



Love and Other Natural Disasters

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Eve is eight months pregnant and in the middle of a Thanksgiving celebration when she discovers that her husband Jonathan has developed an intimate relationship with a woman over the past year. Jonathon asserts his innocence (an affair involves physical intimacy, and he didn't have any), while Eve feels deeply betrayed by the emotional connection he shared with someone else. What Jon has done seems so terrifyingly out of character that Eve finds herself questioning her entire reality. Did she ever really know Jon at all? Was their happiness together a lie? Is emotional intimacy more forgivable than sexual intimacy? And can their marriage survive?

Love and Other Natural Disasters Details

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From Reader Review Love and Other Natural Disasters for online ebook

Nicole says

I wanted to give this one three stars and I was going to until the latter end of the novel. Eve made an such a foolish choice and I wondered why in the world the author chose that for her. And then the author had to very graphically describe that choice. It ruined the book for me.

I don't generally like Chick-lit, but this one showed some strong promise through much of the novel. I thought the author did a great job of portraying the devastating affects an emotional affair has on a marriage. But after the story took a turn for the worse, there was no redeeming it in my opinion.

Christie says

When Eve, a young mother pregnant with her second child, overhears her husband having what sounds like a very intimate conversation on the phone in the middle of Thanksgiving dinner, her whole neatly ordered world is turned upside down. She overhears her husband say: "Shh, you're going to be okay" and that's all it takes to know that something is going on.

Holly Shumas' novel Love and Other Natural Disasters explores the effects of an affair – not a physical affair, but an emotional one – on a marriage. I suspect that there are probably some people who would say that if there isn't any sex, it's a "no harm, no foul" situation. Shumas does a pretty good job, though, of illustrating that looking outside of your marriage for any sort of fulfillment can have devastating consequences.

Love and Other Natural Disasters traces Eve and Jonathan as they try to put their marriage back together. It's a push/pull affair as they both try to cope with their own issues and the unresolved issues in their marriage.

Shumas herself is a licensed marriage and family therapist and if I have any niggles with the book it's that sometimes it seems instructional. The characters each have a part to play to demonstrate the various stages of grief: the disbelief and anger, forgiveness and acceptance. Sometimes their reactions seemed over-the-top or not quite harsh enough. For example, after she discovers her husband's relationship, she reads his emails looking to understand what's gone wrong. Later, in therapy, Jon blows up about her invasion of his privacy. Um, hello, there wouldn't have been any need for her to go snooping if you hadn't done something inappropriate. But I know the therapist's point of view might be to suggest that Jonathan has a right to his anger.

Some of Love and other Natural Disasters resonated with me, but not because the book was beautifully written or original. And even though I sometimes felt as though it was too instructional, and that the characters weren't particularly nuanced – Love and Other Natural Disasters is topical.

Staci says

<http://lifeinthethumb.blogspot.com/20...>

I chose to read this book because my friend Mel at Lit*Chick featured this for this month's online bookclub. At first I was a little put off by the back cover description but Mel liked the book and I was willing to see where it would take me. Without getting too personal, I'm all too aware of what infidelity can do to a marriage and so as I was reading this book, I kept asking myself THE QUESTION...which is worse....a sexual affair or an emotional affair? My personal feelings...an emotional affair feels more personal and more earth-shattering to me. How could this person that loves me and I love back, be giving a stranger time that should belong to me? telling this person things that they should be telling me, confiding their secrets and fears to this stranger instead of their "loved" one?

"Attending to someone outside of the marriage robs your partner of the intimacy they deserve."
"You needed a book to tell you that?" I wished I could believe his conversion, but it seemed a little too convenient and showy, like something you'd find in a revival tent.

p.111

One of the questions from the back cover was, 'is his emotional affair more forgivable than a sexual one?' I guess my answer to that is no. I won't speak for all women but for me I want to connect with my partner on a deep emotional level not just when we're having sex or making love. There are things that only you two have shared and that is what makes your relationship so special. You are connected...but when that bond breaks....things just never seem the same again.

I found myself wishing Thanksgiving had never happened. I liked to think Jon would have come to his senses after Olivia was born and ended things with Laney on his own. If he had, I would never have been the wiser. I would never have had to rethink my entire relationship with him. I wouldn't have lost my best friend, my family. But once you know there's no Santa Claus, you can never convince yourself otherwise.
p. 153

The other question that is asked is 'can their marriage survive?' I believe in my heart that if BOTH people are open and brutally honest with each other, and are both committed to their marriage, then yes, a marriage can survive infidelity. But not without a lot of tears, screaming, anger, true sorrow, forgiveness and most of all love.

