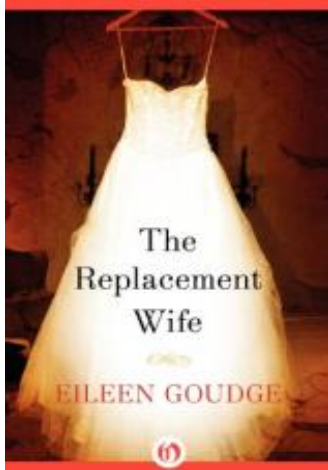


The Replacement Wife

by Eileen Goudge



About the Book

From *New York Times* bestselling author Eileen Goudge comes a poignant new novel that asks the question, "What would you do if you were told you had only six months to live?" For one professional matchmaker the answer is heart-wrenching: She must find her husband's next wife.

Camille Hart, one of Manhattan's most sought-after matchmakers, has survived more than her fair share of hardships. Her mother died when she was a young girl, leaving her and her sister with an absentee father. Now in her forties, she has already survived cancer once, though the battle revealed just how ill-equipped her husband Edward is to be a single parent. So when doctors tell Camille that her cancer is back --- and this time it's terminal --- she decides to put her matchmaking expertise to the test for one final job. Seeking stability for her children and happiness for her husband, Camille sets out to find the perfect woman to replace her when she's gone.

But what happens when a dying wish becomes a case of "be careful what you wish for?" For Edward and Camille, the stunning conclusion arrives with one last twist of fate that no one saw coming.

At once deeply felt and witty, **The Replacement Wife** is an unforgettable story of love and family, and a refreshing look at the unexpected paths that lead us to our own happy endings.

Discussion Guide

1. What is the significance of Angie's cooking class?
2. How would you describe Edward's evolution of feelings towards Camille as the story develops and comes to an end? Please explain.

3. What --- or who --- do you think began to drive Edward and Camille apart?
4. Do you think the title of this book is ironic? Please explain why or why not.
5. Do you believe that Camille will ever find a new love? How might her skills as a matchmaker help or hurt her ability to find someone new?
6. In your opinion, did Camille do the right thing by trying to replace herself? Explain. Also, what would you do if you were in her situation?
7. Why did Edward begin to agree with Camille's plan? What prompted his change of heart?
8. The book gives us an extensive look at Camille's family. Why was it that Kyra began to act older while Zach began to act younger? What observation about male and female behavior might Goudge be making?
9. Goudge juxtaposes past and present a great deal in this novel. How do you think the theme of old vs. new relates to the notion that Camille's father started trying to reconnect with her? How does this event strengthen or weaken the story?
10. If you could write a sequel to **The Replacement Wife**, what would be the main plot points that you would want to write in? Why? Do you feel like Goudge left anything out of her ending, or do you find the ending appropriate? Please explain.
11. Why do you think the story was set in New York City, as opposed to any other city? What significance does this particular setting have for this story?
12. Which part of the novel did you enjoy most, and why?

Author Bio

Eileen Goudge (b. 1950) is one of the nation's most successful authors of women's fiction, beginning with the acclaimed six-million-copy bestseller **Garden of Lies**.

Goudge is one of six children, and the joys and strife that come with a large family have informed her fiction, much of which centers on issues of sisterhood and family. At eighteen she quit college to get married, a whirlwind experience that two years later left her divorced, broke, and responsible for her first child. It was then that she started writing in earnest.

On a typewriter borrowed from a neighbor, Goudge began turning out short stories and articles. For years she had limited success --- selling work to *McCall's*, *Reader's Digest*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* --- but in the early eighties she took a job writing for a new young adult series that would become the phenomenally successful *Sweet Valley High*.

Goudge moved her family from California to New York City, where she spent several years writing young-adult fiction, creating series such as *Seniors*, *Swept Away*, and *Who Killed Peggy Sue?* In 1986 she published her first novel of adult

fiction, **Garden of Lies**, inspired by a childhood anxiety that, because she did not resemble her brothers and sisters, she had been secretly adopted --- a suspicion so strong that, at twelve, Goudge broke into her father's lockbox expecting to find adoption papers. (She did not.) The tale of children swapped at birth was a national sensation, spent sixteen weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and eventually yielded a sequel, **Thorns of Truth** (1998), which Goudge wrote in response to a decade of fan mail demanding she resolve the story.

Since then, Goudge has continued writing women's fiction, producing a total of thirteen novels to date. Her most popular works include the three-book saga of Carson Springs --- **Stranger in Paradise** (2001), **Taste of Honey**(2002), and **Wish Come True** (2003) --- a small, secret-ridden town that Goudge based on scenic Ojai, California. She has also published a cookbook, **Something Warm from the Oven**, which contains recipes that Goudge developed as a reprieve from the stresses of writing novels.

Goudge met her current husband while conducting an interview over the telephone. Entertainment reporter Sandy Kenyon was so taken with the author that he asked if he could call her back when the interview was done, and after weeks of late-night conversations they met in person and were married in 1996.

Goudge lives with Kenyon in New York City.

Critical Praise

"I've just finished **The Replacement Wife** by Eileen Goudge, and I'm still sitting here wondering what it would be like to be told you only had a few months to live. A few months left with your children, your husband, friends, and family... what would you do? What would you do if you were a business-woman whose job was to find matches for people that had not the time nor ability to find that perfect someone in their life, then one day you find out that you had to find someone to replace you because you fear your family would be unable to go on without you? How hard would it be to seek out a woman to finish raising your children, to be your husband's companion, to give yourself a sense of accomplishment and well-being before you traveled down your final road to eternal sleep? "This book made me cry, it made me smile and above all it made me thankful for what I have in my life. Eileen Goudge writes this story beautifully, with an expertise that makes you feel, dream, and truly live it as though you were there. Camille Hart is not just a matchmaker with a terminal illness, she's a martyr, a fighter and a modern day heroine. The surprising ending is the best of all. I whole-heartedly recommend this novel. Everyone should read it, man or woman, a beautiful book and one to truly be cherished."

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