



The Truth of the Matter

Andrew Klavan

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"Never give in."

Ever since he woke up in a terrorist torture chamber--with a year of his life erased from his mind--Charlie West has been on the run. He has one desperate hope of getting his life back: track down the mysterious agent named Waterman. But in fact, reaching Waterman--and recovering the secrets lost in his own memory--will only increase his danger. Because a team of ruthless killers is rapidly closing in on him, determined to stop him from finding the answers. And the truth of the matter is more incredible...and more deadly...than he could ever imagine.

"Action sequences that never let up...wring for every possible drop of nervous sweat."--"Booklist "review of "The Long Way Home"

The Truth of the Matter Details

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From Reader Review *The Truth of the Matter* for online ebook

Calvin Edwards says

I did not like this book very well. But near the end was good, so I rated it two and a half stars.

Josiah says

Andrew Klavan only gets better the deeper we go into the Homelanders series. By the time *The Truth of the Matter* rolls around, the occasional awkward passages in *The Last Thing I Remember* and *The Long Way Home* are nearly gone, replaced by deft, forceful writing almost any author would be proud to create. After saving his girlfriend Beth's life from Mr. Sherman and the terrorist Homelanders at the end of the last book, eighteen-year-old Charlie West vacates the scene just in time to avoid Detective Rose and the police. Charlie now knows for a fact that he didn't murder his old friend Alex Hauser, but he's an escaped convict with no proof of his innocence, and he has to evade the cops until he finds that proof. His best lead is the name Waterman, which an unseen helper whispered to him while Charlie was briefly back in police custody. Charlie's memory of the past year is still lost to him, and he has no recollection of Waterman, but the guy might be his only hope. When Charlie tracks him down in noisy, chaotic New York City, he breathes a small sigh of relief. After months of continuous peril, perhaps Charlie has found sanctuary.

Waterman, a middle-aged man with a light Southern accent, doesn't look surprised when Charlie corners him at the end of a deserted alley. But Charlie is sure surprised when a hidden assistant shoots Charlie on Waterman's command. Upon awakening from the potent tranquilizer shot, Charlie fears that Waterman is as bad as the Islamo-fascist Homelanders. Why else did he react with violence after Charlie approached him in good faith? Waterman and "Dodger Jim" escort Charlie to a bunker deep in the woods before revealing the plan. They aren't corrupt, Waterman insists. In fact, they are on Charlie's side, but his time with the Homelanders means they can't be sure of his allegiance. To find out if Charlie remains loyal to the U.S., they need to inject him with a drug to restore his lost memories. It will be a long and painful process, but if it means getting answers to his biggest questions, Charlie is ready to comply.

Deep into Charlie's brain we go in search of his stolen memories. The gaps gradually fill in between the day he finally worked up the nerve to ask Beth on a date and the moment he woke up bloodied and tied to a chair by the Homelanders. Shocking truths come back to him bit by bit, but regaining everything won't be easy. Midway through the "memory attacks"—intermittent episodes of excruciating pain that knock Charlie out but return a portion of his memory each time—the Homelanders launch a strike on Waterman's bunker. Led by crazed, sadistic Waylon, whom Charlie remembers from when the Homelanders tortured him before, the terrorists attack with guns and bombs, and only Charlie's extraordinary grit preserves him from immediate extinction. He's on the run again, but it's the Homelanders on his heels now, a much more vicious enemy than the law. The Homelanders want to brutalize and then kill him; the cops' goal is to put Charlie back behind bars for the heinous crime they believe he committed. Eluding Waylon and his men would be challenge enough if Charlie were in peak condition, but the memory attacks won't stop just because they're inconvenient, and every time he's racked with one, Charlie loses twenty minutes of consciousness. His skill and ingenuity can't overcome that deficit.

Charlie has been caught and managed to escape before. All he needs is a tiny opening in order to slip through Waylon's grasp, and the police unwittingly provide it. Starving and dehydrated, Charlie dashes into the

woods alone, chased by powerful people with incentive to put all their resources into stopping him. The pursuit through the wilderness is electric, but the best part comes when Charlie stumbles upon a small house he can hide in and hope the police and Homelanders won't find him. Can he convince the people living here that he isn't the villain the media portray him to be, that he was convicted and sent to prison because he loved his country enough to make such a sacrifice? Even if Charlie finds sympathetic company, the Homelanders won't relent even if the police call off the manhunt. Charlie will have to prove his heroic mettle yet again...but can he and his allies escape the vengeance of the Homelanders without loss of innocent life?

