

# Chains Draped in Roses: The Illusion of Regret in Toxic Love in It Ends with Us

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## ABSTRACT

*It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover is a thorough examination of the emotional complexities that emerge in partnerships when abuse and love coexist. The novel explores the psychological difficulties of loving someone who is both damaging and affectionate through Lily Bloom, the protagonist. It depicts the pattern of sensitive moments of abuse followed by violent outbursts and apologies, which makes it extremely difficult to leave an abusive relationship. This talk looks at how Hoover depicts the emotional struggle of clinging to love despite suffering, emphasizing the psychological attachment and social forces that lead people to remain in unhealthy relationships. *It Ends with Us* offers a gripping story that speaks to real-life events while challenging readers to re-evaluate conventional ideas of love, resiliency, and self-worth.

**Keywords:** Emotional complexity, psychological turmoil, apologetic, toxic relationship

## INTRODUCTION

*It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover is a gripping book that delves into issues of love, resiliency, and suffering. In the narrative, a young woman named Lily Bloom falls in love with a charming neurosurgeon named Ryle Kincaid. But Ryle's aggressive tendencies quickly eclipse their apparently ideal relationship, making Lily face up to unpleasant memories of her past and make tough choices about her future. Hoover explores the inner turmoil, the cycle of violence, the intricacies of abusive relationships, and the resilience needed to escape via Lily's journey. Hoover's own experiences served as the inspiration for this intensely intimate book, which also serves as an enlightening account of domestic abuse. *It Ends with Us* is not just a love story but a powerful exploration of self-worth and breaking generational cycles. The purpose of this paper is to analyze how Colleen Hoover portrays the emotional complexity of abusive relationships in *It Ends with Us*.

Hoover illustrates the psychological challenge of loving someone who is both loving and destructive through the protagonist, Lily Bloom, in a complex portrayal of love, tragedy, and resiliency. The book explores the cycle of abuse, showing the internal turmoil that makes escaping challenging, and shows beautiful moments followed by violence and regret.

This research looks at how Hoover subverts conventional ideas of love and strength by analyzing Lily's path to self-awareness and her eventual decision to leave. The essay will also go over generational trauma cycles, social constraints, and how Hoover's own experiences influenced the story's realism. In the end, *It Ends with Us* offers a potent critique of the realities of violent relationships and the bravery needed to leave them.

The mental tension that many people in abusive relationships experience is tragically reflected in Lily Bloom's internal battle in *It Ends with Us*. Lily struggles with the question: Can love justify suffering? She is torn between her intense love for Ryle Kincaid and the misery caused by his violent actions.

At first, Ryle is the epitome of everything Lily wants: charm, passion, and brilliance. There are many happy and delicate times in their relationship, so it's hard for Lily to make sense of the abrupt, terrible abuse episodes. She hopes that Ryle's remorse represents genuine transformation each time he apologizes. She feels that love can heal him because she understands his prior suffering, which adds to this hope.

But as the abuse cycle persists, Lily starts to see similarities between her mother's experience with domestic violence and her own relationship. She struggles with emotions of shame, guilt, and self-doubt, wondering if leaving would mean letting go of the guy she loves. When she finds out she is pregnant, this internal battle becomes more intense, and she is forced to face the hard truth of what staying could mean for her unborn child.

In the end, Lily's internal conflict gives rise to resilience and self-awareness. She understands that her personal wellbeing shouldn't be sacrificed for true love. Her decision to leave Ryle is a statement that she will not allow history to repeat itself, in addition to being an act of self-preservation. Her choice to leave highlights one of the book's most important lessons: choosing oneself is the ultimate act of love, yet breaking abusive cycles requires a great deal of bravery.

Lily Bloom experiences a deep emotional struggle in *It Ends With Us* as a result of Ryle Kincaid's split character, which contrasts his intelligence and tenderness with his violent outbursts. Lily is captivated by Ryle's charisma, ambition, and intense passion when he is at his best. She is easily persuaded to believe in their love by his tender gestures and vulnerability, particularly his emotional transparency regarding his history.

