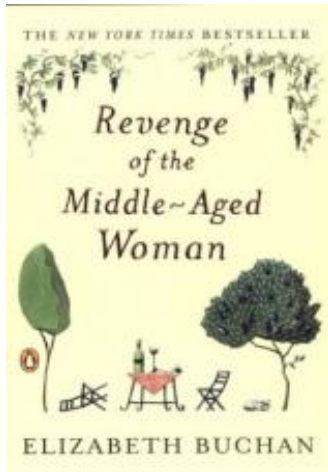


Revenge of the Middle-aged Woman

by Elizabeth Buchan



About the Book

Revenge of the Middle-Aged Woman is a modern Everywoman's tale. It is the funny, heartfelt, and sad?but definitely not tragic?story about love and how it touched forty-seven-year-old Rose Lloyd. As a college student, Rose fell in love with a man. His name was Hal and he loved her but also wanted to roam the world. Then she met Nathan, who wanted to marry her and raise a family. Rose loved Nathan, too, although for different reasons. She made a decision.

One wedding, two children, and twenty-five years later, Rose is a book editor for a weekly London paper where husband Nathan also works as the deputy editor. Rose is at peace in her life, happy and secure in the knowledge that she has successfully balanced the often conflicting demands of home and career. But when Nathan announces that he is leaving her for another woman, the stability she has always relied upon is unexpectedly gone.

Nathan laments, "I feel imprisoned by the walls I've built around me," just before he tells Rose that he's leaving her for Rose's own trusted twenty-nine-year-old assistant, Minty. Young, attractive, and incredibly ambitious, Minty has designs on more than Rose's husband. The same day that she loses her husband, Rose discovers that she is going to be replaced on the job by none other than Minty, who promises to bring a younger look and tone to the book section.

Out of a job, a marriage, and soon to be ousted from the cozy home and garden she's lavished with care, Rose is suddenly alone with too much time on her hands. While her friends and children rally around her, Rose is dealt a blow by her mother, who implies that it was Rose's selfish decision to work outside of the home that destroyed her marriage. Rose sinks into despondency, begins to drink a little too much, and wonders if her mother is right. But when in the midst of her mourning, her beloved cat, Parsley, dies, Rose realizes, "I had had enough. I wanted my grief dead." She decides to live?and that's when the fun really begins.

With the complacency and safety of her married life and career gone, Rose remembers how a long-ago trip to Rome showed her that most people lived, not in the radiant semitransparent envelope that writers described but in a plain

brown one with which they had to make do but it was better than nothing: "I was sixteen . . . and in love for the first time?with being there, out of England. Rome was noisy, filled with smells?coffee, exhaust, sweat, hot buildings?and its flux of life, noise and sensation flowed through me, intensely, luxuriously felt." As Elizabeth Buchan weaves the narrative back and forth between Rose's youth and middle age, we see Rose once again reach out for the meaning in life and to courageously explore the life-altering decision she made long ago. What she discovers is sweet revenge, indeed: the promise of better days ahead, no matter what age we are.

Discussion Guide

1. Do you think the young Rose should have stayed with Hal or did she make the right decision to marry Nathan?
2. How would you describe Minty's relationship with Rose? Were there definite indicators something was amiss that Rose might have noticed sooner?
3. Do you think that Rose was complacent in her marriage and career? What have you learned from her journey toward self-exploration?
4. What do you think of Minty? Did she really want Rose's life all along and just pretended to be independent or do you think something changed her?
5. Rose sought friendship and solace with friends to help her through the depression. Are there other ways she might have helped herself? What would you have done?
6. The novel was written from a wife's point of view. At any time in the novel, did you find yourself sympathizing more with Nathan than with Rose?
7. Which character, if any, in the novel disappointed you most and why? Which character surprised you most and why?
8. How do you think Rose's life choices have influenced her daughter Poppy's life? Do you think Poppy's marriage will last?
9. The novel ends on an ambiguous note. What do you think happens next?

Author Bio

Elizabeth Buchan is the author of several highly acclaimed and bestselling books of fiction, including the bestselling *REVENGE OF THE MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN*, *THE GOOD WIFE STRIKES BACK*, *EVERYTHING SHE THOUGHT SHE WANTED*, and *CONSIDER THE LILY*.

Critical Praise

"What I like about this book is everything."

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