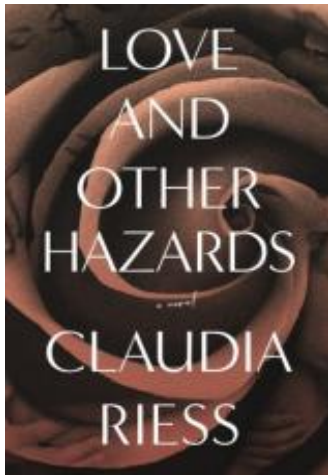


Love and Other Hazards

by Claudia Riess



About the Book

Glenda Fieldston is at the Metropolitan Museum of Art with her seven-year-old daughter, Astrid, who is inspecting the anatomically correct parts of a male statue. Glenda considers this an appropriate learning experience since Astrid, whose father is an anonymous sperm donor, has never seen a nude male. Eugene Lerman is walking by at a distance with his eight-year-old daughter, Meredith, a schoolmate of Astrid's. Meredith spots Astrid and is grossed out. Eugene has a prudish twinge. Glenda and Eugene, who have never met, engage in long-range cursory assessments, and the families go their separate ways.

But not for long. Glenda, a consultant at a computer firm, is scheduled to upgrade the computer system of a medical publishing company, where Eugene, she discovers, is an editor. In the course of analyzing the system, Glenda uncovers signs of fraudulent activity and is charged with the task of finding its source. The process takes an extended period of time and brings Glenda and Eugene into close association.

So begins a friendship fraught with complications. Glenda's independence is self-imposed and fierce. Eugene's was foisted on him by a wife who left him. Although Glenda's and Eugene's personal demons are incompatible, their longings are, confoundingly, in harmony. Their cautious friendship is further inhibited by past and present relationships, and it remains to be seen if they can break out of their set ways --- and mindsets --- to make a break for uncharted love.

Discussion Guide

1. How do Glenda's and Eugene's respective relationships with their daughters influence their relationship with each other?
2. In what ways do Glenda and Eugene modify each other's attitudes about love and intimacy?

3. What factors in both Glenda's childhood and Eugene's had the profoundest impact on their adult lives?
4. Glenda's and Eugene's peripheral relationships spark or impede their growing affection for each other?
5. How do Astrid's and Meredith's outlooks and behaviors change during the course of their imposed companionship?
6. Putting yourself in Glenda's shoes, how would *you* have responded to Eugene's spiking your tea --- and what followed?

Author Bio

Claudia Riess is a Vassar graduate who has worked in the editorial departments of *The New Yorker* magazine and Holt, Rinehart and Winston books. LOVE AND OTHER HAZARDS is her fourth novel. Her first novel, RECLINING NUDE, was published by Stein and Day. Oliver Sacks, author of AWAKENINGS, had said her first book was "exquisite --- and delicate? a most courageous book, full of daring --- a daring only possible to a passionate and pure heart."

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