But this delusion is destroyed by his violent outbursts, trapping Lily in a torturous cycle of fear and love. Because of his unpredictable behaviour—one minute gentle, the next violent—Lily tries to explain his behaviours in the hopes that the man she loves will be able to control his darker tendencies. Her feelings are further complicated by his intense regret after every violent act, as she battles feelings of terror, hope, and shame and wonders if leaving him would mean forsaking someone who might change.

Hoover's depiction of Ryle captures the truth that abusers are not always purely malevolent or lacking in affection; rather, what makes abusive relationships so psychologically complex is their capacity to vacillate between fondness and harm. Despite her love for Ryle, Lily's quest leads her to redefine what love is and ultimately puts herself above the possibility of helping him.

Ryle's regrets are a major factor in Lily's emotional upheaval and decision-making during *It Ends with Us*. Here are some significant instances where his regret influences her decisions:

### **The First Violent Incident**

Ryle feels instantly guilty after injuring Lily for the first time in a fit of wrath. He apologizes with tears in his eyes and attributes his response to prior trauma. Lily forgives him, persuading herself that his remorse indicates he won't do the same thing again since she wants to think it was an isolated incident.

### **The Second Act of Abuse**

Ryle once again shows profound regret and vows that it won't happen again following another violent outburst. Considering how her mother experienced similar patterns in her own marriage, Lily struggles with the decision of whether to stay or leave. She lets Ryle's regret serve as an excuse for staying longer than she had planned, even though she is scared and hurt.

### **Lily's Final Choice**

Ryle's apologies are no longer effective when Lily finds out she is expecting a child. She is aware of the recurring pattern and will not allow her child to experience the same suffering as she experienced. She bravely decides to go even if his apologies still cause her emotional distress since she knows that safety should never be sacrificed for love.

By illustrating the emotional, psychological, and social obstacles that make leaving an abusive partner so difficult, Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* effectively conveys the complexities of violent relationships in real life. Instead of portraying abuse as a simple problem, Hoover skilfully crafts the narrative to highlight the strong emotional bonds, the cycle of regret and hope, and the impact of prior trauma.

The core of *It Ends with Us*'s emotional depth is Lily Bloom's path to self-discovery and ending the cycle of abuse. In spite of Ryle Kincaid's violent inclinations, Lily initially believes that he has the capacity to reform and is hence passionately involved in their relationship. She battles mixed feelings of love, fear, and hope, which is similar to what many people in violent relationships go through.

### **Identifying the Trend**

As Lily begins to see the parallels between her relationship with Ryle and the brutal marriage her mother experienced, her perspective on violence changes. She used to think she would never put up with domestic abuse, but now she finds herself using the same excuses as her mother. She is forced to face the unpleasant reality that love cannot make hurt go away as a result of this revelation.

### **Drawing Strength from Her History**

By writing in her journal about Atlas Corrigan, her childhood buddy and first love, Lily re-establishes a connection with a past self who valued consistency and sincere compassion. In contrast to Ryle, Atlas serves as a reminder that love ought to be secure and caring. His presence bolsters her developing strength and enables her to see that her past transgressions shouldn't determine her future.

### **Motherhood's Power**

A pivotal moment occurs with Lily's pregnancy. She considers the psychological damage caused by seeing her mother struggle and comes to the conclusion that she cannot let her child grow up in the same surroundings. Her viewpoint changes at this point since she is making decisions for her daughter's future as much as for herself. Leaving Ryle is an act of parental love and self-preservation.

### **The Courage to Walk Away**

Lily decides to go despite Ryle's entreaties and apologies, which is a tough but essential choice. Her decision exemplifies the central theme of the book: self-worth must always come first, even when ending the cycle of abuse demands tremendous strength. Lily's statement, "It ends with us," in the last scene, is a potent moment of empowerment that shows she has taken control of her destiny.

Hoover's depiction of Lily's path is honest and poignant, highlighting the idea that escaping an abusive relationship involves more than simply walking away; it also entails rediscovering oneself and making the decision to live a better life.

