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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ FAMILY & RELATIONSHIPS

Keeping It Civil: The Case of the Pre-Nup and the Porsche and Other True Accounts from the Files of a Family Lawyer

Margaret Klaw
Algonquin Books (Sep 24, 2013)
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With wit and emotional drive, a family lawyer sensitively reveals the changing laws regarding marriage in the modern era.

The definition of family has changed over the years. Gone are the days when most homes in the United States comprised a father, mother, and two children. Margaret Klaw's *Keeping It Civil* explains how the modern family, gay marriage, reproductive rights, and ever-changing culture have affected societal constructs, custody cases, prenuptial agreements, and how family law operates. The book not only sheds light on the complexities of the legal system but also on complex definitions of family.

The author loves family law because it gives her the chance to pick up a family's pieces. Her intention is to explain the emotions and complications that expand past a lawyer's billable hour. She is passionate about her work because she is fascinated by how others "live, love, and often screw up their lives."

It can be difficult for family law professionals to maintain boundaries when dealing with sensitive issues. Klaw explains the importance of emotionally connecting with clients but also of putting up a wall so clients' problems don't become hers. However, like any human, there are cases and stories that get to her. This book explains what it is like to navigate such sticky terrain when other families become her families.

Forget cumbersome legal terminology and stale prose: Klaw makes law seem exciting. She explains how legal contracts like marriage and prenuptial agreements place value on socioeconomic status and place in relationships. Though law is not always fair about putting people on equal footing, things are changing.

The chapter titles are witty because they use legal terminology to explain Klaw's own life and work. For example, in "The Prenup and the Porsche," she explains how her family went to a race car museum for Father's Day. While roaming, Klaw realized she once handled the car owner's prenuptial agreement with a young woman. For a moment, her family becomes linked to this past case. Klaw cannot get away from the law.

Love can be messy, and law is just as complicated. Klaw's book reminds readers that nothing about law is impersonal. Instead, human emotion remains the glue of the legal system, societal norms, and family law.
LISA BOWER (August 31, 2013)

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