



A Reliable Wife

By Robert Goolrick

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Rural Wisconsin, 1909. In the bitter cold, Ralph Truitt, a successful businessman, stands alone on a train platform waiting for the woman who answered his newspaper advertisement for "a reliable wife." But when Catherine Land steps off the train from Chicago, she's not the "simple, honest woman" that Ralph is expecting. She is both complex and devious, haunted by a terrible past and motivated by greed. Her plan is simple: she will win this man's devotion, and then, ever so slowly, she will poison him and leave Wisconsin a wealthy widow. What she has not counted on, though, is that Truitt — a passionate man with his own dark secrets — has plans of his own for his new wife. Isolated on a remote estate and imprisoned by relentless snow, the story of Ralph and Catherine unfolds in unimaginable ways.

With echoes of *Wuthering Heights* and *Rebecca*, Robert Goolrick's intoxicating debut novel delivers a classic tale of suspenseful seduction, set in a world that seems to have gone temporarily off its axis.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Set in 1907 Wisconsin, Goolrick's fiction debut (after a memoir, *The End of the World as We Know It*) gets off to a slow, stylized start, but eventually generates some real suspense. When Catherine Land, who's survived a traumatic early life by using her wits and sexuality as weapons, happens on a newspaper ad from a well-to-do businessman in need of a "reliable wife," she invents a plan to benefit from his riches and his need. Her new husband, Ralph Truitt, discovers she's deceived him the moment she arrives in his remote hometown. Driven by a complex mix of emotions and simple animal attraction, he marries her anyway. After the wedding, Catherine helps Ralph search for his estranged son and, despite growing misgivings, begins to poison him with small doses of arsenic. Ralph sickens but doesn't die, and their story unfolds in ways neither they nor the reader expect. This darkly nuanced psychological tale builds to a strong and satisfying close.

(Mar.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

The Boston Globe described *A Reliable Wife* as “a historical potboiler, an organic mystery rooted in the real social ills of turn-of-the-century America.” Certainly, the novel’s characters have their share of secrets and motives while illuminating the social milieu of early 20th-century rural Wisconsin and Gilded Age St. Louis. Psychologically driven, the novel boasts an unusual depth of characters and hypnotic, if at times overly sensuous, prose. Indeed, noted the Washington Post, it is “a gothic tale of such smoldering desire it should be read in a cold shower.” A few critics predicted the final twist, but that did not detract from their praise for this riveting novel of love, loss, forgiveness—and human connection.

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From [Booklist](#)

Goolrick twists a familiar story, refashioning it into something completely original. Many authors have employed the timeworn rural-man-advertises-for-mail-order-bride plot device, but few have permeated their narratives with gothic elements and suspense to such great effect. All is not as straightforward as it seems when Catherine Land steps off the train in rural Wisconsin in 1907. Who is Catherine, and what is her true intent? What shadowy secrets could middle-aged Ralph Truitt be hiding? Both these complex characters have plenty of traumatic baggage that is peeled away layer by layer as the two engage in a darkly dangerous game of check and checkmate. The unforeseen conclusion provides a big payoff for readers of this tension-laden debut from a promising new talent. --Margaret Flanagan

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lanita Hill:

Do you considered one of people who can't read satisfying if the sentence chained in the straightway, hold on guys this kind of aren't like that. This *A Reliable Wife* book is readable through you who hate the straight word style. You will find the data here are arrange for enjoyable examining experience without leaving possibly decrease the knowledge that want to give to you. The writer of *A Reliable Wife* content conveys the idea easily to understand by many individuals. The printed and e-book are not different in the written content but it just different as it. So , do you continue to thinking *A Reliable Wife* is not loveable to be your top

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Michelle Saunders:

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Rosalva Nichols:

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