that Writing 101 crap at me. I get enough of that in the program. I want to practice what I preach. I'm constantly telling the undergrads to forget the rules and write intuitively. Now I'm asking you for realistic feedback, from a reader's point of view, not an instructor's."

"I'm trying to. I thought that's what I was doing. You know how hard it is for me to critique your work. You can't handle it. I didn't connect with the characters, so I wasn't interested in reading the rest of the story. So there. I'm just being honest."

"There's a nice way to be honest," I muttered.

"I still finished the story, and now I'm trying to help you, but you're not being receptive to it. Just tell me what you want me to say."

I crossed my arms over my chest. "Are you serious right now?"

"Yes." He got up abruptly and I toppled over onto the floor.

"You're not a reader. I shouldn't have asked you to read it. Are we actually fighting over this?"

"We're always fighting over this," he said. "And I resent you for saying that I'm not a reader, as if I'm some kind of illiterate Neanderthal."

I had been dating Trevor since our senior year at Berkeley, so I knew exactly where this insecurity was coming from. Seven years—that's a long time in anyone's book. When we met, he was a superstar quarterback destined for the NFL, and I was a bookworm trying to be a wordsmith. He was Tom Brady handsome, and for so long I wondered why he was into me at all. Yet for some reason, in the beginning, it just felt right. We got along beautifully, and our relationship went on like a fairy tale—until he injured his throwing arm in the last game of the season. His professional football career was over before it even began.

He graduated unglamorously and then took an assistant offensive coaching job at San Diego State so he could be closer to me while I worked on my MFA at UC San Diego. It was a major show of dedication, but I couldn't help but feel like a little light had gone off inside of him. He was there in San Diego with me, but sometimes I felt like he wanted to be somewhere else.

The dynamics of any long-term relationship tend to shift in subtle ways, but for us, the change was more abrupt: the moment he got injured, I wasn't the nerdy bookworm infatuated with the star quarterback anymore. And while that never bothered me, it definitely bothered him. Even after he followed me to San Diego, we continued to live separately, and neither one of us pressed the issue, even after I finished my MFA. I told myself I was waiting for him to make the move, to own the decision, but honestly I didn't know if I wanted to move in with him either.

So I kept living with my roommate, Cara, a fellow graduate from the UCSD writing program. She was saving money and teaching a couple of writing courses while she worked on her first novel, and I was trying to do the same. Her longtime boyfriend, Henry, was a surgical resident in New York, and she planned to move at the end of the school year to be with him. I knew I had to figure something out by then, but arguments like this made me think Trevor and I still weren't ready to take the next step.

"I'm going for a run," I said to Trevor as I hurried toward my bedroom to get dressed.

"What? One minute you're worried about a tsunami and the next you want to go for a run? What the hell?" He followed behind me. "Emi, you're going to have to deal with your shit at some point."

"My shit? What about your shit?" I said flatly as I sat on the floor, tying my shoes. I wasn't even looking at him. I got up and tried to move past him to leave the room. I might have been carrying around some baggage, but so was Trevor.

"You have to stop running every time I want to have a bigger conversation with you."

"Later," I said.

"No, now," he said firmly.

I shimmied between his body and my bedroom door and headed toward the kitchen. I busied myself filling up a water bottle.

"We've been together since we were twenty, Emi."

"Jesus, I just asked you to read a fucking story."

```
"It's not about the story."
```

"What is it about, then?" I asked sharply.

He looked frustrated and defeated, which was rare for him. I felt a twinge of guilt and softened.

"Trevor, I don't know if you can tell, but I'm having a hard time with my writing right now. I don't want to be an adjunct creative writing professor forever. Do you get that?"

"You're already a writer, Emi." He seemed sincere, but it wasn't exactly what I wanted to hear.

"All of the other adjuncts have been published in some right, except for me."

"Cara's been published?"

"Twice," I said under my breath.

He hesitated before continuing. "You want to know what I think? It's not a lack of talent, Emi. I just don't think you're writing what you know. Why don't you try writing about yourself? Explore everything you went through when you were a kid?"

I felt myself getting mad again. He knew my childhood was off-limits. "I don't want to talk about it, and besides, you're totally missing the point."

Pulling my hoodie up over my hair, I pushed the door open and jogged down the stairs toward the walkway as the rain pelted my face. I heard Trevor slam the door and jog down the steps behind me. I stopped on the sidewalk, turned, and looked up at him. "What are you doing?"

"I'm going home," he said.

"Great."

"We still need to talk."

I nodded. "Later." He turned on his heel and walked away. I stood for a moment before turning in the opposite direction . . . and then I was running.

I was convinced that the years of therapy my aunt Cyndi and her partner, Sharon, had paid for guaranteed my past would always be just that. Still, I knew in the back of my mind that I hadn't quite dealt with what happened on that long dirt road in Ohio, all those years before I came to live with Cyndi and Sharon. I was guarded and withdrawn, hiding in my relationship with Trevor, in my job as an adjunct professor, in my writing. I knew all of this, but I wasn't sure how to get out of the rut.