I enjoyed reading this book and it certainly gave me a lot of food for thought. I would recommend it to anyone who is looking for a good read that will make them question themselves as to what would you do if you were in this situation.

Amelinda says

Eve and Jon have been together for ten years. They are married, have a five-year-old son, Jacob, and she is eight months pregnant with their second child. At Thanksgiving dinner, Jon leaves the room to take a phone call. Noticing his long absence, Eve follows him into the study, where she finds out that he has been having an emotional affair with a woman for almost a year.

Jon (and many friends and family) find it hard to empathize with Eve's anger, saying that he never did anything physical with the other woman. Eve, however, feels betrayed and wonders if an emotional affair is worse than one based on physical intimacy. Love and Other Natural Disasters follows Eve as she tries to

see her husband as the man she fell in love with, and herself as the woman who perhaps was not enough for him.

This book raises the interesting question of whether the term "affair" should only be used to describe physical intimacies outside of a relationship. As a woman, I could understand how Eve saw her husband's emotional attachment to another woman more threatening than sex. I was irritated that he wanted credit for "resisting" the other woman, for not sleeping with her. Marriage is based on trust; you trust your spouse with your life, your secrets, dreams, fears, desires, etc., because they are your partner, your equal. If you're not giving those things to your partner but you're giving them to someone else, then there's a problem.

Shumas's skill in the book is that, like in reality, nothing is either black or white. There's gray. Everywhere. I agreed with Eve sometimes, and was appalled, even disgusted, by what she did at other times. The same for the husband. In relationships, there isn't one right person and one wrong person. Shumas shows that right and wrong sometimes overlap. As the story progresses, the incident at Thanksgiving seemed less like the source of the problem, and more of an impetus for Eve and Jon to figure out what they wanted, and if they could find that in each other again.

Analilia Llamas says

What a selfish annoying woman.

Adensanti says

this book make me questioning myself, what would i do if i were in eve's shoes. what eve's going through is different from the used to or supposed to be an affair. her husband, jon is having an emotional affair w/OW and not once having a sexual intimate relationship w/this OW. they both just simply... care and loving for each other in the deepest of their relationship. i too, will go mad ofc if i knw my husband was having this kind of affair, but im really cant put this kind of affair in the same level in "physical" affair. but somehow this emotional affair is also hold the same heaviness as the physical one. it's weird but that's what im feeling. im agree w/some lines in this book where eve's friend (i forgot her name) was saying that, according to her, emotional affair is more dangerous than the "lust" one, coz it means while doing this, both Jon n laney were in their "right" mind. it involves their heart and their thought. and this kind of affair is put an attachment, this mean, laney was meant something to jon and jon to laney.

many commnt seems to hate on eve. yes, she is kinda "too much", but what is too much? remember, she was 8months pregnant, finding her husband excused himself when he was in the middle of family gathering on thxgiving day to picked up a phone from his "GF", and then hearing her husband saying encouraging words to calm the ow in an intimate way that he shouldnt do that in the first place. heck even in the wrong time! hellooo... pregnant wife here ???

and also, i kinda not satisfy w/thing that happened to jon n laney. and what's going through in jon's head. this book is all about eve's pov, eve's pain, and eve's dealing w/her trouble to accept jon back. but we never knw exactly how deep this jon the ass husband felt for his sin, how deep was his feeling toward laney, and how far he trying to forget his "affair" w/laney. sure he must felt "troubled" to ended thing w/laney that fast. i mean, he's been in this -super best friend, soul mate- things w/laney for almost a year, and then pooff... the book explained that jon was sorry and he love eve, WHILE he also love laney but he love eve's more and

dont want to lose his family and his soon to be born daughter. well, ass holes, where were that thought when u was about to make a bullshit -soul mate conversation- w/laney ? ha? and does it ever occurred that he need to end his affair? long bfore his wife cought him?

i honestly confused w/eve n jon character. if im hanging onto the lines that jon said to assure eve that he was sorry and he love her, well, sure i do believe. but somehow, i didnt believe that he love eve. he only dont want to breaking off his family. so he go w/the flow. what if there was no kid on the way? would he ended thing w/eve? the way the author make jon's character doesnt convinced me enough of what the author wants us to see. i knw the author want us to knw that jon choose eve and that he love eve and that he want to go back. but it doesnt explained when jon said that he love eve and he also love laney. why he love laney? if this was all about jon felt like a hero in front of laney, as he said to eve, then why would he still sent laney those "unsend" email? it's as if, he still feeling attached to laney, but he cant, but he want to. it's confusing. their emotional problem doesnt came clear to me.

