

A TOTALLY ADDICTIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER WITH A SHOCKING TWIST

HE'S LYING ABOUT EVERYTHING



ROBIN MAHLE



HE'S LYING ABOUT EVERYTHING

A totally addictive psychological thriller with a shocking twist

ROBIN MAHLE

Joffe Books, London

www.joffebooks.com

First published in Great Britain in 2025

© Robin Mahle 2025

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, organizations, places and events are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental. The spelling used is American English except where fidelity to the author's rendering of accent or dialect supersedes this. The right of Robin Mahle to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner for the purpose of training artificial intelligence technologies or systems. In accordance with Article 4(3) of the Digital Single Market Directive 2019/790, Joffe Books expressly reserves this work from the text and data mining exception.

We love to hear from our readers! Please email any feedback you have to:
feedback@joffebooks.com

Cover art by Nick Castle

ISBN: 978-1-80573-136-8

CONTENTS

[Love Free Bestselling Fiction?](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[Chapter 16](#)

[Chapter 17](#)

[Chapter 18](#)

[Chapter 19](#)

[Chapter 20](#)

[Chapter 21](#)

[Chapter 22](#)

[Chapter 23](#)

[Chapter 24](#)

[Chapter 25](#)

[Chapter 26](#)

[Chapter 27](#)

[Chapter 28](#)

[Chapter 29](#)

[Chapter 30](#)

[Chapter 31](#)

[Chapter 32](#)

[Chapter 33](#)

[Chapter 34](#)

[Chapter 35](#)

[Chapter 36](#)

[Chapter 37](#)

[Chapter 38](#)

[Chapter 39](#)

[Chapter 40](#)

[Chapter 41](#)

[Chapter 42](#)

[Chapter 43](#)

[Chapter 44](#)

[Chapter 45](#)

[Chapter 46](#)

[Chapter 47](#)

[Chapter 48](#)

[Chapter 49](#)

[Chapter 50](#)

[Chapter 51](#)

[Chapter 52](#)

[Chapter 53](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Discover More Books by Robin Mahle](#)

[Also by Robin Mahle](#)

[The Joffe Books Story](#)

Love Free Bestselling Fiction?

GET BESTSELLING BOOKS **FREE** EVERY WEEK



Thank you for choosing this book.

Join our mailing list and get FREE Kindle books from our bestselling authors every week!

www.joffebooks.com/freebooks

To my husband.

Thank you for your support, dedication, and for having no part in this story's inspiration.

Prologue

Thank you for choosing this book. Join our mailing list and get FREE Kindle books from our bestselling authors every week!

www.joffebooks.com/freebooks



So this is how it ends — water pressing against my lungs, the domed corrugated ceiling above me rippling as though it, too, is drowning. I’ve barely started my life, and now it’s over. My mind flashes to the countless hours I’ve spent in this pool, training, exhausting myself. Forgoing parties, dances, homecoming games. My entire collegiate career hinged on my success in this pool.

Now, it’s where I die.

It’s strange, the clarity that comes in these final moments. Every sound, splash, and muffled cry distorts into a dull echo. It’s as if the world is underwater. For me, I suppose it is.

When I left here only hours ago, after an argument with a man I loved, I didn’t expect to return so soon. Tomorrow is the season’s most important swim meet, and I intended to return first thing in the morning. But I had to know. I had to get to the truth. That’s how I ended up here.

Talk about regrets.

Returning to the building at such a late hour, I sensed something was off. That feeling you get when the tiny voice in your head tells you to run — I should’ve listened. Instead, I walked inside. The pool shimmered amid the hazy green light. The rest of the building was dark. The familiar chlorinated scent surrounded me as it always had. I swear I must have chlorine in my blood. But that won’t save me now.

This place is my second home.

After the revelations came the push. Panic overtook reason, and the water swallowed me whole. Did I struggle? Of course. But it wasn’t enough.

As an expert swimmer, I would've expected more from myself . . . fought harder, kicked and thrashed, clawing my way to the surface. Instead, the surface slipped farther and farther away, and my strength right along with it.

The cold surprised me the most. Not just in the water, but a deeper, penetrating chill, as though something — someone — wanted this.

With what little consciousness I have left, I see the blurry silhouette looming above the water's surface. Watching. Waiting.

An accident, they'll call it. A tragic mistake. She trained for too long, too hard. Her body exhausted itself, they'll say. But the truth is sinking with me.

