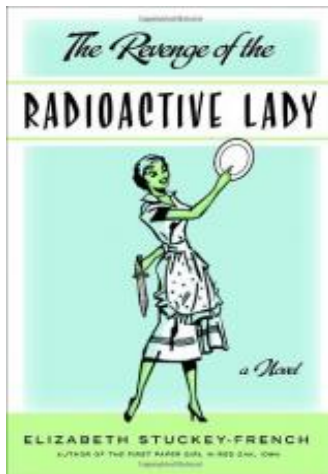


# The Revenge of the Radioactive Lady

by Elizabeth Stuckey-French

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## About the Book

This lively, intricately plotted, laugh-out-loud funny, and surprisingly touching family drama combines the wit of Carl Hiaasen with the southern charm of Jill McCorkle.

Seventy-seven-year-old Marylou Ahearn is going to kill Dr. Wilson Spriggs come hell or high water. In 1953, he gave her a radioactive cocktail without her consent as part of a secret government study that had horrible consequences.

Marylou has been plotting her revenge for 50 years. When she accidentally discovers his whereabouts in Florida, her plans finally snap into action. She high tails it to hot and humid Tallahassee, moves in down the block from where a now senile Spriggs lives with his daughter's family, and begins the tricky work of insinuating herself into their lives. But she has no idea what a nest of yellow jackets she is stumbling into.

Before the novel is through, someone will be kidnapped, an unlikely couple will get engaged, someone will nearly die from eating a pineapple upside-down cake laced with anti-freeze, and that's not all...

Told from the varied perspectives of an incredible cast of endearing oddball characters and written with the flair of a native Floridian, this dark comedy does not disappoint. Check out a special book trailer for **The Revenge of the Radioactive Lady** [here](#).

## Discussion Guide

1. Do you believe that revenge is ever justified, and under what circumstances? To what extent do you sympathize with Marylou's decision to move to Tallahassee and stalk Wilson Spriggs? What do you think you would have done in her situation?

2. Are there ways in which Otis and Ava's having Asperger's Syndrome is similar to the radiation experiment that Marylou experienced? How are the two situations different?
3. Asperger's Syndrome affects Otis differently than Ava. What do you know about Asperger's and other neuro-disorders on the autism spectrum? Does the book seem to speak authentically to the ways in which Asperger's Syndrome affects both boys and girls differently? In what ways do you think Suzi's problems are a consequence of having two siblings with Asperger's?
4. What's the biggest problem in Vic and Caroline's marriage? What do you think's going to happen to them?
5. What does it mean to forgive someone? How important is it to forgive, and to be forgiven? What role does religion play in this novel?
6. Who is your favorite character in the book and why?
7. Quite likely you were surprised by the change in Wilson and Marylou's relationship, but did you find their relationship believable? Understandable? Why or why not? Why do you think it takes the turn it does?
8. As the novel's acknowledgements reveal, the radiation experiments in this book are based on actual experiments carried out on U. S. citizens during the Cold War. Do you think such experiments are ever justified? Even if you don't, how do you think scientists and government officials justified them to themselves?
9. **The Revenge of the Radioactive Lady** is told from multiple points of view. Though always third-person limited, the point of view shifts from character to character with each chapter. Did you find this technique effective? What does it allow that first-person or third-person omniscient would not have allowed?
10. Stuckey-French is known for her dark humor. Do you find this novel humorous? If so, what parts did you find funniest and what are the sources of the book's humor?

## Author Bio

Elizabeth Stuckey-French is the author of the short story collection **The First Paper Girl in Red Oak, Iowa**. Her stories have appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Gettysburg Review*, *Southern Review*, *Five Points*, and other literary journals. She lives in Tallahassee, Florida, where she teaches fiction writing at Florida State University.

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