and i also feeling that eve n ray actually more fit. from the way they speak when they r having sex, eve also recalled what's her n jon's sex life. it's seems that her n jon's sex life is dull, and no passion, and she also said that jon mostly closed his eyes and not having this... hmm wht should i say ? .. a stare contact. while ray n eve are having a passionate one. sure the author should be giving us more story about eve n h=jon in this area. i mean, everything between eve n jon is soo dull.

regards

Heather says

Rating: B+

Review: For reasons beyond the scope of this review, let me just say that this book made me not want to be a writer. Holly Shumas does a pretty bang-up job of writing a book with a seemingly basic hook and keeping you interested. Writing a simple book and making it good is very hard to do. She's set the bar pretty high in this regard. (Perhaps higher than I would ever be able to grasp.)

This book also made me incredibly fearful to ever get married. Shumas is a marriage therapist and I think she might have been writing from some experience. Emotional affairs are no joke. And they probably happen just as often, if not more so, than physical infidelity. The questions that the affair raises in Eve's mind are questions that I'd scarcely want to answer.

A couple of things regarding the technical expertise of this book:

1. The hook came so early in this book that I was nervous for Shumas. I wasn't sure how she was going to sustain this "forgiveness" of the emotional affair for ~300 pages, but she held her own pretty well.
2. She wasn't pitch-perfect in handling this long, drawn-out turmoil in the marriage. At a couple of points I thought, "Yep, it was bad, but you need to piss or get off the pot. Just make a decision about what you're going to do with your life."
3. The climax was kind of surprising. The climax is, not surprisingly, an emotional climax. She has set up the characters of Eve and Jonathan to fit into particular boxes, and then she kind of flips the script. She kept her hand concealed so you couldn't really see "the climax" coming, but it caught me off guard. (But that wasn't all-together bad.) (Neither was it all-together good.)

It's hard to describe the book other than to say this:

1. If you're looking for clean resolutions, don't read this book.
2. If you're looking for a "fun" read, don't read this book.
3. If you don't like to read characters who complain or are "realistic," don't read this book.

Be warned: This book is not for everyone! But, if you like reading about people who live in reality (albeit, perhaps, a reality not like your own) and can take some grief and grit in reading, then this book is totally for you.

Recommendation: People looking for a better alternative to Sue Miller (see this review) will probably enjoy this book.

Heather says

Love and other Natural Disasters would make a great book for a book club. The subject matter is definitely one that can get you talking, not a pleasant one but non-the-less will get you talking.

Eve discovers during her family's Thanksgiving dinner that her husband is having an emotional affair with another woman, Laney. They never had sex, although Laney would have liked to. Jonathan the husband feels that sex would be too much of a betrayal.

This book definitely makes you wonder how you would handle and feel about a situation in your marriage. I am completely happy with my husband but still was able to feel some of the anger that Eve feels. It is a well written book, however I felt that Eve was overboard on some of her reactions. Those reactions did make me wonder what I would do in her situation, and then it didn't seem quite as over the top.

I liked Love and Other Natural Disasters, but would not necessarily recommend this to someone who is dealing with infidelity. It may hit too close to home.

Emily says

This book does not live up to its great title. I was expecting an earthquake at least. But there are no other natural disasters in this book.

There is a lot of sulking and discussing of feelings, and a lot of times when you want to yell at the characters "Just talk to each other!" Maybe that is how therapists feel all of the time.

It was a good premise for a story but did not follow through with the writing or super-interesting characters.

melanie (lit*chick) says

A few weeks ago one of the headlines on my homepage was regarding Brangelina. I'm not a gossip hound, but was intrigued his statement regarding the whole mess:

“Even then it doesn’t mean that there was some kind of dastardly affair. There wasn’t. I’m very proud of the way that it was handled. It was respectful.”

I was immediately disgusted. Hello... if you fall in love with someone while you are married to someone else, regardless of physical contact, you are having an AFFAIR. And frankly, there is no argument to convince me otherwise. And giving yourself a pat on the back for your imagined restraint and self control is delusional and laughable. (Can you tell I’m irritated?)