The Truth of the Matter is fast-paced but thoughtful. Andrew Klavan respects Western values of freedom, justice, and individuality, and the Homelanders series reinforces those values. In one of Charlie's restored memories, he had been grappling with a decision that would do him great harm but potentially save many lives, and Charlie isn't sure he's willing to opt in. He asks Sensei Mike, his karate teacher, for advice, though only in vague terms because the matter is top secret. Limited as Sensei Mike's knowledge of the situation is, his response is pure gold. "Life's funny...You only get one and you don't want to throw it away. But you can't really live it at all unless you're willing to give it up for the things you love. If you're not at least *willing* to die for something—something that really matters—in the end you die for nothing." Those words are later echoed by Margaret, who plays a pivotal role in this book. She has experienced tragedy, and has a sense of what's important. "A broken heart is not the worst thing in the world. And neither, when it comes to that, is death. You can't get through a good, strong life without coming upon both of them one way or another, without looking them both straight in the eye. But if I could go back in time and protect myself from my broken heart by living my life in fear, by saying yes to every bully and slave driver who came along, by scuttling away from my duty and from my country and from the things I love and believe in, I wouldn't do it". Fear is a potent persuader. We fear life going wrong, things happening we can't take back that might haunt us for the rest of our days, so we hesitate to act boldly. Erring on the side of safety keeps us out of minefields that might detonate our future before we can enjoy it, but having safety as our primary objective only delays the loss of that future. You'll die eventually, and if you never stood for anything more important than safety, you'll have lived and died to no effect. That's the worst death, the kind which ends a life that meant nothing. There's no foolproof shield against disaster, but you can focus on what truly matters and not shy from your defining moment when it arrives. Live or die, free man or prisoner, Charlie won't give up until his last option is exhausted.

This third Homelanders novel might be my favorite so far. The writing is crisp and energetic, the characters compelling and realistic. I love Margaret and Larry (especially Larry), who are no strangers to heartache and don't shrink away from their part in Charlie's saga, though the decisions they make are anything but easy. I hope we see them in *The Final Hour*. Trouble is still brewing for Charlie, but he has a clearer picture of what he's up against and who is on his side, and the end of his nightmare is near, one way or another. His friends have repeatedly put themselves on the line for him, unwavering in their faith that he's a good person despite the legal system's guilty verdict, and that bodes well for Charlie. We shall soon find out if it's enough.

Jeremiah says

This was awesome. It's my favorite book in the series so far. I recommend them.

Jerry says

Very exciting! Can't wait to read the conclusion!

serena482* says

This.....Book.....is WAY.....better.....than.....The Last Thing I Remember. Like WHAT!!!! How is that even possible?????? But it is, and it's true!! I LOVED this book!! It is completely and unbelievably awesome!! And Charlie is like, the awesome-st person ever!!! I NEED THE LAST BOOK NOW!!!!!!!!!! I have a feeling this whole review is going to be about how I loved this book. The Truth of the Matter is like my favorite book of all books!! Well it is tied for first! :) :) But I'm serious everyone NEEDS to read this series. It is like one of the most amazing series ever. Is there anything I did not like. NO. Was I ever bored. NO. At least not that I remember. Was this book totally and completely awesome through and through. YES!!! Is Charlie awesome. YES!! I know, I know, this review is not good, and is all about how much I love the book. But how can I help it? THIS BOOK IS AMAZING!!! Sorry..... But seriously you all should read this book, and read the other books in the series first. I recommend it to ages 13-up maybe 12-up, I duno. There are terrorists and bad guys, and some killing. Intense scenes. Might be scary for younger kids. So ya, after that amazing review let me just tell you guys that, you seriously need to read this book. :) :) :D

Emma Ksiazak says

The Truth of the Matter is about a young man, Charlie West trying to stop the mysterious terrorist group called the Homelander, and find out what happened to his memories. Desperate for answers, he finds a man who he has heard could help him, and he goes by the name of Waterman. Waterman begins to help Charlie get his memories back, but before he can help him anymore, he is killed and Charlie once again is left to fend for himself. Charlie eventually finds himself running for his life again, and while on the run he makes a revelation which could change his life forever.

After reading this book, I noticed one of the main themes of the book is how Charlie is regarded as a national enemy, but his friends and girlfriend know the truth that he is not a terrorist, but was framed by someone. This reminds me of the I am Number Four series, written by Pittacus Lore, where the protagonist John Smith is regarded as a national enemy, but in reality he is not only trying to save Earth but his planet he comes from, Lorien. Most of the world hates him, except for his friends and girlfriend, just like I am Number Four. I think one of the main themes in both of these texts would be to be honest, and that the ones that you love will know you are innocent, and that even if the world hates you there are at least some people who cares for you. This is a strong message and I feel like we should try to influence this message, that there will always be somebody out there for you, no matter what.

m a r y l i z says

WOW SO THAT HAPPENED.

All you need to know about this book is that it will 1) dramatically speed up your heart rate, 2) make you freak out for the character's life at least 1,734 times, and 3) cause you to get NOTHING DONE BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

Ahem. Yes. I need book four right now, please. xD

4 stars!

Courtney Vail says

Charlie West is a feisty protagonist, who's missing a year of his life and running from mystery killers--a group of terrorists he just escaped from. He can't recall what's happened in the last year, so he's on a hunt to fill in the memory gap. When he tracks down the only clue he can remember, a guy named Waterman, he begins to get some answers, but the closer he gets to uncovering the truth, the more danger he finds himself in. And when Waterman dies with questions still unanswered, he's left in a sea of black all alone, trying his best to get out alive.