Chapter 1

Derek

The mild burning sensation in my nose is the chlorine. Immediately recognizable, it hits me first. As I draw closer, my footsteps echo inside the vast building that encloses the pool. Above me, fading rays of light scatter through misty windows.

Bleachers flank three sides of the pool. I walk past them, my hands tucked into my pants pockets. I don't want to be here to say the things that must be said — to say them to her.

In front of me are the diving boards, each one higher than the last. This isn't just any pool — it's one of the best Olympic-sized pools in all of New England, funded by obscene amounts of money from the university's annual endowments.

The tiled edge shimmers blue and green as I peer into the water at an indistinct figure moving beneath the surface. Her movements are graceful and hypnotic. As the figure rises to the top, my heart skips, and a smile spreads across my face. "Nicole," I call out to her, my voice echoing off the masonry block walls.

She turns toward me with a seductive grin. Water drips down her face. Her hair, wet and slicked back, highlights her sharp cheekbones and firm jawline. Nicole paddles toward the steps, and as I reach for her towel, she climbs out. Water clings to her flawless figure, clad in a one-piece swimsuit emblazoned with the school's emblem.

"What are you doing here?" she asks.

I wrap the towel around her shoulders and peer into her brown, deep-set almond eyes. Their color matches her skin. "I finished grading papers and thought I'd stop in to see how you were doing. Tomorrow's a big day." As a professor, I've learned that beginning on a positive note before introducing a negative one yields the most effective results.

She blots the water from her face. The hairs on her arms rise in the cool air, and I try not to stare at her breasts as her suit outlines them. "It is a big

day. If I win, I'll draw the eyes of Olympic scouts. I can't afford to screw this up."

"You won't," I assure her before returning my hands to my pockets. "Listen, uh, I won't be able to make it—"

"What?" Nicole lowers her towel. "You're not coming to the most important swim meet of the season? Why?"

I scratch my eyebrow with my middle finger, a familiar gesture when I'm faced with saying things I don't want to say. "Well, not only could it draw attention, but I also happen to have a family thing going on."

A frown replaces her previous smile. "Of course you do." She scoffs. "Damn it, Derek, why do you always do this? How many times have you promised you'd end things and yet here you are, letting me down once again. I'm sick of it, you know that?"

I raise my hands to calm her as her voice echoes around me. I can't risk anyone overhearing our conversation, though I'm uncertain whether anyone else is here. The risk is too great. My job, my family. "Nicky, please, you know how hard this has been for me, but Evelyn and I share a child."

"Oh, I'm perfectly aware." She tosses the towel onto the chair and reaches for her T-shirt, pulling it over her wet swimsuit. "I'm also well aware that I'm not the only one."

"Excuse me? Look, whatever you've heard . . ."

"Really?" she cuts in, hands on her hips. "You know what? You can't make it tomorrow, Derek, that's fine. I don't need you there. In fact, I don't need you at all."

Her face heats with anger. Only a moment ago her eyes held affection, but now I see only contempt. "You must think I'm stupid. You think I don't know I'm not your only sidepiece? You think we don't talk to each other?" She stops, her expression changing as her mouth tilts into a calculating grin. "I'll bet Evelyn would like to know about your extracurricular activities. I'd probably be doing her a favor."

The warning echoes in my ears, igniting a fire in my gut. Whatever my purpose was on arrival has now morphed into self-preservation. I take her

shoulders, my fingers digging into her soft skin. “Don’t threaten me, Nicky. I don’t respond well to threats.”

The sound of wheels on concrete echoes in the distance. Someone’s coming. The janitor with his cleaning cart? Maybe. I can’t afford for anyone to see me here — not with her.

I release my grip, drawing in a calming breath. “Look, Nicky, it doesn’t have to be this way, all right?”

She drapes the towel around her neck. “They warned me about you. I should’ve listened. Get the hell away from me. I don’t ever want to see you again.”

It takes me a second to register it all. But there’s nothing left to say. Hearing that cart approach, I turn to leave. “Just keep your mouth shut, Nicky, and neither one of us will have to face the consequences.”

I slip out the side exit, unseen. Now, to head home to my family. Home to my wife and child, who’ve done nothing to deserve this. I love them, and I won’t let anyone destroy my life.

