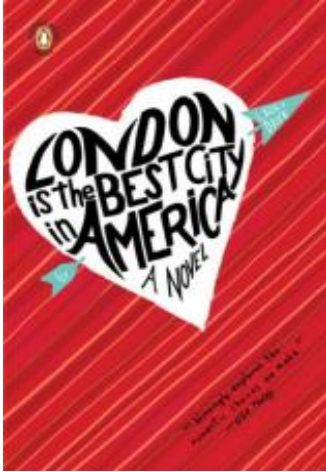


London is the Best City in America

by Laura Dave



About the Book

Emmy Everett is reluctantly heading home to New York for her brother Josh's wedding. She has spent the last three years in a fishing town in Rhode Island and, having little to show for it, she doesn't particularly want to answer the questions she is sure to face about her (ex)-fiance, her (questionable) career choices, her (unknown) future. But she is still shocked when her typically resolute brother Josh confesses he is having doubts about his imminent marriage --- and he asks Emmy the hardest question of all: what do I do now?

With seventy-two hours until the wedding, Emmy embarks with her brother Josh on a road trip to help him find a mystery woman, and to answer some long overdue questions about who he wants to spend his life with. It isn't only Josh who has some lessons to learn. Along the way, Emmy discovers some undeniable truths about what she wants from her own life; and she begins to realize that perhaps her own happy ending is not as far away as it seems.

In mapping their struggles over one wild and emotional wedding weekend, Laura Dave gives us a brilliantly subtle and honest look at contemporary courtship, family tension, and the angst that we all experience when we have to make difficult choices.

Three years ago, Emmy Everett made the painful decision to call off her engagement and leave New York City behind. Since then she has been hiding out in Rhode Island working at a bait and tackle shop and haphazardly shooting a documentary about fishermen's wives. July 4th weekend has rolled around again and Emmy is mustering up the courage to return home to New York (the site of her own failed romance) to celebrate her brother Josh's wedding.

En route to his bachelor party, Emmy is shocked when her typically resolute brother confesses that he is having serious doubts about getting married ? and he may even be in love with another woman. Emmy is determined to help her brother face up to this decision?the one she fled from herself. With less than twenty-four hours to go before the wedding, she takes Josh on a road trip to find this mystery woman. Along the way, Emmy embraces her own hard-earned lessons

about romance, commitment and what happens when we refuse to let go of the past.

London is the Best City in America is a courageous, big-hearted portrait of love, loyalty, and heartbreak. Emmy is lively, wise and, ultimately, very brave as she tries to answer the universal question: how do we take that first step toward making our lives our own?

Discussion Guide

1. It seems Emmy did make the right decision in leaving Matt (although arguably she did not handle it in the best way), but why was she unable, after making that decision, to make some other productive decisions and move on with the rest of her life? Why does it take her so long to make the next step?
2. What is the significance of "Independence Day"? What does it mean in both Emmy's and Josh's life?
3. Why does Emmy end up interviewing so many fishermen's wives? What questions is she asking, and what answers is she looking for in her own life through these women?
4. What is it about Berringer that makes him so attractive to Emmy? How might things be different with him than with Matt, or how does Emmy believe they will be different?
5. Do you believe, as Emmy seems to, that we create our own destiny by the choices we make, or do you believe more in fate, that whatever happens happens for a reason? What are the benefits/pitfalls of each view?
6. On page 26, when Emmy probes Josh about Meryl, he tells her not to "stir the pot." This seems a bit odd since he brings up the subject with Emmy. Do you think he tells Emmy about Meryl because, at least subconsciously, he hopes Emmy will interfere? Matt says to Emmy, "Maybe it's not your job to help [Josh]" (p. 162). Is it her job to help him? Should we try and help those around us get out of sticky situations? When does helping become interfering? How involved should we be in other people's lives?
7. Emmy says that "wedding weekends . . . encourage people to revisit the past" (p. 34). Do you agree? What are some of your best/worst "wedding weekend" experiences? Have you experienced any wedding debacles?
8. The title of the novel refers back to a childhood decision Emmy makes regarding where the family should go on vacation. What does it say about Emmy that she chose London when the destination was supposed to be one the family could drive to, and how, if at all, does this foreshadow her future choices?
9. Emmy spends a lot of time thinking about how people met—she and Matt, Josh and Meryl, Berringer and Naomi, and her parents. How important is how two people meet, and does it predict at all their future success? What do you think of Josh's theory that an entire relationship is based on what occurs "over the course of the first five minutes you know each other" (p. 56)?
10. Emmy says that "It wasn't about which woman Josh ultimately chose—it was about which Josh Josh chose" (p. 107). What does Emmy mean?

11. After Emmy tells Elizabeth about her documentary, Elizabeth shares with Emmy the fortune cookie saying that read, "You can't finish the things you weren't supposed to start" (p. 108). What may Elizabeth be implying, both about herself and Emmy?

12. The chance occurrence of a blackout has a decisive effect on the events in the novel. How dependent are our lives on the intrusions of circumstances like blackouts, broken blinkers, etc.? Is this kind of dramatic impetus toward change the stuff of books and movies only? Are there examples from your own life?

13. Meryl suspects something is going on with Josh, and Emmy discovers that Matt was indeed having an affair when she had thought he no longer loved her. Do you think it's impossible to hide these kinds of things from the people we're close to? Should we always trust our instincts when it comes to our suspicions? What is the advantage of doing so, and what are the dangers?

Author Bio

Laura Dave is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of several novels, including *THE LAST THING HE TOLD ME* and *EIGHT HUNDRED GRAPES*. Her novels have been translated into 38 languages, and six of them, including *THE NIGHT WE LOST HIM*, have been optioned for film and television. She resides in Santa Monica, California.

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