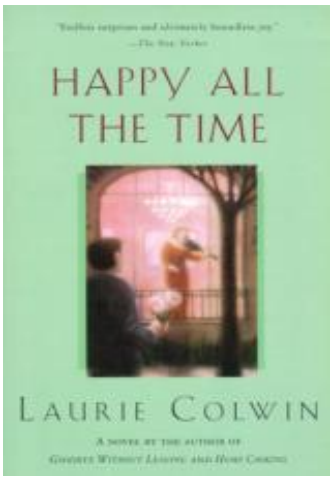
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Happy All The Time

by Laurie Colwin



About the Book

Love comes easy to some people; for others it can be an agonizing process. Everyone knows a couple that seem meant for each other, whose courtship was effortless and whose relationship seems to float along, free of bumps and snarls. However, for every couple like that there is another fighting against all odds to stay together. In Happy All the Time, Laurie Colwin portrays two such couples. Guido and Holly could be brother and sister, and they glide into love and into marriage; Guido, at least never looking back. By comparison, Vincent and Misty's courtship is like a drawn-out argument.

As these two relationships grow, both Vincent and Guido learn that things are rarely what they seem to be on the outside. Guido's idyllic existence with Holly is interrupted as she flies off to France alone, leaving him desperately lonely, angry, and confused. Meanwhile, Vincent discovers Misty's soft, vulnerable side as well as her colorful background. Both men realize that the women they love possess layers of feeling and personality, and Colwin cleverly reveals the way love evolves as a result of these revelations. Her novel is constructed like a delicious sauce, with details added as deftly as ingredients, stirred with subtle action. The result is a rich nuanced brew of a story whose happy ending is as satisfying as a final filling mouthful.

Discussion Guide

1. What do you think of the novel's title? Few of us are happy all the time; is Colwin being sarcastic? Hopeful? Do you think that people should strive for continual happiness?

2. When Guido first meets Holly, he muses "that Holly was probably difficult, quirky, and hard to live with." Why would Guido pursue someone who poses such an obvious challenge to him? Is he correct in his assessment of her personality? How, eventually, does Holly surprise him?

3. Like Holly, Misty has difficult aspects to her personality. Why do you think Vincent continues to pursue her? Why do you think these two people are so happy together?

4. What sorts of obstacles do both couples face, and how -- and why -- do they manage to overcome these obstacles? What is Colwin saying about finding love, and then fighting for the relationship to work?

5. How do these two parallel stories of couples falling in love differ from each other?

Author Bio

Laurie Colwin is the author of five novels: **Happy All the Time**, **Family Happiness**, **Goodbye Without Leaving**, **Shine On**, **Bright and Dangerous Object**, and **A Big Storm Knocked It Over**; three collections of short stories: **Passion and Affect, Another Marvelous Thing**, and The Lone Pilgrim; and two collections of essays: **Home Cooking** and More Home Cooking. She died in 1992.

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