I arrive just in time for dinner. Evelyn will have made something nice for us. She always does. And as I open the door, the waft of roasted chicken brings me comfort and relief. It returns me to a sense of normalcy. I can ignore that I’ve betrayed the beautiful woman who now stands at the stove, her brunette hair pulled back in a low bun, strands brushing against her cheeks. Her statuesque figure is no longer flawless but striking in a way that reminds me she is a mother. Warm and soft. Kind and gentle.

“Just in time, honey,” she says, smiling at me. “Dinner will be ready in ten minutes.”

I slip my arm around her waist, breathing in her soft vanilla fragrance. “Perfect.” I kiss her cheek. “Just like you, Evie. Perfect.”

Chapter 2

Evelyn

A thin blade of light slices under the guest bedroom door, the only sign of life in a house that seems to shrink around me. Derek's snoring — relentless and guttural — drove me from our bed an hour ago, but it isn't the snoring that rattles me now.

I strain to hear his footfalls. It's late, almost midnight. What's he doing up? Is he coming in here? A thoughtful gesture to check on me, or maybe he has something more romantic in mind? My optimism is relentless.

The windows in here are draped by heavy curtains, sealing me in this darkness. That thin strip of light under the door is my lifeline.

I outstretch my hand, touching the nightstand in search of my phone. Grabbing hold of it, the screen lights up much too brightly. I squint to see the time, and when it comes into focus, my guess is close. It's 12:15 in the morning.

A shadow crosses under the door. He's tiptoeing past our son's room now. The stairs creak. He's descending them. My hope for a passionate encounter dwindles. Does he want a glass of water? A bite of food?

Yet when I hear the rumble of the garage door opening and the slight vibration of a car's engine, it hits me . . . he's leaving.

Derek and I have been married for eight years. We share a four-year-old son, Ben. We live in the most beautiful Cape Cod home in one of the best neighborhoods in Medford, Connecticut. He's a professor at Medford University — with tenure, I might add.

What can I say about Derek other than he's brilliant? It was obvious from the moment we met in college. He's witty and passionate about his work. I'm still not sure why he chose me when he could've had any woman. These days, I try not to pull at that thread. I've always considered myself to be an attractive woman. I'm mindful of my appearance and do my best to stay in shape, though I could probably do more. But my husband? He's the Superman of English professors. No doubt he could pull off the blue tights if

necessary. Tall, broad shoulders. Perfect wavy black hair. Admired by all who encounter him. And I mean — all.

The thing is, I love my husband, and he loves me. That is something on which neither of us wavers. No matter what. On the outside, we have the perfect life. I've worked tirelessly to render our impeccable image.

But don't look at it too closely — the cracks are beginning to show.

* * *

At first, the thumping noise seems nothing more than a figment of my subconscious, a muffled echo escaping my dreams. Construction workers — that's what it must be. Their hammers and drills banging away as they remodel my neighbor's house.

But when a slight touch grazes my cheek, soft and feather-light, the distant thumping isn't so far away anymore. The sensation yanks me into the waking world, and my eyes snap open. "Ben," I whisper into the semi-darkness, recognizing the tiny hand still lying against my face.

The soft glow of dawn filters through the gaps in the drawn curtains. I turn my head to look at him. "What is it, sweetheart?"

"The noise," he replies, standing next to the bed. "Someone's banging downstairs, and it woke me up."

I look around, forgetting for a moment that I'm in the guest room. "Did you wake up Daddy?" As my focus on him grows clearer, Ben shakes his head with resolve.

I rise onto my elbows, then toss my legs to the floor as Ben backs up. "It's probably the people fixing Mrs. Johnson's house." I get to my feet. "I'll go see."

The first thing I notice is the cold — like the heat's been turned down. I grab my robe at the end of the bed and pull it around me. "You want to come with me to check?"

"Okay. I'll be brave."

I pull him close. "That's my boy."

As we enter the hall, I glance down to the end. My bedroom door is closed. The noise didn't seem to awaken Derek. Lucky him. As we reach the

top landing, I hear the thumping again and immediately recognize it. This isn't the sound of hammers and drills. Someone's at the door. It's much too early for that, so now I'm on high alert. I turn to Ben. "Sweetheart, why don't you go back to your bedroom, and I'll see what's going on? Then I'll make you a special breakfast. Would you like that?"

"Yeah. Can it be pancakes?"