After a few miles, I found myself jogging through the parking lot at UCSD, getting thoroughly soaked by massive raindrops.

"Emi!" I heard Cara call from behind me. "Wait up!"

I turned and tightened the strings on my hoodie. "Hurry, I'm getting drenched!"

Cara's straight blonde hair clung to her cheeks, making her look even thinner than she was, as she jogged

toward me. She was the opposite of me—tall, lanky, with light hair and light eyes. I had frizzy, dark hair that flew everywhere, all the time.

We took cover beneath the overhang of the building that housed the creative writing department. "Jeez, Emi, your hair." Cara tried unsuccessfully to pat it down as we walked into the building and shook the water off our clothes. Before I could retort, we caught sight of Professor James as he was locking up his office.

"Professor!" Cara called.

He fit every possible stereotype of a college professor. He was plump, had a thick beard, and always dressed in herringbone or argyle. It was easy to imagine a pipe dangling from the side of his mouth as he talked.

"Do you have those notes on my story for me?" Cara asked.

"As a matter of fact, I do." He shuffled through his distressed leather briefcase and handed Cara a stack of papers. "I've written them in the margins."

Cara craved constructive criticism, but I never found the professor's notes all that helpful, even when I was in the program. After I graduated, I stopped letting him read my work.

As she scanned his marginalia, Professor James looked me over. "What are you working on, Emiline?"

"Just doing scene exercises." I looked away, avoiding his stare.

"I didn't mean with your students. I meant with your personal projects."

I thought idly that the only personal project I wanted to work on was plucking my eyebrows and shaving my legs. "Oh, just some short stories."

"If you ever want some feedback, feel free to drop your work off in my office."

I shifted uncomfortably. "Thanks, I'll consider it."

I glanced at Cara's story and noticed, in bold red writing, at the top of the page, the note BRILLIANT!!

Professor James nodded good-bye and walked away. I turned to Cara. "Two exclamation points? He's never said anything that nice about my work."

Cara frowned. "You know what I think about that, Emi."

"Oh man, here we go."

"I know you don't like to hear it, but it's true. Maybe you're writing about the wrong stuff."

First Trevor, now Cara? "I'm really good at baking-does that mean I should be a baker?"

"You know that's not what I mean," she said.

"I know." I looked down at my thrashed Nikes. "I'm just tired of missing the mark on these short stories.

Trevor basically panned my last one." I looked up and nodded toward the end of the hall. "Come on, let's walk."

We headed toward the staff room to check our mailboxes in silence.

"Maybe you could work on a memoir? Even if you don't finish it, you might figure out what you want to explore in your short fiction. Something that's more personal to you?"

"No, thanks," I said, hoping that my tone conveyed how much I wanted her to drop it. She seemed to have gotten the hint and abruptly changed the subject.

"So, have you heard of this new writer that everyone's talking about? J. Colby?"

I shuffled through papers from my staff mailbox, tossing the junk mail in the trash. "No, who's that?"

"Columbia grad. He's around our age. I can't believe he's already published. Everyone's raving about his novel."

"Good for him," I said bitterly.

"Well, I'm going to read it, see what it's all about," she said as she jammed a sheaf of mail into her tote bag. "It's called All the Roads Between. Don't you love that title?"

"It's all right, I guess. Kind of reminds me of The Bridges of Madison County or something." I turned to her. "Okay, well, I'm done here. I'm gonna head home. You coming with?"

"I'll see you back there—just have to run a few errands. But, hey, you know what we should do since it's so rainy out? We should stay in, get takeout, watch trash TV, and drink until we pass out. That'll cheer you up, right?"

"I guess. Yeah . . . that sounds good. Great, actually. Let's do it." Never mind that I'd told Trevor I'd watch football with him and talk. What I needed was a night in with my best friend. "I'll pick up the wine, you get the Chinese?"

"Deal. See you at home."

THE SUN WAS going down behind the storm clouds as I sat on the window ledge and watched the waves crash against the rocks of the cove. I thought about the story I could write. I knew I had more than pages' worth of material. I had books' worth. I just didn't know if I could ever put the words to paper.

Cara came barreling through the door with a Barnes and Noble bag.

"They have Chinese food at Barnes and Noble now?" I joked.

"Our date is off! I went and got that book we were talking about, read twenty pages in the store, and could not put it down. I have to know what happens. Emiline, I'm in love with this author. I'm going to find him and make him marry me."

"How will Henry feel about that?" I teased.

She threw the bag on the counter and poured herself a glass of wine as I watched her from the window ledge. "He'll understand," she said, giggling.

"So you're bailing on me to read in your room?"

"You know how I am when I get into a book. I can't be stopped."

I understood exactly how she felt-I was the same way. "Fine, you're off the hook. But you owe me."

"Maybe Trevor can swing by with Chinese?"

I laughed. "You're ditching me but you want my boyfriend to bring us food?"

She leaned over the couch and smiled. "Are you mad?"

"No, I'm kidding. Go, read, enjoy!"

An hour later, when Trevor showed up with Chinese, Cara came out, got a plate, and darted back into her room.

