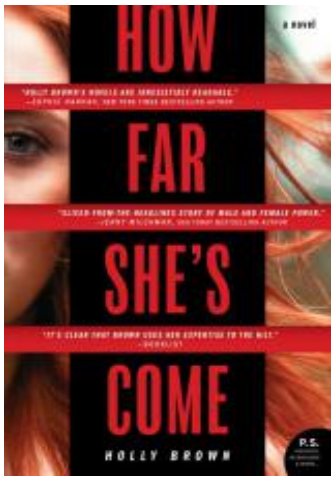
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How Far She's Come

by Holly Brown



About the Book

You might be wondering what a diary from 1991 has to do with you. You're about to find out. Those who don't learn from the past are doomed to repeat it?

Twenty-four-year-old Cheyenne Florian has just received her dream job offer. On the strength of a few vlogs, she?s recruited to be the new correspondent on the recently hatched Independent News Network, INN.

With the slogan ?Because independent thinking is the only way out,? INN has branded itself as innovative. Yet once Cheyenne joins the INN team, she finds age-old dynamics in play. Some of the female staff resent her meteoric rise, while a number of the men are only too happy to welcome her. Then there?s the diary left for her anonymously, written in 1991 by a female broadcaster named Elyse Rohrbach. The mysterious diary is accompanied by a note, urging Cheyenne to learn from the past. She wants to believe it?s intended as inspiration and friendly advice, or at most, a warning. But as disturbing --- and increasingly dangerous --- parallels begin to emerge, she starts to wonder if something more sinister is at work.

It?s almost as if someone is engineering the similarities in Cheyenne?s life to match those from Elyse?s past, like she?s a pawn in a very twisted game. But Cheyenne is determined to rewrite the rules and play her own game. Though they?re separated by more than 25 years, Elyse and Cheyenne are forced to learn the same lesson: Nothing is more threatening than a woman who doesn?t yet know her own power?

Discussion Guide

1. The opportunity at INN has ?too good to be true? written all over it. If you were Cheyenne, would you have been able to turn it down? Or would you have placed different conditions that might have altered the outcome?

2. What do you think about INN?s mission? Was it worthwhile, and was anyone (including Edwin, Beth, and Cheyenne) sincere in its pursuit?

3. Elyse?s diary is set in 1991; Cheyenne?s story is present day. What parallels do you see? For example, now the term ?rape culture? is in wide use; did rape culture exist in 1991, by another name?

4. Would you have reported the Until story, despite being in a relationship with Chase? Was this a turning point for Cheyenne, the moment she became ruthless, just as Graham said she would?

5. Was Edwin Gordon sexually harassing Cheyenne? Do you see him as similar to Roger Ailes or Harvey Weinstein? Because Cheyenne is attracted to Edwin, does that mean he?s not abusing his position of power?

6. Is female ambition stigmatized in a way that male ambition isn?t?

7. Do you have knowledge or personal experience with cyberbullying/cyberstalking, or with any form of real-life harassment or abuse? Were there any times when the book hit close to home?

8. There are a lot of layers of seduction and manipulation, right from the first meeting between Cheyenne and Edwin, with questions of who?s really being used. When Cheyenne turns the tables, her sexuality is a main strategy. Are these means justified by the ends?

9. In the novel, there are multiple times when either Cheyenne or Elyse wonder about the trade-off of anonymity for safety, that making their lives less public might mean they?ll be protected. Victims are often given the advice by police of getting off-line or staying home. Is that a fair bargain? And is it true safety?

10. In what ways are Cheyenne and Elyse shaped by their scars, for better and for worse? Do you believe the adage ?What doesn?t kill you makes you stronger??

Author Bio

Holly Brown is (in no particular order): a novelist, wife, mother, marriage and family therapist, poker enthusiast, resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, member of the SF Writers Grotto, lover of some incredibly shameful reality TV, devotee of NPR (she owes a debt of gratitude for inspiring more than one novel), and a believer that people should always be willing to make mistakes and always be the first to apologize for them.

As a writer, she tends to be inspired by contemporary events and phenomena. With her first novel, DON'T TRY TO FIND ME, she was intrigued by a real-life story about how a parent?s use of social media helped find a runaway daughter. In A NECESSARY END, she was compelled by all the maddening hoops that people have to jump through in order to adopt a newborn and what this does to their psychologies and their relationships. THIS IS NOT OVER is an escalating cat-and-mouse between two women after a house rental goes wrong. She likes to take an emotionally charged situation and then imagine the people within it. That?s where her background in human dynamics comes into play, and where the fun begins.

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