"Sure." I pat his shoulder. "Now, go on." I wait a moment until he disappears into his room. I glance again at our bedroom door, wondering if I should get Derek up. But when the knock sounds again, there's no time. Whoever's there is impatient. And at this time of morning, I don't think they're here to sell me solar panels.

Securing my robe around my waist, I head downstairs, smoothing my hair in the process. God knows what I look like right now. As I reach the foyer and peer into the small mirror next to the door, I shudder at my appearance.

"Just a minute," I call out, peeking through the security lens. *What the hell?* I pull back, quickly unlocking the door to open it.

A man in a suit, flanked by two uniformed police officers, stands on the other side. "Mrs. Evelyn Moore?"

"Yes. Is something wrong?" Is this about my parents? Derek's parents, or maybe his sister? A million scenarios run through my mind as I stare at this man presenting a badge.

"I'm Detective Bartz. Is your husband, Derek Moore, at home?"

One thing I haven't mentioned is that I was once a lawyer, having given it up after the birth of my son. Not a defense attorney — it seems that might come in handy right now — but I know my way around situations like this.

"Yes, but he's still asleep. May I ask what this is about?"

"Do you know a Miss Nicole Peterson, ma'am?"

My pulse rises, and I become acutely aware of my heart beating in my chest. The name doesn't ring a bell, but she's most likely a student in one of Derek's classes. Has she lodged a complaint against him? That would hardly

explain the early morning pounding on my door. “No, I can’t say I recognize the name. What does this have to do with my husband, Detective?”

He pockets his badge and tilts his head. “Well, ma’am, she’s dead, and we think your husband was closely acquainted with her.”

“Dead?” I repeat the word because it suddenly sounds foreign to me.

“Yes, ma’am.” The detective peers over my shoulder, and I instinctively shift my weight so he can’t see inside our home. “Is your husband available? I’d like to ask him some questions.”

Chapter 3

I envision her wide-open eyes staring into the pool's depths. A terrified expression, frozen on her face forever. A bubble rising to the surface; the last vestige of air escaping her lungs. My mind's eye conjures these images as the police talk to my husband. Meanwhile, I hover in front of my coffee maker, waiting for it brew.

According to Detective Bartz, Nicole Peterson was a beautiful girl. Strong. Athletic. His description is designed to evoke guilt, no doubt. She was the top swimmer on the university's team, having led them to a national title last year. Set to graduate this spring, but that won't be happening now.

The coffee's done, and I pour myself a cup. Taking a sip, I watch them in our kitchen nook, sitting on the oversized chairs. Derek and I don't eat breakfast together much anymore, so I decorated that spot with a couple of comfy chairs and a small table. The two armed officers loom over them like hired muscle.

"Can I get anyone a cup of coffee?" I cut in, raising my mug. "I just made a fresh pot."

Bartz turns his attention toward me. "Yeah, sure. That sounds great. Black, please. One sugar. Appreciate it."

"Okay then. Any other takers?" I ask, glancing at the officers, who both shake their heads. I prepare his coffee and walk over, setting it down on the table. "Here you go."

"Thank you, Mrs. Moore," he says, taking a sip. "Perfect." Bartz pulls out a recorder from his suit jacket. "You don't mind, do you, Mr. Moore?"

"No, sir," Derek says.

Normally, I'd object to the use of a recording device, but it's best I keep my mouth shut. If I push this detective, he'll insist Derek go into the station to make an official statement. That would make things far more difficult. At least this way, I can attempt to control the narrative if this thing starts to tilt. Though, we may already be capsizing.

“I understand you and Miss Peterson were in a relationship,” Bartz says, tossing a glance my way as if I’m somehow still unaware. It’s safe to say I’ve connected the dots.

“Yes, sir. That’s correct, but it had recently ended,” Derek glances at me.

“Is that so?” Bartz jots down something in his tiny notepad. “And when did you last see Miss Peterson?”

“Friday evening,” Derek says. “She was in the pool — training.”

“So, had it ended at that point, Mr. Moore, or before then?” Bartz raises his palms. “I’m trying to get a sense for why, if you’d ended things with Miss Peterson, you would’ve seen her only hours before we suspect she drowned.”

“To be honest, I’d gone there to tell her it was over.” Derek glances at me again. “Then I went home and had dinner with my family.”

