



## Still Life With Husband

*Lauren Fox*

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## **Still Life With Husband** Lauren Fox

Meet Emily Ross, thirty years old, married to her college sweetheart, and personal advocate for cake at breakfast time.

Meet Emily's husband, Kevin, a sweet technical writer with a passion for small appliances and a teary weakness for *Little Women*.

Enter David, a sexy young reporter with longish floppy hair and the kind of face Emily feels the weird impulse to lick.

In this captivating novel of marriage and friendship, Lauren Fox explores the baffling human heart and the dangers of getting what you wish for.

*From the Trade Paperback edition.*

## **Still Life With Husband Details**

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Author : Lauren Fox

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# From Reader Review *Still Life With Husband* for online ebook

## **Dina Roberts says**

This book is about adultery.

Most books I read about this subject focus on the single man or woman (usually woman) who is in love with the married person.

This book is told through the eyes of the cheater.

Emily Ross is having difficulties in her marriage. She meets a man on a day she's forgotten to wear her wedding ring. He pursues her. She develops a crush on him. She tries to resist and fails.

I thought Emily was a well-written character. I felt sympathy for her and understanding; rather than seeing her as a horrible villainous wife.

There were some odd lines in the book that I questioned. Trivial things though. One had someone swallowing their dry spit. How can spit be dry? Can it? I would think it would just evaporate and then there'd be nothing left to swallow.

Then there was something else. I forgot the exact line. Maybe someone made a sympathetic gurgling noise in the back of their throat. Something like that. I couldn't imagine what that could be.

I didn't like the "postscript" of the novel. I'm pretty sure it's supposed to be a metaphor and it connects to something mentioned earlier in the book. I do like endings that go back to the beginning. But this time it didn't work for me. But maybe my brain didn't connect the dots well enough.

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## **Nicole says**

Is it wrong not to want to do what everyone expects? To the world, thirty-year old Emily Ross seems to be happily married to Kevin, a sensitive guy, for nearly nine years. She knows that she should be yearning to get to the next stage in her life, a house in the suburbs and a baby in the near future, at least that's what Kevin and her mother tell her. Lately, a strangling sense of suffocation in a marriage that seems to be getting tedious is all Emily feels. A chance meeting at a coffee shop with David, a writer for the local newspaper, spins Emily's life in an unexpected direction. A genuine and sometimes humorous look at expectations and relationships.

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## **Autumn says**

Oh my goodness... how to rate this book?

'Still Life with Husband' is Emily's story. She's a thirtysomething freelance journalist with a job she likes, a nice home, good friends, and a husband who loves her completely. What's wrong with all that? She gets bored. She gets stressed by the thought of living in the suburbs. She is irritated by her husband's requests that she consider having the child they'd agreed that both wanted.

So what does she do? She starts an affair with a slightly younger, slightly 'edgier' photographer. And slowly throws her life away.

First, let me say that this book hooked me at the library. I picked it up and giggled my way through the first couple of chapters. Emily talks and thinks (at that point) much like I do with my friends. So I took it home, read the rest... and by the end would have cheerfully slapped her face right off of her head. After starting a hitman fund for her husband. Before helping him hide the body.

The woman who was funny and slightly cynical at the beginning is revealed to have depths of self-centeredness and self-interest that truly shocked me. I don't want to give away too much here, but suffice to say that I was upset about this book for a few days--hell, it makes me mad thinking about it right now.

...And there's the rub. Despite my intense NEED to trash this book, neither it nor Fox deserves that. For her to create a character that I hate with the burning passion that I hate Emily... well, that takes TALENT. I haven't hated a character like this since 'The Great Santini' (Pat Conroy), and I read a LOT of books.

Being fair, Lauren Fox is a fine writer. Her characters are true, in the finest sense of the word. How tempting must it have been to have Emily's character redeemed at the end, how easy and reader-satisfying? I admire Fox so much for not doing that. Emily is at the end as she was in the beginning. People don't change much, after all. The dialogue in this book is just spot on, an evocation of the way real women speak (at least in my world). And each situation, every damned one, is plausible.

I still don't like this book, but it isn't because of the writing. If you can admire that without getting personally involved with the characters (and I couldn't manage that), this really is a lovely, well-written book.

Which I intend on forgetting as soon as I can.

