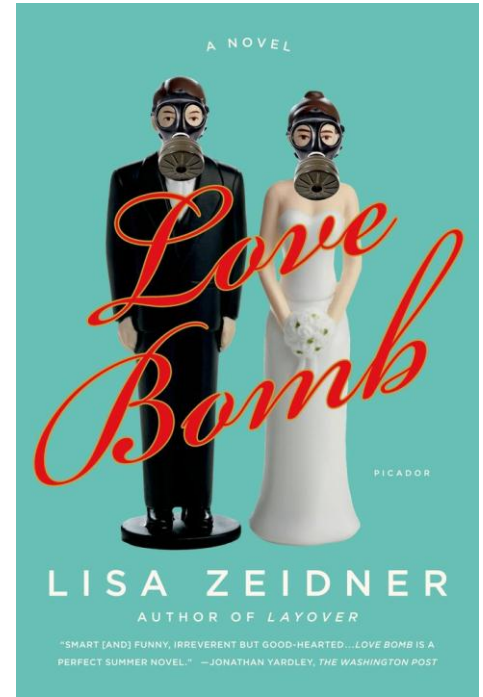


Reading Group Gold

Love Bomb

By Lisa Zeidner



1. What does the book's title mean to you?
2. What were your theories about why the hostage taker was really there? Which hostage seemed to be the culprit most likely to have enraged her—and how did you react when her real identity was revealed?
3. The novel includes many references to hostage dramas on TV and in movies. Why? How is the hostage situation in *Love Bomb* different from the typical ones?
4. Why is Helen more effective than the psychiatrists on the guest list at bonding with the HT? How did you feel about the psychiatrists' competitive attempts at diagnosis?
5. While the hostages are stuck in the room, the author frequently takes you out of the situation at hand to hear about the hostages' pasts and key events in their lives. How did you feel about the novel's unusual structure? Why do you think the author employed it?
6. As you read about the novel's lovers, which stories captured your attention the most? Did you find any patterns in the courtships? What would Helen assume about your circle of friends if she applied her skill in assessing the strength of a relationship by reading a couple's body language?
7. What does Amy's stalker, Kevin, teach us about the nature of obsession? Does Mara count as a stalker as well? At what point should persistence become defined as insanity?
8. The HT claims to be a feminist. Do you agree? Discuss the differences between the male and female responses to the hostage situation. Did you find the male characters less brave or faithful than the female ones? Or is Zeidner's appraisal of her characters gender-neutral?
9. What does *Love Bomb* have to say about parenthood, how it changes marriages, and the lasting effects of childhood experiences in shaping our characters?
10. Many of the characters' stories include details about their first meetings. What is the author's point about "love at first sight"?

11. Throughout the novel, which aspects of American culture are on display for the African cohort? Discuss the novel's culture clashes—between black and white, Jewish and Muslim, American and African, urban and suburban.
12. *Love Bomb* has a large cast of characters. Does it have a hero—or heroine—in the traditional sense? Who is it?
13. How would the guest list (appearing at the back of the book) compare to your own clusters of family and friends if you were to host a similar event?
14. Discuss the aftermath of the wedding and the novel's coda. How does the day bring out the best and the worst in the hosts, guests, caterers, and law enforcement?
15. How would you characterize the tone of the book? How does the author balance comedy with drama? Mockery of her characters with empathy for them?
16. Discuss the previous Lisa Zeidner novels you have read. How does she use wit and tragicomedy to open meaningful dialogues about the experience of love and loss?

About the Author

Lisa Zeidner has published four novels, including the critically acclaimed *Layover*, and two books of poems. Her stories, reviews, and essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Slate*, *GQ*, *Tin House*, and elsewhere. She directs the M.F.A. program in creative writing at Rutgers University in Camden, New Jersey.



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