

He Started It

by Samantha Downing

Author Bio: (from *Fantastic Fiction & Authors Website*)

Samantha Downing currently lives in New Orleans. She is an internationally bestselling thriller author. *My Lovely Wife* was her first novel.



Characters:

- **Beth** –Middle child. (2 years younger than Eddie.) Has been married to Felix for 6 years. Works for International United. Lives in Florida. The invisible one in the family.
- **Morton J. Barrie** – Grandpa’s lawyer
- **Calvin Bingham** – Private Investigator following Grandpa and the kids
- **Cooper** – Nikki’s on-again off-again boyfriend.
- **Felix** – Beth’s husband. Works for International United. Likes to take pictures and videos. Likes schedules.
- **Grandpa** – The kid’s grandfather. He took the kids on a road trip across the country when they were little (6, 12, 14, & 17). Not a nice man. His ashes are currently in the trunk of the car. Wife died of cancer.
- **Dr. Lang** – Beth’s childhood therapist.
- **Eddie Morgan** – Brother. Older than Beth by 2 years. Has been married to Krista for 6 months. Likes to make decisions and be in charge. Lives in Alabama. A “lovable asshole”. He can charm anyone and everybody likes him.
- **Krista Morgan** – Eddie’s wife of 6 months. Was a receptionist at Eddy’s job before their marriage.
- **Nikki Morgan** – Missing. Beth’s older sister. She is the firstborn. Known as the troublemaker and wild child of the family. (18 at the time of the 1st road trip.)
- **Paulette Morgan** – Beth’s mother. In prison for killing her husband.
- **Portia Morgan** – Youngest sibling. (6 years younger than Beth.) Not married. Lives in New Orleans. She is a waitress/stripper. Family thief.
- **Nathan and Jonah** – Men in pickup
- **Trip Itinerary**
 - **Tuscumbia, Alabama** – Hellen Keller’s House - Ivy Green
 - **Gibbsland, Louisiana** – Where the FBI caught Bonnie and Clyde.
 - **Alma, Arkansas** – Henry Humphrey Memorial
 - **Three Corners** – Where Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma meet
 - **Dodge City, Kansas** – Gunfighters Wax Museum
 - **Cadillac Ranch, Texas**

- **Devil’s Rope Museum, Texas** – (Barbwire)
- **Oklahoma**
- **Colorado** – UFO Watchtower
- **Wyoming** – Ghost Town – Kirwin
- **Montana**
- **Idaho**
- **Colfax, Washington** – Codger Pole
- **Hell’s Canyon, Oregon**
- **Nevada – the Desert** – Duckwater and Alamo

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you like the book? Why or why not?
2. The story is told from Beth’s point of view, but with entries from the journal spliced into the story. Did you like the way the story was set up? Did you find it easy or hard to follow? Why or why not?
3. This book doesn’t have the traditional “Chapter 1, chapter 2... setup” It is broken into two parts, with each chapter counting down the days of the trip. Why do you think the author set the book up that way? What do you think about it?
4. What was your initial opinion of Beth, Portia, and Eddie? Did it change throughout the book?
5. Why do you think Grandpa made the road trip a condition of inheriting? If one of your family members put a condition like that on a windfall, would you do it? How much money would it take?
6. Why do you think Grandpa took the kids on the road trip when they were kids?
7. What tourist attraction did you find the most interesting? Are there any you would like to see?
8. Why do you think Beth brought the journal with her on the 2nd (inheritance) road trip?
9. In Chapter *14 Days Left*, Beth says that a family is “not a single unit with a single goal... Every member of the family has their own agenda.” Is that true or not?
10. With *13 days Left*, Beth thinks “Maybe everyone feels this way about their siblings. A little competitive. A little vindictive.” What do you think about that statement?
11. After Eddie’s fight with the college kid, Beth thinks “Sometimes we are a family of assholes. You can blame that on Grandpa, he started it.” What do you think about that statement in relation to the rest of the book?
12. If you were on a road trip with your family and you suspected someone was following and sabotaging your trip, but you had no proof, what would you do?
13. Grandpa believed that you can do bad things if it’s for love. What do you think about that belief?

14. The repeating theme of the book appears to be “Why did you do that? Because I can.” This line is repeated by multiple people in the book. What do you think about that life philosophy?
15. Nikki takes over the trip to get back at their grandpa for hitting their grandma. Was that the right thing to do? What should she have done instead? What could she do?
16. Who would you have sided with: Grandpa or Nikki?
17. What do you think about what happened to Felix?
18. What do you think about what happened to Calvin (the private investigator) and who did it? Were you surprised?
19. Did you suspect what happened to Nikki before the book told you?
20. Who was the real villain of the book?
21. How do you feel about the way the book ended? If you could change the ending, how would you have it end?
22. **He Started It** was written by Samantha Downing. Will you read anything else by the author?

References:

- Samantha Downing's website – <https://www.samanthadowning.com/>
- Fantastic Fiction – <https://www.fantasticfiction.com/d/samantha-downing/>
- GoodReads – <https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/51373979-he-started-it>
- Novelist – <https://web-p-ebSCOhost-com.ezproxy.clevnet.org/novp/detail?vid=2&sid=78c78880-55bb-4a5b-b8a0-12a7f44093ab%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9bm92cC1saXZl#UI=10874945&db=neh>

Samantha Downing's Books

Stand Alone Novels

- My Lovely Wife (2019)
 - He Started It (2020)
- For Your Own Good (2021)
- A Twisted Love Story (2023)

If you liked He Started It, try...

- The Better Liar – Tanen Jones
- The Last Mrs. Parrish – Liv Constantine
- Summer House with Swimming Pool – Herman Koch
- A Slow Fire Burning – Paula Hawkins
- The Housemaid – Freida McFadden