



My Husband's Marriage is Fine, but Mine Isn't: Patience and Trust in God: The Key to a Fulfilling Life

Aretha S. Larsen

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This shifting story of love and disillusionment maintains faith as its center.

What do you do when your strong Christian faith tells you to honor your husband, but your husband seems to be concerned only with himself? In Aretha S. Larsen's *My Husband's Marriage is Fine, but Mine Isn't*, this quandary is explored.

Sarah is a young, inexperienced woman when she meets Robert and is swept off her feet. Though her family warns her that Robert is a criminal and that they will cut her off if she continues to see him, Sarah is in love. She ends up moving out of the country with Robert. In no time, Robert changes from a loving partner into a selfish man who steps out on Sarah, can't pay his bills, and fails her in every way possible. Devastated, Sarah moves back home.

Before long, Robert realizes his mistake and, with the help of his parents, regains Sarah's love and trust. The two marry. Patterns are hard to break, though, and soon Robert falls back into his old ways. Sarah's faith tells her that God will somehow bring Robert back to her, but when Robert falls for her best friend, it seems their marriage could be over.

My Husband's Marriage is Fine is an uneven novel, with elements of a religious self-help book, confusing hints at a mystery, and nods to a handful of other genres thrown into the mix. First set up as a woman's story of regaining faith in her marriage, the perspective soon shifts to other characters and interactions who don't quite fit in the story. The book's muddled directions make it hard to follow, as do its frequently awkward descriptions and improper grammar. All these factors become dizzying, and the book's ultimate goal remains unclear.

The story's transitions are uneven. One chapter ends with the couple blissfully happy; the next opens with them miserable again, without explanation. Inconsistencies also abound, as with Sarah declaring that Robert forbids her to get a job, just after she's described a handful of her previous jobs.

The novel becomes mired in a love triangle farther in, inexplicably involving a group of criminals, a Mexican police officer, and Robert's Muslim friend, who beggars belief when he falls in love with the woman Robert is ready to leave Sarah for. Events lead to the unconvincing conclusion that Sarah's faith in God has finally led him back to her, and the story ends by declaring that the only way to have a true relationship with someone is to rely on God, though it does not sell the message well.

This story about moving toward a fulfilled life doesn't quite reach its destination.

ANGELA MCQUAY (February 7, 2018)

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