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Three Minutes on Love

by Roccie Hill



About the Book

Rosie Kettle, quick and intuitive, leaves her small town in the California desert to attend art college in San Francisco in the late 60?s. There she discovers a passion for photography and music. Through a chance meeting with Peter Varga, a flamboyant Hungarian illegal immigrant who runs a local music newspaper, Rosie is offered her first job photographing a down-and-out blues musician. This experience opens the door to her career as one of the first rock and roll photographers, while at the same time introducing her to the chaotic, seductive life of the music industry.

She meets David Wilderspin, young guitar sideman in the bluesman?s band, with whom she will spend her entire life. Although he is only 19, David is already a survivor. The estranged son of a violent, Russian choreographer, David has spent his life fighting to come to terms with his conflicted feelings for his father.

Only days after Rosie and David meet in a small club in San Francisco, the bluesman hangs himself. This single self-destructive act changes the lives of both Rosie and David forever. The picture Rosie takes that night, her first paying job, jack-knifes her into a new career as one of the first women rock photographers battling a male-dominated profession.

Rosie and David are characters of courage and grace, and the book is written in a profoundly literate style, a first-person narrative, with simplicity and honesty.

Discussion Guide

1. In Chapter 1, Rosie Kettle describes the California desert where she grew up. ?This was our community: fueled by someone else?s water and someone else?s electric power. Even then we were kids of excess, although we never knew it.? Do you believe that the abundance of the post-Eisenhower era significantly impacted the lives of Rosie and her generation?

2. What experiences of their youth caused Rosie and her friends in San Francisco to become the naïve idealists that allowed her to say: ?For hours we sat in the wide Sharon Meadow with music around us and the mist moving in from the cold bay at Ocean Beach. We talked of music as though we had invented it, and all of us were certain we would one day be heroes of something.?

3. ?I picked up my camera and hid my face behind the lens, holding it still for a moment while the light passed between them, and then I took a picture of those two, musicians who lived in buses and motels together but never once trusted each other.? Of the four housemates in their artistic community (David, Rosie, Peter, Marta), two are introverts and two are extroverts. Discuss which you feel to be in each category, and what leads you to believe that.

4. How does the artistic lifestyle impact those personalities? Or?how do those personalities impact the artistic lifestyle?

5. ?Her cheeks were thick and puffy like baby?s cheeks, but ruptured with veins. Between us, the air was medicated with the smell of anise, and she flicked her fingers on the glass. She must have been frightened for a long time, and was now crazy because of it, or was now frightened because she had been crazy since childhood. People like this did not survive in my suburban desert, because there they crushed people who were different.? Rosie describes Sonia in this way. Rosie is surrounded by musicians and filmmakers, several of whom reach their demise in the course of the book, via accident, drugs, alcohol, or madness. What components in Rosie?s life, or in the events in the novel, keep her safe?

6. When Rosie observes the reunion of David and his elderly father, she describes it in this way: ?His lashes were so long, framing deep green almond-shaped eyes the exact color of David?s, and some black fire, a luminous blueprint drawn by blood, shone underneath his skin. He reached a hand towards David, his joints knotted with bone disease, but the shape of their fingers was the same, double-helixing as they clasped together.? How does family harm or heal the main characters?

7. ?Once I saw an photograph in a magazine of a human embryo at seven weeks. The brain of it shone through its forehead, a cloudy halo of light, deep in the belly of its mother and breathing, the whole luminous mass beating and breathing and that brain driving the first thoughts through a fragile, silk-thin membrane. I always wondered what person had the privilege and the intelligence to take that picture, to intrude on life at its purest and most vulnerable moment.? How would you characterize Rosie?s philosophy of taking photographs? Do you think this description is an honest rendition of her attitude? If so, how do you think she survived a career in the cut-throat music business?

8. Three Minutes on Love is a novel about redemption. What do you believe are the primary elements leading to redemption for David and Rosie? For Peter? For Marta?

Author Bio

Roccie Hill is an American writer living currently in California. Roccie studied Philosophy at UCLA, and Creative Writing at San Francisco State University, where her short stories appeared in the literary quarterly. She wrote lyrics for rock bands in the 70s, and worked for a major entertainment law firm, before moving to Europe. She worked as a photo-journalist and teacher of Creative Writing while living in Paris, France. She produced a variety of short films and celebrity/royal events during her years working in the UK and Paris. Roccie has one daughter, a pilot and Captain in the United States Air Force.

Critical Praise

"In Hill's wonderful debut, young Rosie Kettle departs her quaint desert town to chase her dreams in 1960s San Francisco. Attending art college, Rosie has a chance encounter with an illegal immigrant named Peter who publishes a music magazine. Peter gives Rosie her first job, photographing a once legendary blues guitarist and his talented young partner, David Wilderspin. That assignment catapults Rosie into a hot career on the scene, an addictive lifestyle and a troubled affair with David. The two become inseparable, settling into a dream home and having a baby. But when David sets out on tour to support his disappointing new album, the road takes more out of him than he anticipated, and soon memories of his perfect life are drowned in booze. Hill's characters are believably flawed, and her powerful romance about the intersection of love, art and independence features troubling plot developments and a strong climax while deftly avoiding artists-in-love stereotypes."

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