This is the premise of the new book by Holly Shumas and when asked to review it (just a few days later), I jumped at the chance. Knowing my already strongish opinions on the matter, I was curious to see how the situation would be handled over 300 pages. I was not disappointed.

From the first chapter, you are thrown into the discovery by pregnant Eve that her husband Jonathan is involved (via emails and phone calls) with someone from work. The rest of the story deals with Eve's reaction and back & forth over how to handle life and her future; complicating matters are the reactions of those close to her, and Jon's attempts to get his family back and rationalize his behavior. Shumas does a masterful job of not making Eve a whiny victim and with each decision Eve makes and responses she has, the situation gets fuzzier instead of clearer.

This would make for a feisty and spirited book discussion. Which is why I'm choosing it for my February online bookclub pick. Yes, during the month of love I'm asking you to read it and be ready to chat on February 28.

3.5+ stars

also posted at www.litchick.typepad.com

Hachette Book Group has graciously agreed to giveaway a copy - enter to win on the blog :)

Hope to see you there...

Goobledybook says

Disclosure: I am super nit-picky about books that involve real life circumstances. Makes my reviews tougher than feel good chick-lit.

If you read the synopsis, it is pretty obvious what you are going to get in this book. A brokenhearted, confused woman that questions every thing about herself and choices. Believable...yes. Where this book lost me was the anger issue. This woman discovered her husband LOVED another woman, had for some time and hid his feelings and actions for a year. Jon, then lied and half-assed his way towards reconciliation and there was never a real confrontation between the two. Believable...no.

Another problem was Ray, the short term boyfriend of Eve while separated from Jon. The dating wasn't the problem, although the author did not make the guy seem very appealing. It was the mind blowing sex she had (which didn't read as very mind blowing) followed immediately with "I want to get back with Jon". Come the f--k on! Believable...no.

Finally, Eve discovered most of what Jon was doing and feeling by reading his emails without him knowing. Honestly, I get it. She no longer trusted the guy, what did he expect. So when he found out, he blew up and

for some unknown reason the author wrongly put Eve's action on par with Jon having an emotional affair with another woman for a year. Again, come the f--k on! When Jon discusses the email issue with Eve, he says she could have just asked him questions about the other woman and his feelings/actions and he would have answered, so she didn't have to get "half the story" from his emails. So I read this book and the guy was not being honest with Eve or himself, yet I'm supposed to agree with his point-of-view about Eve reading the emails?

So I initially gave 3-stars, then wrote the review and realized this isn't a 3-star book, because I didn't like it. I'm ready to read an book where the scorned, cheated on wife isn't made to feel guilty about what SHE did to cause the husband to cheat. I'm ready to read a book that empowers a woman to move on from a man that chose to cheat instead of working with his wife to make a better life. I'm SO ready to read a book that does NOT tell a woman that forgiving transgressions is okay because she wasn't a perfect wife.

2-stars.

Mel says

I list this as "read" but to be honest, I didn't finish it.

An "emotional affair" was an interesting topic to base the story on. How could this happen to us, while I am pregnant even? I wanted to see the healing process. But I didn't

What I saw was a lot of the wife thinking she could forgive him, but then she couldn't. I can, of course, understand that change of heart. But it just kept dragging on and on. So I skipped to the end to see what would happen with this " I forgive him, I forgive him not" daisy. And that was it. I didn't even care anymore if they reconciled or not.

Jennifer says

It was just okay for me. I thought Eve was whiny and Jon a little pathetic. I think it had the potential to be really good, as it is certainly an interesting topic. By the time you get to the end and hear about all the history of the relationship, I found myself Feeling almost cheated because a lot of the character traits and events in their marriage that led to the affair are not really clear Until Eve basically tells us "Jon was like this, and I was like this". Overall mildly entertaining, but not a book a recommend.

Donna says

Eve, eight-months pregnant, finds out her husband is having an emotional affair with a co-worker.

Good thing: Eve's reactions in the first half of the book seemed reasonable - I'd look at my mate's emails on the sly too if I just found out he was doing this and lying about it.

Bad thing: I wanted to see more confrontation between Eve and her husband rather than the possible dulling of the feelings over time.

I know how hurtful emotional affairs can be from experience. This book does a good job of making you realize that emotional affairs, even without physical contact, can be relationship shattering. It doesn't do a good job of making you feel what Eve must have been feeling. Based on this book, I'm neutral about reading another book by the author.

Nerissa says

Just not the book for me.

Not sure why. I didnt even finish it.
