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What do you do when your husband claims to be madly in love with you, but doesn't desire you sexually? When your therapist is more interested in opening an online sex-toy shop with your husband than in saving your marriage? Do you try yet another counsellor, get divorced or settle for a sexless marriage?

Lee Kofman, rebellious daughter of ultra-orthodox Jews, has always sought her own way. True to her Bohemian dream where love can coexist with sexual freedom, she decided to experiment with an open marriage . despite the fact that her previous non-monogamous relationship ended in disaster.

Our cultural mores suggest that love without monogamy is impossible, but Lee hoped she could do better the second time round and embarked on a personal exploration to find out whether she could save her marriage while being non-monogamous in an ethical way. For several months she talked to swingers, polyamorists, cross-dressers, suburban families, artists and migrants—in short, to anyone who has ever been involved in an unconventional relationship.

Set during Lee's first years in Australia, it is also the story of migration, and an exploration of the eternal conflict between our desire for security, but also for foreign places—in love and elsewhere. The Dangerous Bride tells the story of her quest.

The Dangerous Bride Details

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From Reader Review The Dangerous Bride for online ebook

Glen Hunting says

A highly engaging, intellectually rigorous, soul-searching, blood-and-guts wrestling match with contemporary relationships, and the happiness (or otherwise) we can reasonably expect from them. Ms. Kofman has lived bravely and learned much, and her account of her experiences and preoccupations are both informative and evocative. She deals with a fascinating subject and, although she steers clear of easy answers, she provides the reader with a significant progression towards understanding it more fully.

Rachel Eldred says

I love it when I come across a new author in an unexpected way. When I subscribed to the literary magazine 'Meanjin' last summer I was sent a free book as part of the subscription. It was in my mailbox when I returned home from a summer holiday; but with the busyness of the new year already underway, I put it on my bookshelf to return to later. The book was Lee Kofman's 'The Dangerous Bride' and 11 months later I *did* return to it.

It didn't take long for me to be drawn into the book's pages and Kofman's bright and candid style. 'The Dangerous Bride' quickly became an old friend I hadn't seen in years, my senses instantly alive to the similar, shared experiences, as well as the dissimilar experiences, which fascinated me.

Born in Siberia to Jewish parents, Kofman spent her childhood in the Soviet Union. At 26, bored and restless in Tel Aviv, she arrives in Melbourne after a brief stopover in Sydney, which she found 'expensive, fake, capricious'. 'You'll find your husband in Australia,' Kofman's mother tells her the day before she leaves.

'The Dangerous Bride' is a love story ... of sorts. It's not your conventional, mainstream love story where woman finds Mr Right, experiences a few initial hiccups, then floats away to live happily ever after. (Not exactly, though the end may surprise in that regard.) Chiefly, as the title suggests, it's the unconventional tale of non-monogamy, about free thinkers and artists and non-conformists, about people happy to tread off the mainstream path to experience love and sex in alternative and original ways.

The book opens with Kofman on her hen's night, at a fetish club, where she kisses a girl. The scene sets up the book's main line of enquiry: can I commit to married life *and* keep my sexual freedom? For people faithful to monogamy as 'the way, the truth and the life', that may be dismissed as 'can I have my cake and eat it too?' I'm more open minded and take to heart Friedrich Nietzsche's quote, which Kofman includes in the book: 'Normal people do not know that everything is possible.'

'The Dangerous Bride' weaves around Kofman's own experiences of non-monogamy, which she explores while in a relationship with her boyfriend, J, whom she meets soon after her arrival in Melbourne, and also with her first husband Noah, whom she flees to after her relationship with J sours.

What I love about 'The Dangerous Bride' is the way Kofman uses literature, poetry and art to navigate her experiences. It's beautifully crafted and her insights are intelligent and original. Many of my favourite books and authors are mentioned: Anaïs Nin, Henry Miller, Helen Garner, Gay Talese (only briefly, but I was happy for the reminder) and Elias Canetti, and there are others I hadn't heard of, namely the Russian poets Osip Mandelstam, Marina Tsvetayeva, Vladimir Maykovsky and Joseph Brodsky, whose lives immediately intrigued me. I'm also reminded of a couple of my own literary heroines (not mentioned) whose experiences of non-monogamy had fascinated me: Charmain Clift and Thea Astley.

'The Dangerous Bride' covers three main areas of non-monogamy: the free love of the sexual revolution (the interview with Angela from Garner's 'Monkey Grip' is a pleasure), swingers and polyamory. It is a real immersion into the different ways non-monogamy can be navigated, with a good selection of personal interviews included, each of the interviewees courageous enough to explore love and sex in different and nuanced ways.

Some, admittedly, are not to taste: one couple 'hunted' for sexual 'prey' (it was consensual, an adult game), while the ins and outs of the polyamory community (life partners, primary partners, secondary partners, triads, quads, vee relationships) left me exhausted. I admired them, though. It takes a lot of courage to explore the idea that it is possible to love more than one person (just as parents know it's possible to love more than one child), and to confidently move through the insecurity, the jealousy, the conventional expectations of 'true love' and 'the one'. The depth of communication and honesty among the people interviewed impressed me, and although it was clear it wasn't an easy path to follow (what relationship *is* easy?), it seemed deeply fulfilling.

