

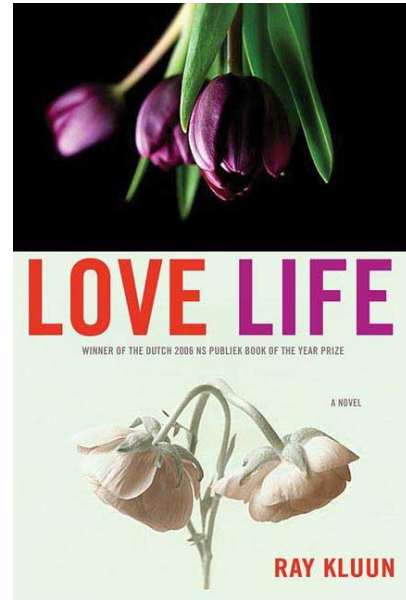
READING GROUP GUIDE

Love Life

By Ray Kluun

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Love Life* 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 *Love Life*.

About the Book

A touching, post-modern version of *Love Story*, told with great emotional honesty and a healthy dose of humor, which will appeal to young readers who are willing to look at life and interpersonal relationships realistically. Kluun has delivered a novel that is completely unapologetic, extremely controversial, and ultimately full of hope.

About the Author

After Ray Kluun's thirty-six-year-old wife was diagnosed with breast cancer and died in 2001, he moved to Australia with his small daughter and began writing *Love Life*, which is modeled on his own experiences. Kluun now lives in Amsterdam and has just published a follow-up novel, *The Widower*.

Discussion Questions

1. What is Dan to you: A heartless philanderer who didn't deserve Carmen, or a modern emotional realist who deals with a painful experience the best he can?
2. Euthanasia is legal in the Netherlands, and Carmen does resort to this solution to end her ordeal. Do you believe this should be an option here in the U.S. as well, and should it extend beyond cases of terminal illness?



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3. Discuss how Dan changes throughout the book. Did your opinion of him shift at some point? Did he become more or less sympathetic?
4. LOVE LIFE, although a novel, is largely based on the author's own experiences, and many of his friends, family members, as well as doctors and medical personnel appear as only thinly veiled characters. Why do you think Kluun chose this genre, rather than writing a memoir? How would you feel if you found yourself a character in someone else's novel without knowing he was writing about you?
5. How might the story end for Rose and Dan? Do you think Dan will ever be able to overcome his "monophobia"?
6. The author has a daughter, who is now nine years old. How do you think the existence of her father's book will affect her when she is old enough to grasp the content?
7. Discuss the use of 'wramples' as chapter openers, and how they relate to the individual chapters.
8. Carmen turns out to be the strong, steady character in this novel, as well as the emotional center of gravity. Compare her character to Rose. How are they the same, how are they different? How should Rose have reacted once Dan told her about Carmen's illness?
9. Dan, although he cheats on Carmen, does love her until the very end. Can infidelity and unconditional love be reconciled? Is a fling worse than an affair? Is sex without love possible for men but not for women?
10. How would you react if a friend told you he or she was cheating on their spouse? Would you feel obligated to keep their secret or notify their significant other? Would this change if the spouse was terminally ill? Do people need to be protected from reality and truth? Who gets to decide what to withhold?
11. Most of the doctors in LOVE LIFE are not portrayed in a positive light, either in their personalities or their professional demeanor. Have you been in a situation where you felt you couldn't trust someone in the medical profession? What were your options? Would Carmen have had a chance without the wrong and delayed diagnosis?
12. If you were given only a few months to live, what would you do? How would you want to spend your last week, day, hour?

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