“I stay home with our son, Detective Bartz,” I interrupt, assuming Derek’s look was a silent request for a lifeline. “So I know when Derek arrived because I had just about finished making dinner. He got home around six thirty.”

“So you ended your relationship with Miss Peterson, and then she drowned.” Bartz tugs on his jacket lapels as if punctuating the irony. “And did you leave your home again after that, Mr. Moore?”

“He didn’t.” I jump in before Derek can answer. “We stayed in the rest of the evening. Derek bathed Ben and put him to bed while I caught up on some reading. We went to bed around ten o’clock.” I’m keeping quiet about hearing Derek leave the house in the middle of the night.

I’m emboldened enough to attempt to put an end to this — a hint of the confidence I once possessed returning to me. Bartz seems to have no other reason for being here than the fact Derek and this girl, Nicole, had a relationship.

“Please forgive me, Detective, but do you have specific evidence you’d like to discuss with Derek? Because it’s starting to feel a little like a fishing expedition right now.”

Bartz raises the corner of his mouth in a half-smile. “Are you his lawyer, Mrs. Moore?”

“No, sir, but I am a lawyer.”

He snickers. “Of course you are.” The detective licks his lips, resting his elbows on his knees. “Look, Mr. and Mrs. Moore, I’m just trying to figure out how an experienced swimmer, a star swimmer, such as Miss Peterson, managed to drown in the university’s pool. She didn’t suffer an external injury. That much we know. And given what we’ve learned about Professor Moore, well, it seems he gets around.”

“Excuse me, Detective,” Derek cuts in. “Is that necessary? You’re in my home with my family.”

Bartz raises his hands. “You’re right, Professor. My apologies. But you’ll forgive me for wanting to find out exactly what happened to Nicole Peterson. You two had a thing for a while, so, of course, it makes sense for us to come speak to you. To get your side of the story.”

“And unless you have evidence to suggest my husband played a part in a death that could very well have been accidental, then I don’t think it’s necessary to continue this conversation.” Now I worry I’ve pushed too far, but there’s no turning back. “People make mistakes, Detective. Derek isn’t perfect, and neither am I. I imagine you aren’t, either. So, if there’s nothing else . . .”

“No. Nothing else. We’ll be on our way.” He stands and offers Derek his card. “If you do happen to think of anything . . . you or your wife . . . feel free to contact me.”

As Derek shows them out, my mind claws through the timeline, frantic to pin down the details of Friday night, but the specifics slip through my grasp. I can’t recall the precise time Derek came home or when we finally went to bed. Everything I’d said to that detective was a best guess. The only thing I *do* remember — clear and unshakable — is him leaving the house at 12:15 on Saturday morning. When did he return? I have no idea. A knot twists my gut at the implications. Could he have had something to do with that girl’s death? My hand trembles as I lift the coffee cup, and I blink back the sting of tears.

A soft thud reverberates through the house as the front door closes. They're gone, but the relief is fleeting. This isn't over. Derek shuffles into the kitchen, his footsteps dragging like dead weight. His head hangs low, hands buried deep in the pockets of his sweatpants, but when his eyes finally rise to meet mine, the silence between us screams at me.

"I'm sorry you had to find out this way," he says, his voice a ghost of itself.

The lack of remorse in his words astounds me. "*That's* what you're sorry for? If I were you, I'd be sorry for the fact that a young woman is dead."

"Of course I'm sorry." He walks toward me, arms open, ready to pull me into an embrace.

"Don't," I whisper, flinching at his touch.

He takes a step back, swallowing hard. "I didn't do this, Evie. Please believe me. Whatever happened to Nicole had nothing to do with me. I love you, and I love our family."

I take in a deep breath, letting his words settle around me — words I've heard before. Finally, I put down my mug and leave the kitchen, brushing past him without another glance.

After this morning, everything will change. Regardless of whether this girl's death was an accident, the affair will come out. There's no denying that. Our standing at the school will come into question. My charity work. The volunteering I do when Ben is at preschool. I've prided myself on helping our community.

Meanwhile, Derek helps himself to whatever and whoever he wants. A fact I've conveniently ignored because those cracks I mentioned earlier? I've done my best to plaster over them.

This life of respect and admiration, of dinner parties with meaningful discussions about important things, is over. A girl is dead.

Do I blame Nicole Peterson for screwing my husband? Well, as the saying goes, it takes two to tango. But no, I don't blame her, especially now. Derek can be very persuasive.