Kofman notes that survival rates of monogamous and non-monogamous relationships are about the same, which may come as a surprise to those dedicated to monogamy, many of whom have heard about at least one non-monogamous relationship that did not work out. 'They always end in heartache,' I've often heard people say about non-monogamous relationships. An unsubstantiated statement, it turns out.

The end of the book is an optimistic summary whereby Kofman sees a brighter future for non-monogamy, possibly one where it is seen as something more than an unworkable pathology. That may be. However, what's more certain is that lovers and dreamers and free thinkers and writers and artists and non-conformists will always explore love and sex in alternative and original ways. Amen to that.

Susan says

I love this book for many reasons. First, Lee Kofman is one of the most honest memoirists I've read. She leaves no question unanswered and brings the reader completely into her story. I love how she alternates between her research about non-monogamy, a failed relationship with a previous boyfriend, and her crumbling marriage to another man. She even incorporates literary figures like Anais Nin, Iris Murdoch, and Marguerite Duras into her book. What caught my attention were the cultural contexts about which she writes: Russian emigre, Israeli transplant in Australia, and religious New York parents.

Jen Squire says

This was a great reminder to me of what a memoir can achieve - a mix of personal stories (both the author's own and others she interviews), historical and current research.

A really interesting book - I've written more about it here
<http://jen-squire.blogspot.com.au/201...>

Rae says

Read as part of the Popsugar 2015 Reading Challenge - 'A Memoir'.
Also read as the February book for Avid book club.

Amra Pajalic says

Picture

Lee Kofman's memoir is about her search for freedom and autonomy while being married is a fascinating read. What began as a personal journey of love and marriage became a book whereby Kofman interviews people who have engaged in relationships that don't follow the traditional monogamous model.

I loved this book for many reasons-the honest and heartfelt writing, and the fact that it made me think about relationships and the longevity of marriages. While Kofman's journey ultimately ends with a happy ending, she realises that the marriage she was in did not fulfill her needs and leaves, only to find love and a traditional monogamous marriage, it was the stories of her interview subjects that provided much food for thought.

Kofman undertook a lot of research about polyamorous communities and other non-traditional relationships and I learnt a lot from this book. One of the things I was struck by is the honesty of some of her interview subjects about the tumultuous lives they experience as they engage in different partnership models. How their relationship is constantly changing and evolving, and that there is the acknowledgement of the pain and pleasure that this results in.

Being in a long term relationship, whether it is monogamous or open, there will be pleasure and pain, what I was struck by is that the open relationships might be more honest in expecting this to happen, whereas with monogamy we're sold the model of happily ever after and are then shocked that there is an after that might not be so happy.

This was a beautifully written memoir that transcends the confessional and does what great creative fiction should do, uses the personal in order to tell a universal story and give the reader pleasure, and a moment of reflection on their own lives.

Kate Murdoch says

There are multiple layers to this book — it drew me in on so many levels. The author uses her own history to ask questions about love, relationships, monogamy and hidden desires. She bravely questions — why is monogamy seen as the most acceptable way to conduct a relationship, and what would happen if we make different choices? Would everything fall apart? Essentially, this is a book about ambiguity. People explore, discover, fumble and make mistakes through their choices. Kofman interviewed people from all walks of life, sexual orientations and relationship configurations in an attempt to make sense of these questions. She is open about her own confusion in trying to understand these issues in the context of her own life. Drawing from artists throughout history such as Anais Nin and Iris Murdoch, she shows that these complexities are not new. By examining the life stories of these people, another question is posed — is layered and non-monogamous sexuality more common among artists? I enjoyed the way the author created a labyrinth of questions without judgment. It is primarily an exploration rather than a manifesto. Raw, brilliantly researched and intelligent, I highly recommend this book.

Emma says

As a former writing student of Lee's I'm so excited Lee has published in English and what an impressive book! Part Carrie Bradshaw from Sex and the City, part intellectual analysis of poets and writers affairs, part memoir. It's a long book that you can pick up at any time and read again. Her poetic language is beautiful and it's very engaging throughout. So impressed. I'm sure it will become a must-read 'bible' on relationships, a very now topic.

Caitlin says

I really enjoyed this book which surprised me...Lee Kaufman was honest real and made some amazing and confronting points on love and relationships. At times it was uncomfortable to read but I was drawn into her spell. The references she used has given me some wonderful books to read and add to my collection..

Mauoijenn ~ *Mouthy Jenn* ~ says

NetGalley book review

First off, this book was wacky weird. It was interesting in some parts but I'll be honest, it didn't grab me and not want to let go. I literally read the majority of this with a smirk on my face. Who would write about this? Seriously?! Anywho... not really for me.

Calzean says

Hated it. The concept of the book was good but it became a story where the author appeared to be justifying her lifestyle. The interviews with others were the highlight and some of the analysis of other author's works was interesting but I could not find any interest in her search to find sexual fulfilment and a happy marriage.

