

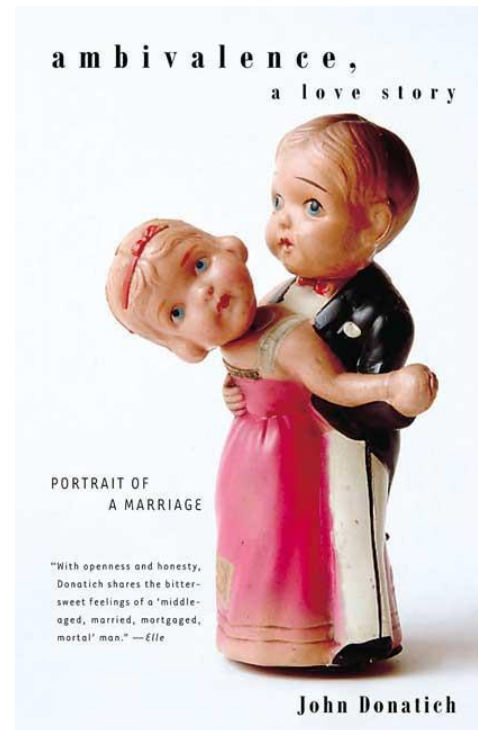
READING GROUP GUIDE

Ambivalence, a Love Story

By John Donatich

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Ambivalence, a Love Story* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *Ambivalence, a Love Story*.

About the Book

Ambivalence is an eloquent exploration of the temperament of modern manhood, a thinking man's meditation on marriage and its discontents. This remarkable personal journey is a deeply nuanced love story in which two people come together to make a marriage work--and how that union is tested by depression and other realities of contemporary life.

About the Author

John Donatich is currently Director of Yale University Press. His work has appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *The Village Voice* and other publications. He lives in New Haven, CT with his wife, Betsy Lerner and their daughter, Raffaella.



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Discussion Questions

1. The author thinks a lot about the role and challenges of fatherhood today. How would you define fatherhood in the modern world, and do you think the author will make a good father?
2. What do you think of the author's portrayal of his own father? Is it fair? Why or why not?
3. How did the author's experience as a first generation Catholic boy influence his general outlook on life? How did that boy become the man we read today? Is he right to say that the first generation child's experience is a fundamentally American one?
4. What do you think of the author's treatment of his wife's miscarriages and the depression that followed them?
5. Is "Love Story" an accurate way to describe this book? Why or why not?
6. With which character do you empathize more: the author or his wife, B? How did you feel about the author's portrayal of his wife?
7. The author takes a very analytical and philosophical approach to becoming a father. Why do you think he finds this necessary and what does this say about him? How would a man preparing to become a father benefit from reading this book?
8. Discuss the affect that having a baby has on a marriage, as depicted in the book. Are the conclusions and observations made by the author accurate? In your experience, how does the arrival of a first child affect a couple?
9. Why is the word "ambivalence" so important to the author, and in what ways does he see ambivalence as a good quality for coping with the challenges of today? Do you agree or disagree?
10. Discuss the line: "Ambivalence embraces compromise, and the effect is as enduring as it is flexible. The same applies to marriage." What does he mean by this?

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