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### **Allison says**

I am head over heels in love with Fox's writing style. This book is just as funny as her second (*Friends Like Us*), and populated with equally as witty characters. Emily has been with Kevin for nine years, and their marriage is comfortable... maybe *too* comfortable. Her best friend Meg is also married, but happily so, and she and her husband are thrilled at Meg's pregnancy. Emily, on the other hand, is being pressured to get pregnant and move to the suburbs by her husband, and she has no interest in either of those life changes. When Emily meets David, she starts to wonder what might have happened if she had met him *before* she met her husband, and if she could possibly rectify that situation. The book is very realistic, and I love how Fox doesn't make everything seem like a movie scene, and doesn't smooth everything over for a happy ending. It's a very minor part of the book, but so hilarious that I have to bring it to light: Emily is a freelance writer, but she also likes to write poetry, just for fun. And not your typical love poetry, but what she calls "love poems to nonhumans." That phrase alone cracks me up... "nonhumans." Emily has a whole series planned,

but in this book she is focusing on fish, and thankfully some of the poems are shared with the reader. Every time I read one I had to put the book down and laugh for a good five minutes. So witty!

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### **Lindsay says**

Did not enjoy this book at all. Read a great review for her second novel, "Friends Like Us." The library did not currently have it so I figured I try out her first book instead. I kept waiting for something to happen, which nothing did. There is hardly any character development and there is absolutely no conclusion to the story. Waste of time.

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### **Marie says**

Liked the writing and sassy one-liners, but felt the author was a bit muddled between comic chick-lit and something much darker. When a woman cheats on her husband, gets pregnant with her lover's child, gets dumped by both the husband and the lover, and ends up sitting in her parents' house without a clue, I am left not really caring much about her, her choices, or her future. Had at least one element of the story ended with a hint of forward-moving resolution I would have gone for four stars.

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### **Libby says**

Despite Knopf saddling this novel with an atrocious, obvious-as-hell marketing ploy of a cover, this novel wants to be taken seriously. I mean, Ms. Michiko Kakutani herself gives it her imprimatur (or at least Lauren Fox's writing), as the copy makes ample note of.

And, while I was reading this novel (as a much needed speed read break from W.G. Sebald's *On the Natural History of Destruction*) I did it enjoy it enough. But, as soon as I had finished it, and really started thinking about how *slight* it felt, I realized I didn't really like it at all (I mean, it isn't a reprehensible piece of work or anything, just... thin).

I started this book with more than an open mind. Anyone who knows me well has likely heard my rant about the inherent sexism of the "chick-lit" label and those who decry novels they believe fall under this heading, and how such criticisms typically embody a lazy, easy way to dismiss the validity of female experience, especially if it--god forbid--pertains to love.

Furthermore, the subject of the book lies close to my heart at this moment in time, as it focuses on a young woman who experiences ambivalence about the institution of marriage (or at least I thought that was what the book was about, although I would now argue that it is not about that at all).

The plot is straightforward, which is no great crime in its own right, of course. Emily Ross is 30 years old and married to her college sweetheart (they've been together for nine years and married for five). She and her husband Kevin have reached an impasse: he wants to have children and move to the 'burbs; she doesn't want to have children (at least with him), and wants to stay in their urban Milwaukee apartment. One day at the local coffee shop she meets a handsome stranger with whom she feels an instant connection. The rest is history.

Lauren Fox has a gift for zippy one liners, and her observations on many subjects--from friendship to family dynamics--are biting and astute. Fox is honest about Emily's choices, which I appreciated. On a personal note, however, Emily reminded me of the many boring Midwesterners I know who go to their local state university, move back to the city or town in which they grew up, and have all the same friends they've had since high school, so I wasn't particularly keen on keeping company with her, but I acknowledge that this is a bias on my part, and doesn't mark a flaw in the writing.

The real flaw of the book is that in a novel about cheating and the dissolution of a marriage, we the readers have to believe that there is something real and meaningful at stake, a loss of a certain magnitude, in order to care about what happens, or to believe that the person who has to make said difficult choices is experiencing actual conflict. That does not happen in this novel.

I've been trying to figure what missteps Ms. Fox made, and I think that the biggest issue is her choice to not only start us *in medias res* vis a vis the boredom of E. and K.'s marriage, but to also forgo any real or sizable flashbacks that convincingly illustrate that Emily was ever in love with Kevin.

Lauren Fox makes sure that we understand that Emily is a fairly conventional, analytical person who doesn't experience great passions (a possible justification for my above complaint) so that we GET IT when she does experience irrational, unexplainable passion for her dark, tall, and handsome stranger, David Keller. But David and Kevin are not ultimately developed all that differently, which is to say thinly. They're both good guys. They're both good at what they do. They both love Emily. Yawn.

