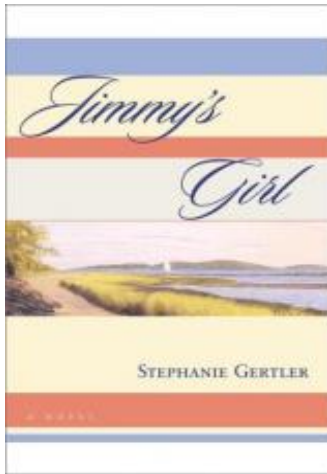


Jimmy's Girl

by Stephanie Gertler



About the Book

Jimmy's Girl is the story of first love lost and of the price to be paid for finding it again.

Ever wonder what became of your first love?

Emily did.

Emily Hudson should be happy. She has achieved modest success as a painter and lives a good suburban life with her husband and four children. But one day, somewhere between the train schedules, orthodontist appointments, and bake sales, Emily stopped and remembered who she was when she was sixteen and how she felt when she found love with James Moran- the young man she kissed beneath her parents' Ping-Pong table-the boy who made her Jimmy's girl.

It's been thirty years since they went their separate ways. But Emily can't stop herself from thinking about Jimmy . . . nor can she resist using the Internet to find his address and telephone number . . . and placing the phone call that will change both of their lives forever.

Connecting again, Emily and Jimmy risk the lives they've made for themselves and happiness of their respective families when they decide to meet. In one unforgettable weekend, they will learn what went wrong between them and find out together if first love deserves a second chance.

Told from the perspectives of both Jimmy and Emily, each in turn revealing their lies and truths, this remarkable first novel shows with tenderness and heart-rending accuracy the differences between what men and women say, and what men and women hear. The debut of a writer of extraordinary talent, Jimmy's Girl is a novel for anyone who ever left love behind and dared to wonder "what if?"

Discussion Guide

1. In the beginning of the novel, Emily's son Jack tells her "You're never too old for anything, Mom." Do you think this is true? Can you be too old for some things?
2. Do you think it acceptable for married people to think or have fantasies about their first loves? Is it acceptable for people to act on fantasies about their first loves?
3. In the early chapters of the novel, both Jimmy and Emily refer to each other as "something" that was theirs. Does this suggest that Jimmy and Emily might be thinking of each other as things from their past instead of actual people? If so, does it relate to any of the actions that either character makes as they get to know each other again?
4. How much or how little of the connection between Emily and Jimmy lies at an artistic level?
5. Are Emily's moves from one art form to another as she ages in this novel symbolic of her emotional growth? Why or why not?
6. How important is the cultural backdrop of the 1960s and 1970s to Jimmy's Girl?
7. How would the novel have changed if the present day found Emily living a working class existence and Jimmy living a life of affluence? Does the relative wealth or lack thereof in either character fundamentally affect the story?
8. Are some of Emily's actions in the novel forms of punishment directed at her husband? Does Emily at some level resent Peter?
9. Do you think Peter's reaction to Emily's trip is supportive? What do you think is motivating Peter: Jealousy? Fear? Anger?
10. Are there any signs of the detachment between Jimmy and his father present in Jimmy's relationship with his daughter, Clancy?
11. At the close of the novel, have Emily and Jimmy made the right choice? How would things be different if Emily and Jimmy had chosen differently?

Author Bio

Stephanie Gertler, who has been writing all her life, writes a monthly lifestyles column, *These Days*, for two Connecticut newspapers, *The Advocate* and *Greenwich Time*. Stephanie is the author of two novels, *JIMMY'S GIRL* and *THE PUZZLE BARK TREE*. She lives with her husband and three children in New York.

Critical Praise

" Most people think of teenage romance as fleeting, but Jimmy's Girl is a perfect reminder of how strong first love can be. "*-Redbook*"First-novelist Gertler offers a tender evocation of lost love, and what it means to find it again. "*-Kirkus*

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