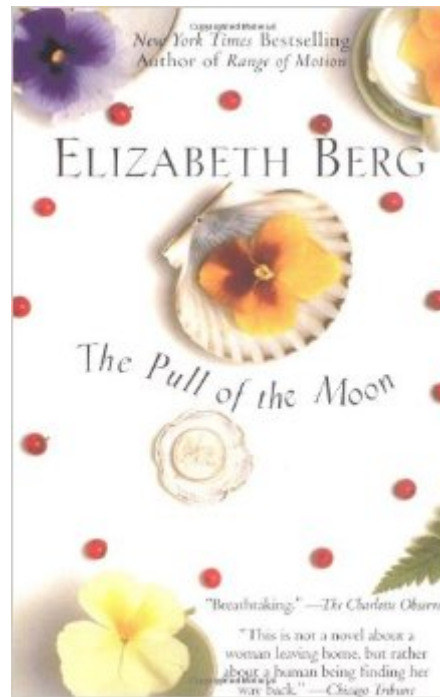


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The Pull Of The Moon



Synopsis

"Not a novel about a woman leaving home, but . . . a human being finding her way back."

—Chicago Tribune"Turning 50 seems to turn women crazy. When Nan hits this mark, she hits the road, leaving behind her home and husband. Driving west from Boston, she consults only her own pleasure. And while this sounds easy, it is often arduous for Nan, who can hardly remember what her own pleasure is . . . The Pull of the Moon is upbeat from beginning to end." —Boston Sunday Globe"Measured, delicate, and impossible to walk away from." —Entertainment Weekly

Book Information

Paperback: 193 pages

Publisher: Berkley Books (October 1, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0425176487

ISBN-13: 978-0425176481

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.6 x 7.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (195 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #131,885 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #52 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Epistolary #1730 inÂ Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Psychological Thrillers #4798 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Contemporary

Customer Reviews

I have never read a book that was so exquisitely tuned into the mind and feelings of the human condition. The lead character is turning 50 years old and decides to take a road trip. Oh, she's not headed anywhere special on the map, but this trip couldn't be more important. As Nan meanders across the country on those back roads that only the towns people use, she is content to pull up and set for a spell on the porch of a woman that seems to know exactly why she came, though the two have never met. She sits down to meals in diners with complete strangers and finds she has more in common with them than she might expect. Along the way she writes letters to her husband, honestly pouring her heart out to him, letting him know how their comfortable day to day saunter through life may not always have been all that was expected. The trip is a revelation for both of them in the end. This is a coming of age book, it points out the wisdom that gradually permeates the mind and spirit as we ripen with time. I can't begin to tell you how revealing Berg's insights are, I got

the feeling that she went through life taking notes on all of those little things that we experience and never give a thought to, little, insidious things that can impact our outlook on life in the most profoundest of manners. Read this book and I promise you won't be disappointed, you will find yourself in the midst of more than your share of "a-hah" moments and this book will make you realize just what a comforting thing that can be. 12/10/00

Elizabeth Berg's THE PULL OF THE MOON is the story of Nan, and her search for herself. She's in her 50's and has decided to leave her husband (temporarily) and travel the country, looking for what, she does not know. She sends letters to her husband Martin throughout this entire trip, revealing to the reader what is going on in her head as she goes from town to town, doing things she enjoyed doing but felt her husband never understood. She finds joy in the little things, taking time to talk to people along the way. A lot of her letters are angry, some are sad. She loves her husband, but as many women feel as they approach middle age, she feels burnt out and neglected. She's been taken for granted, and she wants to change it all. I think a lot of women will be able to relate to Nan and her journey to find herself. It's an easy read; took me only a few days to finish. I'm not 50 yet, but I could understand her frustrations. Elizabeth Berg is the master of "chick books" I think, and I always come away from one of her books with a "I can relate!" feeling. If you are an Elizabeth Berg fan, this is another great read!

When I enjoyed this slim change-of-life novel, I enjoyed it very much. When I did not, well, it was a sore disappointment. Berg's work has, in the past, rated high on my fiction likes, but unfortunately I won't be adding this novel to my Berg favorites. And still. There was, as I stated earlier, much that I did enjoy about it. "The Pull of the Moon" is about Nan, apparently a financially well-off woman (because it is one of the lackings in this story that Nan does what she does with such carefree extravagance with nary a care about how to pull such things off in the "real world" most of us live in), turning 50 and not quite ready for it. This is the story of her midlife crisis. Maybe not so much a crisis to her, though, as one wonders if it might seem so to Martin, the husband she leaves behind as she suddenly takes off on a cross-country road trip to find herself at midlife. We never do find out how Martin feels about this. The book consists merely of Nan's letters back to him, one would assume posted and mailed, and the tone is usually one of "here I am, having these fine adventures without you, I'll fill you in when it suits me to return home." Nor does it ever seem to occur to her that Martin may not so readily welcome her home. Okay, so it's an interesting journey. And Nan fulfills perhaps several fantasies of the aging woman. Taking off into the wild blue yonder with no apron strings

attached. Ah, yes. If only. She travels where whim leads her, and en route has occasion to contemplate her life backwards and forwards. Many of us in the same age range, I'm sure, will identify with Nan's musings and meditations on a woman at this stage. The restlessness, the eagerness to throw off the old to embrace the new, to understand the process of aging as a woman in a society that is not particularly forgiving of it, to check our priorities, what belongs, and what deserves discarding. We hear you, Nan! She speaks of a renewed "preoccupation with the body" in the 50ish woman, only it has a different flavor now than in youth. One observes, winces, wonders, longs with melancholy, but then, ah enlightenment, realizes... not so bad. This process of crossing another threshold, it has its costs but it also has its delicious payoffs. "I just wish I could cross over a little faster," writes Nan in another letter home to confidant Martin. Even as she observes the "formidable camaraderie" of older woman, wearing glasses as they read menus on gatherings in restaurants, self consciousness at long last abandoned, enjoying each other's company, embracing life more fully than ever. Then there are those moments that Nan starts to resemble the cliché midlife man in his crisis of red convertibles and young eye candy seduced into affairs. She writes, oh yes, home to her husband, how she has always longed for beards on the men in her life, had wanted him to grow one (he did not), and now encounters a young bearded man, recently widowed, ever so sad, and in soothing his grief, ends up pulling him into her on-the-road bedroom -- to sleep innocently beside her (after some lush and lingering kisses) through the night. I'd love to hear Martin's response to this one. Nan goes home to Martin. One is left to assume Martin opens the door. But one is not sure why this assumption is warranted. Here Berg fails, for many of us may long, many of us may fantasize, many of us may love a manly bearded cheek to brush against. But most of us do not abandon our faithful life partners to feed such whims, fewer partners would tolerate it, most of us couldn't afford it anyway, and perhaps none of us should expect such forgiveness for doing so. Am I being too harsh? I have followed many whims, after all, in my own life, some of them pretty wild. The difference may be, though, that all of those times have carried a cost. That, I think, is the bite of reality.

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