In *It Ends with Us*, Lily's pregnancy is the pivotal event that forces her to escape the abusive cycle. Even though she had previously found it difficult to leave Ryle, the knowledge that she will soon become a mother makes her face the possibility of staying, not just for herself but also for the future of her child.

### **Breaking the Cycle for Her Daughter**

Lily thinks back to her early years, when she saw her mother tolerate domestic abuse while defending her father. She once vowed to herself that she would never put up with abuse, but she keeps doing it. She cannot tolerate the idea of her daughter growing up in a world where apology and violence coexist, and she will not allow history to repeat itself.

### **Choosing Self-Worth over Hope for Change**

Lily holds onto the belief that Ryle can change and that his apologies have some significance before she becomes pregnant. But having a child changes her priorities. She understands that safety should never be sacrificed for love, and she cannot take the chance of exposing her kid to an unstable household. In order to ensure that her child grows up knowing love without fear, she made the self-worthy decision to leave.

### **The Meaning behind "It Ends with Us"**

In the final confrontation with Ryle, Lily makes a powerful statement: "It ends with us." These words signify her determination to break the cycle of abuse that has plagued her family for generations. She is no longer just making a choice for herself; she is making a choice for her daughter's future, ensuring that she never has to question whether staying in an abusive relationship is acceptable.

After becoming a mother, Lily changes from being a victim of her circumstances to a woman who takes back control of her life. In addition to putting a stop to her personal suffering, her decision to leave is a precedent-setting act for her daughter, demonstrating that self-respect can be a stronger option than pain-poisoned love.

*It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover dispels a number of myths regarding abusive relationships and illuminates the psychological and emotional intricacies that make leaving an abuser extremely challenging. The book challenges readers' preconceived notions about abuse and challenges society's presumptions.

### **Abuse Is Not Always Easy to Recognize**

The idea that abuse is obvious right away and that victims should flee at the first hint of danger is a prevalent one. Hoover, however, shows how abuse frequently begins quietly—Ryle is endearing, loving, and seemingly flawless before his violent inclinations surface. Lily finds it hard to believe that he can harm her because of his compassionate moments, illustrating how victims frequently downplay early warning signs.

### **Love Does Not Erase Abuse**

Many people think that an abusive relationship can change if they are in love. Ryle's repentance gives Lily hope that their relationship can mend because she truly loves him. Hoover refutes this notion by showing that abusive behaviour cannot be changed by love alone. Lily understands that love should never come at the expense of her safety, regardless of how much she loves Ryle.

### **Leaving an Abusive Relationship Is Not Just About Walking Away**

"Why don't victims just leave?" is a question society frequently poses. By illustrating the psychological and practical barriers that make leaving challenging, fear, hope, financial reliance, and, in Lily's case, pregnancy, Hoover addresses this damaging query. Her internal conflict highlights that fleeing abuse involves more than just physically leaving oneself; it also calls for a great deal of emotional fortitude, introspection, and, frequently, outside assistance.

### **Abusers Are Not Always Purely Evil**

Ryle is a multifaceted character that is influenced by his personal experience, bright, and occasionally compassionate. Hoover emphasizes that abusers can have redeeming traits rather than defending his actions. This disproves the notion that abuse is only committed by naturally cruel people and emphasizes how victims frequently find it difficult to leave because they perceive the "good" in their partner.

### **Breaking the Cycle Is an Act of Courage**

The book reinterprets strength as choosing to walk away from hardship rather than enduring it for love. Lily's choice to leave Ryle makes a strong statement against violent cycles that persist throughout generations. Her statement, "It ends with us," turns the focus from victimization to empowerment and demonstrates that the greatest act of bravery is deciding to leave a poisonous relationship for oneself.

By forcing readers to face difficult realities regarding abusive relationships through Lily's journey, Hoover undermines the simplistic idea that victims are weak or that leaving is simple. The book's honest and poignant narrative inspires more compassion and understanding for anyone caught in comparable circumstances.

In *It Ends with Us*, Lily Bloom's choices are heavily influenced by generational trauma. Her early experiences of witnessing her mother suffer domestic abuse have left her with emotional scars that influence how she views

relationships, love, and self-worth. Hoover provides examples of how trauma may linger for generations and affect people's decisions even when they think they are moving on from the past.