Karin says

Surprising and not the ending I expected. I saw Lee at the Sydney writers festival. She has lived her story and the book takes you on her journey. I really enjoyed how she explored all options with an open mind. I was a bit sceptical about her ending but it was true to her explorations. Well worth a read and came at a time in my life that was very influential

Jacqueline Ballard says

The Dangerous Bride is a novel surrounding love, sexuality, and marriage. The best way I can describe the memoir is with one word, "RAW." Kofman wrote honestly and eloquently, and it will be one I won't soon forget. The novel forced me to consider many aspects of love, sex, and relationships I had not previously

entertained. The writing style itself was unlike any I've experienced before; as a reader, I could feel Kofman's passion, insecurities, disappointments, and triumphs. It was, as I mentioned before, simply raw--raw and beautiful.

Elyse Walters says

Lee Kofman first met Noah at a party in Australia.

They started talking about the Margaret Atwood novel she was reading. She soon offered Noah her phone number. Noah seemed overwhelmed by her initiative. Lee guesses he related their cultural differences different --or less politely --to the famous Israeli "chutzpah".

Still, he called her a week later. She received a gift from him --not flowers or chocolates -but the latest Atwood's novel. Lee knew she had met her man.

The night before Lee and Noah married -- Lee goes to a Fetish Club. She kissed a beautiful woman.

Lee Kofman is Russian born -Israeli Australian author. This is the first book Lee has written in ENGLISH! (her 3rd language). She has written several other books in Hebrew.

Lee was born into an Orthodox Jewish family --She moved to Australia in her 20's. She married a man she loved, but sex was not fulfilling.

Lee wanted to know if it was possible to live a non-monogamous marriage in an open ethical way without somebody getting hurt by jealous feelings.

As a writer, Lee created a research project on the topic of Non- Monogomy -(love, sex, longing, Eros, electricity, romance), with a personal interest of real discovery for herself.

What was working for couples? what was not? what might work for her?.

She talked with old friends, swingers, cross-dressing husbands, artists, people living a POLY-Lifestyle (polyamorous groups), curious if anyone was really happy in love and if their marriage was thriving.

Was non-monogamy out of need or want? (a very clear distinction) -- Is the purpose sexual connection and adventure? Or --are people actively looking for more relationships of intimacy? Is jealousy a natural self mechanism? Can a person love without jealousy?

Is it possible that what lacks in monogamous relationships is the excitement of 'risk-taking'?

Why do over 50% of marriages ending in divorce?

Lee tackles honest questions about marriage. Questions about how to preserve the greatness, have individual lives, and occasionally take risks?

Does it work if partners give permission to one another to be with someone else? Or does somebody get hurt?

Do NON-Monogomy marriages work any better than Monogamy marriages?

Are married swinger couples more happy, more in love? Most couples who 'swing' do report being happy -- They tend to enjoy sexual connections as a social fun- then enjoy coming back home to their safe heaven. Most people in this lifestyle are middle to upper middle class. (doctors, lawyers, nurses, teachers, etc.). There is a very large population of swing couples in America --(growing in Australia)

The Polyamorous group values loving more than one person. They value openness -and lots of communication. These are more complicated relationships, but these type of 'community-relationships' are growing in America. A person might have a life partner -and another partner. Then her partner might have another separate partner. --(everyone knowing who is in the circle). Lots and lots of communication. They do

set agreed upon rules. (can get very tricky, and a little funny outsiders to listen in on).

Just the mere conversation of the topics in this book could feel like a threat for some people. Yet, it was very well researched -and well written -- with a complete quest of answers. Lee was looking for answers for herself.

I applaud people who choose ethical relationships. I want very little to do with people who cheat-lie -or gossip.

However, I support the wide range of lifestyle choices between consenting adults.

This book points out many of those choices. Lee interviewed many interesting people who shared intimately with her about their sex lives, their love lives, and their overall happiness with their choices.

About me: I'm married 36 years this December. Paul and I choose to have a Monogamous marriage. Years ago --(after we had been married for 22 years --we experimented with 'swinging'). We had a 'blast' of fun for a few years and made many 'real' friends. We are a blessed couple. We had/have a good marriage -before - during -and after 'retirement-from-swinging'. Paul and I are both 'thrilled' we 'entered' "The dangerous world". We learned a lot about ourselves -about others - We grew. We now know many people in many different types of lifestyles. (every lifestyle mentioned in the book: we know people living these relationships in their daily lives).

In our little community today, -Paul and I are the un-fun-to-bed-early couple. Many of our friends are singles, Gay, Black, Poly relationships, swingers who have been married for 30 years, cross dressers, 1 trans genders friend ,1 female Rabbi friend, Our Jewish community, book-club community, clothing optional warm water soaking day community, Yoga community, mountain biking community, hiking community, theater....etc....

Lee wrote a fearless engaging ethical entertaining enlightening book. It could be helpful in looking at one's own barriers to sexual communications and choice preferences.

I think this book is a great read for anyone who is just 'open' to reading about the different choices

Chloe Higgins says

LOVED this book from a writer writing what we're all afraid to write. Interesting style RE personal essay/story form.
