

The Geometry of Love

Jessica Levine

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Jessica Levine has crafted a lyrical and realistic examination of the complications and exhilarations of romantic entanglements. *The Geometry of Love* asks whether stability or passion is more important in a relationship, as a love triangle grows and morphs in New York in the late eighties.

In her early thirties, Julia feels bored and stuck in her long-term relationship with Princeton professor Ben. He offers her stability and he's devoted to her, but they've lost their spark and somewhere along the way, Julia's lost herself. When she runs into Michael, Ben's old roommate with whom she shared one passionate kiss years ago, events are set into motion that will cause aftershocks decades into the future.

Julia is a compelling and relatable protagonist and Levine portrays her as a woman in turmoil. She truly loves Ben and doesn't want to hurt him. Not sure if she wants to get married and have children with Ben or have an affair with Michael, she changes her mind every few pages, musing, "I didn't care how contradictory my impulses were—how I was simultaneously trying to force Ben to make a deeper commitment to me while needing to 'explore other directions.'"

The book's one major flaw is the abrupt shift in pace in part two. Set sixteen years after part one, decisions are made abruptly and plot points click through at a rapid pace. Though the events that transpire are appropriate, the time line of the climax seems rushed over a very short period of time and stands at odds with the slow, lyrical progression of the first half of the book. The writing itself is melodious throughout, infused with bursts of humor: "My aunt Linda ... looked like a bohemian forced out of her lair and into civilization at gunpoint."

ALLYCE AMIDON (Summer 2014)

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