‘The Summer I Turned Pretty’ series finale stuns fans of the books

By MORGAN BOLLIGER
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Before it was the No. 1 show on Amazon Prime, “The Summer I Turned Pretty” was a trilogy with the first book released way back in 2009.

Prior to the release of the third and final season of the show, author and show creator Jenny Han teased that the series may conclude differently than the books, sparking fear amongst the members of Team Conrad (Christopher Briney), and raising questions as to who Belly (Lola Tung) might choose.

And, although the finale did differ from the final book “We’ll Always Have Summer,” it still was incredible in its own regard.

The third season begins with a time jump three years into the future. Belly and Jeremiah (Gavin Casalegno) are both attending the fictional Finch College, and their three-year relationship is seemingly perfect. But just as it transpires in the books, Jeremiah cheats on her during spring break.

Things go downhill in the fallout of his infidelity. Belly completely loses herself in Jeremiah; she turns down an incredible opportunity to study abroad in Paris, and overall the show lacks a focus on her personal hobbies, which reflects how involved she is in him. Just because he proposes to her in an emotionally fueled moment, and she accepts, does not make them a couple solid again.

When Conrad learns about Jeremiah’s unfaithfulness, he confesses to Belly that he still loves her, and begs her to be with him instead, a scene that matches the book nearly word for word. This act was selfish of Conrad in some ways, but it was also the first time since making a promise to Susannah (Rachel Blanchard) on her death bed to take care of Jeremiah, that he put his happiness first. Jeremiah inevitably finds out about this, and even though Belly insists she loves him, she doesn’t deny the fact that she also loves Conrad. They decide to call off the wedding that morning.

After Belly’s impromptu decision to flee to Paris when the wedding is called off, we see a lot of growth and reflection on her part. The new haircut she flaunts is a symbol of her maturity and newfound independence. She was once a young, stupid teenager in love — and four years into the future in the very last episode, she is a woman who faces a daunting question when Conrad comes to Paris the day before her birthday.

Does she know what she wants, or is she still figuring that out?

On one hand, she should be allowed to move on from her high school ex-boyfriend. She should be allowed to discover herself in Paris, and not owe anything to anybody. It’s not like her only two options in the world are Conrad and Jeremiah.

But on the other hand, it’s Conrad. The boy she used to wish for on every birthday. The boy who taught her how to ride a bike. Throughout the series, Belly’s feelings for Conrad, which started off as an innocent crush she had as a little girl, transform into something deeper and real. The love she has for him is infinite. And when he shows up at her doorstep, it’s like she physically can’t say no to him.

In the books, it was pretty clear Belly was going to end up choosing him. However, in the show, Belly continued to remain conflicted until the literal last second.

After she and Conrad spent the night together, she goes down a rabbit hole of “what ifs” and regrets.

What if Susannah had never gotten sick? Would they have even gotten together? If her and Jeremiah worked out, would Conrad still be chasing her?

Now, none of this suspense occurred in the books. Belly and Conrad corresponded through letters while she studied abroad in Spain, and suddenly, the epilogue is the morning of their wedding.

But in the show, their getting together was a slow, gradual build up. From picking



ILLUSTRATION BY LILIANA MIRABELLA

peaches, tending to each other's wounds and even spending Christmas together in Cousins, Conrad realizes that avoiding Belly would never solve the problem.

“I’ve changed everything about myself, and the one thing that never changes is that I love you,” he tells her in a last ditch effort to make her understand that, even though he may not have always shown her, he has always loved her.

Still, Belly insists that he leave, but regrets it mere seconds after he walks out of the door.

“Out of the Woods” by Taylor Swift plays as Belly realizes that questioning him was a mistake. She chases him down the streets of Paris and through the train station, as viewers hope that his train hasn't left yet. Even as someone who read the books, I was screaming and crying, praying that they would end up together.

“Conrad, I choose you. Out of my own free will,” Belly declares when she finds him in his seat.

They kiss, and everyone gets their happy ending.