Only Emily's best friend, Meg, is as remotely well drawn as Emily, and it is their relationship that seems to be at the core of the book. I can't help but wonder why Lauren Fox didn't write a book primarily about friendship, given that it seems like that is really what this novel inclines toward.

Her take on the possible complexities of marriage is predictable and boring; in other words, not complex. This is not a book, in my opinion, in any way really about marriage, about which there are actually interesting, unpredictable, intelligent, complex, nuanced potentialities to explore.

Basically, I feel like this book is a bit fraudulent. It wants to be serious literature; it isn't. Knopf wants certain buyers to believe it is a fun, frothy piece of Chick-Lit. It isn't. Instead, it occupies this tepid, non-confrontational middle ground, just like the setting in which it takes place.

I can't wait to leave the Midwest.

P.s. Can we ban publishers from comparing any retarded book that touches on adultery to Madame Bovary? It should be obvious, but despite the jacket copy, this is no fucking Madame Bovary.

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### **Melissa Lee-Tammeus says**

I loved this book up until the time the character made a really stupid choice. But then I decided that we all make really stupid choices all the time. So, I stuck around to see what would happen. To see it unfold before your very eyes with someone else makes you want to scream "don't do it!" And then when they do it any way, you want to scream, "Oh no she didn't!" That's how I felt through this whole book. I simultaneously wanted to slap and shake and hug the main character. And then I was cringing to make sure the author didn't make it all happy in the end, and thank goodness, she didn't. As much as this book is depressing, it's also

pretty real life. People screw up, people deal with the screw up, people get hurt, people move on. The truth hurts. And hindsight is 20/20.

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### **Danielle Andrews says**

This book is all wrong in so many ways. There are attempts at humour in Ms Fox's writing style that just don't align with the story she is trying to tell. She's excessively descriptive with so many minor details (I found myself scanning through paragraphs at times just to get to the point), and yet the lack of clarity regarding her relationship with David leaves me somewhat frustrated and at a loss to understand why she takes the risks she does. I'm not talking about providing the reader with all the sordid details under the sheets - but the author is unconvincing in her portrayal of the illicit draw between two characters. Overall the story lacks depth and left me feeling quite unmoved.

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### **Shana Maimone says**

Ugh. This book was just bad. I didn't even want to finish it, but I kept going, hoping it would get better. It wasn't the writing that was the problem. It was the main character. She was just not a nice person. She was annoying and selfish and just awful. I was hoping she'd redeem herself in the end, but she didn't. I don't mind a book not having a happy ending because that's reality. But this character just never got any better. Very disappointing.

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### **Mamma23 says**

Unsatisfying is the word I'd use to describe this book.

I really enjoyed reading the book, but in the end I felt more than a little cheated. When I invest my time in reading a book, I want it to deliver.

The characters were very well drawn. I liked them all, could really feel them. There are some very funny parts too, that had me laugh out loud.

There needed to be one more chapter. Characters story was just left hanging. I don;t like that. Even if things were "unresolvable", I want some clue as to where it may go.

That being said, I'd recommend this as a light summer/ vacation/beach read.

Side note, My hubs looked at the cover more than once with an annoyed look on his face. Lol.

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### **Angel Perkins says**

This is a funny look at a woman's many moments of "Oh crap. How did I end up HERE?". I thought it was a promising debut for this first time author.

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### **Jaqi says**

Embarrassed to have read this book, which I mistook for a memoir after reading an excerpt on Kindle. Lauren Fox story of a woman's extramarital affair reads like a skimpy script for a made-for-TV movie. The transitions are clumsy and unrealistic, and there's little to account for the motivations at play. One step shy of a creepy "romantic novel," this book left me feeling disappointed in both myself and the author.

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### **Jeanine Walker says**

My sister-in-law gave this book to me after she'd finished it. We were in a cabin (read: decked out wooden house) on the Pacific Coast. She seemed mixed about it. I read it. It was like candy. Maybe liquor. Smooth, went down easily, spelled destruction. The moment I finished it, I didn't like it as much as I had the moment before. I had the feeling it began as a much, much longer book, as parts of it felt like they were missing. It may take this kind of editing to be a NY Times bestseller.

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### **Stephanie Scott says**

I'd never heard of this book or author, and just picked it up in a thrift store. It was so good I finished it fast, and actually loved the ending. I guess it could be defined as well-written chick lit, but I mostly loved the commentary on relationships. It was sad and funny, but mostly just real.

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