### **The Influence of Lily's Mother's Experience**

Growing up, Lily saw her mother suffer at the hands of her father. When she was younger, she wondered why her mother stayed and was angry with her for it. But after encountering Ryle in a similar circumstance, Lily starts to comprehend the psychological and emotional obstacles that make fleeing abuse challenging. This insight compels her to reconsider her mother's decisions and acknowledge the pervasiveness of these tendencies.

### **The Fear of Repeating History**

The idea that she is turning into her mother, someone who tolerates abuse and stays in spite of the suffering is one of Lily's biggest psychological struggles. Because of this anxiety, she is compelled to examine herself and face the agonizing fact that she is locked in a pattern that she vowed never to repeat. Leaving Ryle is more than just a personal choice because of the burden of ancestral tragedy; it's a declaration that she won't allow the past to dictate her future.

### **The Role of Motherhood in Breaking the Cycle**

Lily's pregnancy solidifies her determination to put an end to the cycle of abuse. She realizes that allowing her daughter to grow up in an unhealthy environment would continue the pattern she endured as a child. Her final decision, choosing to leave Ryle, symbolizes not just her own liberation but also her commitment to protecting the next generation from the trauma that shaped her childhood.

### **Healing Through Awareness and Growth**

Lily is able to take charge of her story by acknowledging the effects of generational trauma. Her experience shows that overcoming a harmful history calls for bravery, self-awareness, and a readiness to reinterpret love in a more positive light. More than just a personal remark, her comment that "It ends with us" signifies her determination to stop abuse from being perpetuated.

Hoover's depiction of generational trauma is honest and incredibly realistic, emphasizing the psychological challenges of departing from ingrained behaviours.

## **CONCLUSION**

*It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover sends a strong message: no matter how strong the emotional bond or the desire for change, love and harm cannot coexist. The book demonstrates that love and suffering should never be combined; shattering the perilous notion that love is sufficient to end violent relationships.

The story of Lily Bloom highlights that deciding to put oneself before an unhealthy relationship is an act of self-worth rather than a sign of surrender. She discovers that being in a violent cycle does not imply loyalty or strength and that love should be secure, kind, and fearless. The book refutes damaging social stereotypes and emphasizes that fleeing abuse is a sign of bravery rather than weakness.

By declaring, "It ends with us," Lily makes a decisive break from the past, refusing to let generational trauma define her future. Her story serves as a reminder that real love heals rather than hurts, and that breaking free is often the bravest act of all.

One of the novel's most impactful aspects is its depiction of Ryle Kincaid, not as a stereotypical monster, but as a man capable of love, remorse, and moments of tenderness. His emotional complexity mirrors real-life abusive relationships, where victims struggle with the contradiction between affection and violence. This challenges the common misconception that abuse is always easy to recognize or escape.



The novel dismantles the harmful question “Why don’t victims just leave?” by illustrating the psychological barriers that keep Lily trapped in love, hope, guilt, and fear. It forces readers to empathize with the emotional turmoil victims endure and understand why leaving is not always straightforward.

Hoover highlights the lingering effects of generational trauma by focusing on Lily's thoughts about her mother's past. Lily's choice to leave is about breaking a cycle that has lasted for years, not just about herself. The book provokes conversations about how violence is frequently accepted in families and how it takes a great deal of bravery to leave.

It Ends with Us promotes discussions on how society views abuse, touching on issues such as victim-blaming, the need for forgiveness, and the absence of outside assistance. Since many people's real-life experiences are reflected in Lily's struggle, the book can be used to raise awareness and promote empathy.

In addition to being a compelling book, *It Ends with Us* serves as a call to action, urging readers to assist survivors, educate themselves about domestic abuse, and question social conventions that condone abusive relationships. Numerous conversations sparked by the book resulted in increased awareness of healthy relationships, advocacy initiatives, and donations to charitable causes. Therefore, through its emotionally raw storytelling, Hoover’s novel initiates necessary discussions about abuse, resilience, and the importance of choosing oneself.

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