

## Love in Condition Yellow: A Memoir of an Unlikely Marriage

**Sophia Raday**

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On the heels of a difficult break-up, political activist and “hippie girl” Raday is set up on a blind date by her cousin George with a big-city policeman and former soldier, Barrett. She is urged by extended family members to go: “I realized this is an odd triangulation. Thirteen-year-old Mallory thinks Barretts cute and my thirty-one-year-old gay cousin thinks he has *je ne sais quoi*. Hmm.” Raday knows his and her beliefs and diverse backgrounds are too disparate to overcome, but she is intrigued, and she agrees to meet him anyway.

The first part of the book details the duos dance as they work through these issues and their feelings for one another. It culminates in a wedding weekend in June 2000. “Luminarias twinkle, the full moon comes up. Tattooed former marines dance among tattooed lesbians in the soft midsummer evening.”

The second half of the book is about the give and take of marriage and the evolving dynamics of life as more than a couple. Raday envisions motherhood, a professional career, home renovations, and life with her protector, her rock.

Then 9/11 happens and her husband, a Reserve soldier, is ready: “Barrett is a warrior always on the lookout. You could almost say he was waiting for this moment, preparing for it, all his life.”

The family struggles with conception, work and time constraints, and the eventual deployment of Barrett to the war. Its a story many families could tell, but Raday tells it best. Its also a story of overcoming differences. As Barrett told Raday the first time she tried breaking up with him: “Look, I dont care if you like the same things I do, or think the same way I do. Youre good for me and I like being around you.”

Raday, who has a masters degree from the University of California Berkeleys Goldman School of Public Policy, has worked in community development finance. Shes a founding editor of Literarymama.com.

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (April 13, 2009)

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