

The Last Hollywood Romance: A Novel

Beverly Bloomberg

Bridge Works Publishing Co. (September 2000)

\$22.95 (240pp)

978-1-882593-36-1

Emmaline Goldman Grosvenor is twenty-eight, a Hollywood writer who laces her conversation with profanity and her life with insights into the condition of loneliness, the state of television writing, and the difficulties of life in general. Bud Goodman, already on the team of the popular sitcom *Life with Lucky* when Emmaline arrives, writes gags. He's forty-two and worldly wise, with a kind of sad innocence nonetheless; he knows the realities (and the ephemeral nature) of life (particularly his) as a TV scriptwriter. She is sarcastic, yet optimistic; he, fatalistic yet yearning for a kind of happiness he believes impossible to attain. She's self-confident; his low self-esteem assures him that sooner or later (probably sooner) everyone will know he's a fraud. While both are excellent writers, they are stunned to discover that they make a great team.

When the two fall in love in the process of writing for—and getting trashed by—their hit TV show, it defies all the odds and makes for a situation comedy all its own.

Flipping back and forth between Bud's and Emmaline's viewpoints, the story tumbles along, gathering momentum as it reveals all the other zany characters inhabiting this very strange world of television. There's the handicapped producer, who manipulates people to suit his purposes; there's Enrique Carlos, the "selectively ethnic" casting director, better known as Reek, with a mission all his own; there's the prima donna star of the TV series, Monty Newman, who first quits because he doesn't like the fact that Emmaline was hired without his approval—and then refuses to go away.

Laced with gags and one-liners, moving from one absurd situation to another (like the "shopping trip" to the studio's warehouse, where they pick out an electric fireplace and a purple ottoman for their office just because they can), the tale told is totally Hollywood and hilariously funny. Even the chapter titles are funny—"May All Your Cycles Be Bi-," "The Earth Moved and I Can't Find a Thing," "She Showed Me Hers. Do I Have To Show Her Mine?" and two consecutive titles, "It All Comes Together," and "It All Falls Apart."

It's funny, it's irreverent, and it's ideal for lifting whatever workweek blues the reader may have.

MARLENE SATTER (September / October 2000)

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