"What's her deal?" he asked.

"She's really into her new book."

"Well, I guess it gives us time to talk." We sat down side by side at the breakfast bar, opening cartons silently, waiting for someone to go first.

After a few bites, I put my chopsticks down. "You want to talk? Fine? Why don't you ever tell me you love me?"

"I've told you I love you before," he said, astonished. "And this isn't what I wanted to talk about."

"Well, I do. You have said it but you don't say it often. Don't you feel like you can say it to me?"

"You never say it to me either."

Fair point. "I don't think we even know what it means," I said through a mouthful of sesame chicken.

"Whatever it is you're going through has nothing to do with me," he said. Trevor had this way of shifting responsibility away from himself in every argument. It drove me crazy.

"People are in relationships so they can share things with each other."

"This, coming from you? Emi, after seven years, I still barely know you. I only know what you share with me, which doesn't include anything from your past."

I could feel myself getting defensive. "Since we're playing the blame game, you haven't made much of an effort to get to know me, or to commit to me in any real way."

Trevor's face fell, and I could tell I'd struck a nerve.

"Are you serious? You keep saying you don't know where you'll end up a year from now. What does that even mean? How do you think that makes me feel?"

"Then why are you here?" I asked, simply. I didn't want to sound callous, but I could tell that I'd gone too far. That I was cutting him too deep.

"I moved down here for you, Emi. I built my life around our relationship." He got up from his stool. "We're not kids anymore. I can't deal with your fickle shit and listen to you say I won't make a commitment to you. You're the one who won't commit to me."

I felt all kinds of retorts bubbling inside of me. The only job offer you got was at San Diego State. You didn't move here for me. I'm just the girl you're passing time with. We both know it. Why else would you have a hard time saying I love you? Why else can't I see our future?

I got up and headed toward my room, and Trevor followed right behind me. I turned around to face him and rested my hand on the door for a moment as he waited silently in the doorway. And then I pulled him toward me and kissed him, pressing my body against his. I didn't want to talk anymore.

THE NEXT MORNING, as I drank coffee at the breakfast bar, Cara came skipping by. "What's eating you?" she asked. I didn't know how she could tell these things just by looking at the back of my head, but she could intuit moods like no one else. She poured herself a mug of coffee and leaned against the counter, facing me, waiting for my response.

"Trevor."

"Trevor eating you?" She smirked.

"Not in a good way, pervert." I rolled my eyes.

"Are you guys fighting again? Sounds like you made up last night."

"We're always fighting. Even when we're making up."

She straightened, as if something had just occurred to her, and then rushed off. "I'll be right back. Don't go anywhere."

When she came back into the kitchen, she set a book down in front of me. I glanced at the jacket. All the Roads Between. "You're finished already?" I asked.

"Stayed up all night. I loved it. You said I owed you one for bailing on you last night, and this is my repayment. I think you could use the escape."

"Oh yeah?" I ran my hand over the cover. It was a faint image of two kids holding hands on a road. There was something familiar about the scene, but I couldn't put my finger on it.

"Maybe you can escape your own slightly flawed love story for a bit and get lost in something more satisfying—even if it is fiction."

I sighed and picked it up. Maybe she was right. I grabbed my mug of coffee with my other hand and headed toward my bedroom. "Thanks, Care Bear," I called back.

"Anytime."

Once inside, I plopped down on my bed and cracked open the book to the first page. From the moment I read the second line in the first paragraph, my heart rate tripled. Instantly, I was sweating. By the end of the first page, I was almost hysterical.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michael Auten:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important act, like looking for your favorite book and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your trouble; you can add your knowledge by the reserve entitled Swear on This Life: A Novel. Try to face the book Swear on This Life: A Novel as your friend. It means that it can for being your friend when you feel alone and beside regarding course make you smarter than ever before. Yeah, it is very fortuned for you. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know almost everything by the book. So , we should make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Candice Foushee:

What do you about book? It is not important with you? Or just adding material when you require something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your extra time? Or are you busy person? If you don't have spare time to complete others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. They need to answer that question mainly because just their can do that will. It said that about publication. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is appropriate. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this kind of Swear on This Life: A Novel to read.

Jason Harden:

Swear on This Life: A Novel can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in words, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to get every word into delight arrangement in writing Swear on This Life: A Novel but doesn't forget the main point, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource information that maybe you can be considered one of it. This great information can easily drawn you into brand-new stage of crucial imagining.

Ann Yoho:

Are you kind of occupied person, only have 10 as well as 15 minute in your day to upgrading your mind expertise or thinking skill also analytical thinking? Then you are experiencing problem with the book as compared to can satisfy your limited time to read it because all this time you only find e-book that need more time to be examine. Swear on This Life: A Novel can be your answer as it can be read by an individual who have those short time problems.

Download and Read Online Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino #NKZIGBJYF6M

Read Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino for online ebook

Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino books to read online.

Online Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino ebook PDF download

Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino Doc

Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino Mobipocket

Swear on This Life: A Novel By Renée Carlino EPub