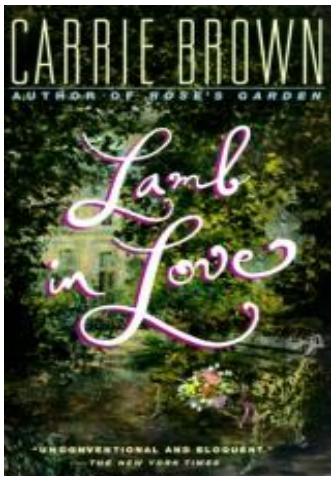
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Lamb in Love

by Carrie Brown



About the Book

It's 1969, the night the Americans land on the moon, and Norris Lamb catches a glimpse of Vida dancing half-naked in the moonlight. Thinking herself alone, Vida dances with such wild abandon and passion that Norris falls instantly in love. Having lived his whole fifty-five years of life in the quiet town of Hursley, Norris had given up hope of ever having anything momentous happen to him, and he is stunned to find himself in love with a woman he has known, but never noticed, his whole life.

Vida, since the age of twenty, has devoted herself to the all-consuming job of being nanny to Manford Perry, a mentally disabled young man living at the empty Perry manor. In all that time, Vida has never had a vacation, never left Hursley, and she, too, imagines for herself a life of uneventfulness. Now, poised on the cusp of love, the shy and awkward Norris must find a way of expressing his feelings before he loses Vida forever. It is through the help of Manford's strange and gentle intelligence that the two lovers find their way toward one another's hearts.

Discussion Guide

1. Is it merely a coincidence that Lamb falls in love the night the Apollo lands on the moon? What does it mean to Norris and Vida that humans have landed on the moon? How is moon imagery used in the novel?

2. Why do you think Norris collects stamps? Is Manford drawn to stamps for the same reason? How does Norris' stamp collecting hobby play a role in his love life?

3. Why does Vida suffer occasional fits of weeping and "sudden apprehension, so quick and sharp it feels like pain"? Do you think Vida and Norris are happy living in the small town of Hursley? What is it that keeps them from leaving? Do you think Vida will return to Hursley and Norris after her holiday in Corfu? Do you think she should?

4. How would you characterize Vida's relationship to her uncle Laurence? What does Laurence represent to Vida? What does it mean that she has an "imaginary" Corfu in her mind?

5. Vida and Norris grew up together in Hursley, and yet were never interested in one another until now. What is it that they appreciate in one another in middle age, that they failed to see in youth? Were these qualities there all along, or were they developed over the years? What is it that finally enables them to notice one another?

6. Norris advises a cynical young boy that "perhaps we only get one wish. One in the whole of our lifetime. But you never know when it's going to be granted, you see. It might be anytime. So you might as well just keep on wishing. In fact, you'd better wish every chance you get, because if you don't--if you don't keep wishing, you might just miss your chance." What is Norris getting at with this piece of advice? Do you agree with him? What might have prompted Norris to suddenly be so eloquent and passionate about wishing?

7. How do events and the weather conspire to bring Vida and Norris together? If it weren't for the timing of NASA, certain rainfalls, a spider web, the church talent show, etc., do you think they would have ever found one another? Were they fated to be together? How do you believe love works?

8. Manford walks, "stroking the air in that odd way he has, as if feeling it billow past him like green waves around the trunk of a giant, a giant striding through the teeming leagues of an ocean..." Why do you think he walks in this manner? Can he feel the currents of the air?

9. How does falling in love transform Norris? What does he mean when he thinks, "for the first time in his life...he has something to lose. He's sure of it."? What does falling in love teach Norris about himself?

10. What role does Manford play in the courtship of Vida and Norris? How aware is Manford of the budding romance? What key to Vida's heart does Manford offer Norris with his shadow puppets? Why do you think Manford is so quick to trust and befriend Norris?

Author Bio

Carrie Brown is the author of five novels and a collection of short stories. Awards she has received include a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, the Barnes & Noble Discover Award, the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize, and, twice, the Library of Virginia Literary Award. Her short fiction has appeared in *One Story*, *Glimmer Train*, *The Georgia Review*, and *The Oxford American*. She lives with her husband, the writer John Gregory Brown, in Virginia, where she is distinguished visiting professor of creative writing at Hollins University.

Critical Praise

"Brown eloquently explores the terrain of human interactions, showing how genuine love can exalt ordinary individuals. "

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