Jeremiah, at first devastated, confused and feeling betrayed, learns how to manage on his own. In a way, Belly cheated on him, too. But he picks himself back up, finds an unexpected passion for cooking, and develops feelings for a girl who has absolutely zero interest in his older brother.

Even Taylor and Steven, albeit an unexpected couple due to them not having a relationship in the books, figure out a way to be together and have plans on moving to California for Steven to launch his gaming start-up.

The series ends with Belly and Conrad eventually making their way back to Cousins, the camera panning outwards, depicting the beach and the summer house, where many important moments had occurred — symbolizing the fact that yes, the teens had grown up, but they had not grown apart. They had all gone through so much loss in various different ways, but they would always have each other, and they would always have summer.

However, this isn’t the end. If you’re still reeling, or wanting more — don’t worry. “The Summer I Turned Pretty Movie” is on its way.

From lyrics to headlines: All about the D4vd controversy

By ADRIHANNA COLLINS
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Fans speculate about “Here with Me” singer D4vd’s connections with the body found in his impounded Tesla.

Celeste Rivas Hernandez was found by police dismembered and wrapped in a plastic bag in the front trunk of an impounded Tesla on Sept. 8. According to the LA Times, her body was found a day after her 15th birthday, severely decomposed. Twenty-year-old David Anthony Burke (known as D4vd) was registered to the vehicle she was found in.

Many fans online believe that Hernandez and Burke were dating. In a leaked song called “Celeste,” Burke says he’s in love with “the girl with my name tattooed on her chest.” According to TMZ, Hernandez and D4vd had matching “shhh…” tattoos on their right index fingers. On top of that, leaked footage shows the two livestreaming together when she was allegedly 13 years old and Hernandez’s mom told TMZ that she was dating somebody named David, though she had never met him.

Friends of D4vd reported the couple were together frequently though they didn’t know much about Hernandez other than Burke saying she is a 19-year-old student at University of Southern California. His friends believed this to be true due to her presence at many age-restricted events. However, police confirmed the Hernandez had multiple fake IDs.

Neighbors told NBC that the car had been abandoned in the Hollywood Hills for a month before being impounded. Authorities believe that the body was put in the trunk five days before



ILLUSTRATION BY JULIA ARCHER

being towed to the impound lot. At the impound lot, the car was reported for a foul odor believed to be from human remains which led to her body being found.

The police searched Burke’s house, and a police spokesperson said that “several items of evidence were recovered” including electronics and a computer. Burke broke his $20,000 per month lease and moved away shortly after as reported by the Daily Mail.

D4vd is known for using murder and death as metaphors and motifs in his work and fans point to this as potential evidence. In one of his stage performances, he was brought out in a casket. In his song “Romantic Homicide,” D4vd says “I killed you and I didn’t even regret it.”

In a music video for his song “One More Dance,” he drags a blood-soaked body into a trunk and it’s buried by a woman who fans believe looks similar to Hernandez. Some argue that using death as an allegory in art isn’t a confession while others argue that it shows his ideation for murder and death.

D4vd came into fame after clips of “Romantic Homicide” went viral on TikTok in the summer of 2022. The song was his debut on the Billboard Hot 100 at No. 77 and he was signed to Interscope Records shortly after. By 2025, he was opening for SZA and sitting front row at Paris Fashion Week

When Riva’s remains were found, D4vd was on tour for his debut album “Withered.” His upcoming shows were cancelled, as were his brand campaigns with Crocs and Hollister. Interscope Records and Universal Music Group have suspended all promotion of D4vd.

According to the Los Angeles Times, Hernandez had been reported missing three times in 2024 and hadn't made it past the seventh grade due to her absences. The Riverside County Sheriff’s Office confirmed that Hernandez was last reported missing in April 2024 in Lake Elsinore, California.

Hernandez’s body was released from the medical examiner’s office and given back to her family on Sept. 23. The cause of death has not been released by the L.A. County Medical Examiner though her manner of death has been ruled a homicide and her place of death in a vehicle.

Police say D4vd is cooperating with the investigation and is currently not a suspect or person of interest.