

Love Reconsidered: A Novel

Phyllis J. Piano

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Love Reconsidered is a touching story filled with extraordinary characters put in heartbreaking situations.

Phyllis J. Piano's *Love Reconsidered* is a heartrending journey charged with emotion. This inspiring tale teaches lessons on forgiveness and how to pick up the pieces after tragedy hits.

When a young man dies, two families are shattered. Ted Hammand has just lost his son in a horrific motorcycle accident. Then his wife leaves him for the father of their deceased son's precious girlfriend, Sunny. Aleen Riddick, Sunny's mom, tries to comfort her daughter who is inconsolable over losing the love of her young life, but it is extremely difficult because she is still reeling from the abrupt end to her marriage. Ted, Aleen, and Sunny lean on each other for support, while the two unfaithful partners are tormented by their guilt. The affair that initiated this awful chain of events is only the prelude to what these families are about to endure.

The narrative opens three months after the devastating crash that forever changed the lives of five interrelated people. With the exception of a single flashback, the story is linear. The novel moves through time with a natural rhythm that gains momentum as shocking developments come to light.

The book is organized with chapters named for a specific character, giving in-depth perspectives on the thoughts and emotional states of each person.

The characters are forced to undergo a transformation into different versions of themselves. Small revelations are experienced, such as when Aleen catches a glimpse of her reflection in the door of the frozen food case while grocery shopping and is horrified. From this moment she vows to take better care of herself, mentally and physically.

It is fascinating to see how characters' relationships with one another change. For example, Sunny's bond with her father is severely damaged, while her interaction with Ted grows more paternal. When situations turn dire, behavioral traits become more human. The methods by which each character deals with their pain compel the story forward. Personality flaws are relatable, even when the mistakes are catastrophic. Motivations feel authentic and rouse empathy as the narrative deepens.

There is a subtle balance between dialogue and exposition. Love notes, moving letters, and emails are incorporated into the text. These messages are evocative and sincere, and they impart a profound view into a character's psyche.

The death scene lacked emotion, as the final thoughts from the person dying were unoriginal. The sensations described were ordinary, expected, and did not stimulate like other agonizing scenes.

Love Reconsidered is a touching story filled with extraordinary characters put in heartbreaking situations. Enjoyable and engrossing, with surprising twists, this is a book that is hard to put down.

BRITTNEY DECKER (August 30, 2017)

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