This book is categorized and sold as Christian, and I don't know how the others in the series are, but this one, **THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER**, could be enjoyed by readers of any or no faith. This novel really only refers to his belief in God but doesn't preach at readers or speak any Christianese at all. It is clean, but not to the point of being annoying, as the grit and danger keep it exciting. And even though this is YA as well, any reader who loves suspense would enjoy this. It's a good example of a cross-over type.

I got this book from Booksneeze, unaware that it was a third installment in a series, but that didn't bother me in the least.

The storyline was very easy to follow for a new reader, gripping, suspenseful and action-packed. There is a strong possibility this novel could be boring for those who've read the previous, since I as a new reader was riveted to discover the chunks of his missing past, whereas those familiar would already know them, making the reveals less impacting.

The only thing I didn't like was the narrative and dialogue were very simplistic, and I don't think you should ever dumb things down for teens. I think if the author hadn't skimmed in this area, his novel would have had even more cross-over appeal. Other than that, it was most enjoyable.

So, if you're looking for a good YA suspense novel, Christian or not, check this one out.

Melanie Kilsby says

AMAZING, as always. Love the ending and of course, can't wait to read the final book :D

Mikayla says

More tension. More memory's. More running. This kept me flipping the pages so fast. A few things about character got a little repetitive. Like I'm pretty sure he just copy and pasted the description of some people. But, other than that we were good. It had a strangely satisfying ending. But I'm looking forward to reading book four!

Lauren says

BEST HOMELANDER BOOK SO FAR! Explained sooo much!! Also really appreciated how much more it spoke of God and how God was Charlie's strength. love love love!

JonathanT says

UGH. I have been shattered again. In the best sort of way.

Book three- the truth of the matter. This is where Charlie finds out everything. Everything about his past, everything about the terrorists, everything about the year he forgot.

I LOVE THIS ONE. I love it so, so much. It's intense and breathtaking and raw and it puts Charlie in tough situations.

I really appreciate how Klavan doesn't glamorize violence (and action). It's not some big, exciting thing that every teenage guy should long for. Instead, it's hard. It's painful. It's scary. Charlie just wants to go back to his normal, everyday life.

That being said, the body count does increase a bit in this one. It's definitely the most violent of the series so far. Never graphic, but still there. For example, terrorists threaten Charlie with torture, but they never actually get a chance to carry out their threat. (the police show up and a gunfight ensues)

Charlie's internal conflict wasn't focused on as much in this one. It's more about how he has to evade both the terrorists and the police while getting his memories back and figuring out who he can trust.

Klavan's books do have a tendency to get off to shaky starts that leave me disoriented. At the end of book two, Charlie sets off to find Waterman, the man who knows the secrets to his past. As book three opens, we find out that Charlie has found Waterman- but Klavan doesn't really tell us how. It feels kinda like a cop-out.

The flashbacks in this are frequent, and some of them are handled awkwardly. But they were necessary to the plot, so I can overlook it.

ALSO. THE ENDING. Where Klavan's beginnings might sag a little, the endings are incredibly intense. I won't say much so as not to spoil anything, but I love this ending to pieces. Make sure you have book 4 ready before you finish this one.

And the themes in this are done brilliantly, especially at the ending. If you think you can get past the clunky writing style, then go read this series. You won't regret it. (13+)

Hannah K says

Wow, things really get going in this book. It may be the best of the 3 so far. I love all the action and

suspense, even though I'm grimacing and groaning half the time as I feel Charlie's pain. :D I love when a book does that to me, when I have to wince and look away, afraid to go on because I'm living the story along with the hero.

On a bit of a sidenote, I was reading this at the lake where my family was boating, and the sailboat went over and my two little sisters were in the water in the middle of the huge lake and the boat was drifting away and we couldn't help them. As I dropped my book and ran through the woods along the shore to try to get to them, I was thinking about all Charlie's adventures like this: "I'm so glad Charlie can live through all that drama and I can read it in a book, cause I sure wouldn't want all that to happen to me! It's great in a book but in real life it's terrifying!"

My sisters were okay, by the way. And the suspense ended there. For Charlie, it continues... :D

Abigail says

It's absolutely impossible to stop reading these books!

Stacy says

More like 3.5 stars. This was my least favorite of the series so far. Not because it wasn't a quick and interesting read, but I just found it kind of frustrating. Plus, this was the first time I really felt the "young adult" aspect, which I never really dwelled upon before. All of the missing time is explained, but at least for me, there weren't really many surprises there. I would have rather gotten all that out at once at the start of the book and then moved on with the story, but instead the flashbacks were interspersed all throughout the story, which I found really broke the overall flow.

****Caution - spoiler alert****

I was also really disappointed when Charlie had the opportunity to take down the super bad guy, but didn't do it because it would have been in "cold blood" - except that the guy had just killed a special agent and was planning on killing thousands more. Again, probably just a young adult thing - not wanting an 18 year old to kill someone that way (but it's not like there isn't plenty of other killing going on). It just felt a bit artificial to extend out the chase longer.

However, even with all of that, I can't wait to read the last one of the series.
