

HYSTERICAL LOVE

Logline: A recently-dumped photographer goes on a wild ride in search of his ailing father's lost love.

Short blurb: (174 words)

Dan McDowell, a thirty-three-year-old portrait photographer set to marry his beloved Jane, is stunned to find his pending marriage tossed after a slip of the tongue about an “ex-girlfriend overlap” of years earlier. Camped in the second bedroom of best friend and next-door-neighbor, Bob, Dan finds himself caught in existential confusion as Jane refuses reconciliation, an unexpected partnership is offered at work, and, most devastatingly, his bear of a father, a man he loves but has never understood, is downed by a stroke.

It's when big sister Lucy shares a decades-old story written by this confounding man that life takes another bizarre turn. It seems there was a lost love of fifty years ago, one that shaped his father's views on the topic, and one, Dan becomes convinced, his father still pines for. As his own romantic dilemma becomes increasingly impossible to fix, Dan sets off on a wild ride of detours and semi-hilarious peril to find the mysterious woman from his father's past, convinced she holds the key to happiness for them all.

Longer blurb: (316 words)

Dan McDowell, a thirty-three-year-old portrait photographer happily set to marry his beloved Jane, is stunned when a slip of the tongue about an “ex-girlfriend overlap” of years earlier throws their pending marriage into doubt and him onto the street. Or at least into the second bedroom of their next-door neighbor, Bob, where Dan is sure it won't be long. It's long.

His sister, Lucy, further confuses matters with her “soul mate theory” and its suggestion that Jane might *not* be his... soul mate, that is. But the tipping point comes when his father is struck ill, sparking a chain of events in which Dan discovers a story written by this man he doesn't readily understand, but who, it seems, has long harbored an unrequited love from decades earlier.

Incapable of fixing his own romantic dilemma, Dan becomes fixated on finding this woman of his father's dreams and sets off for Oakland, California, on a mission fraught with detours and semi-hilarious peril. Along the way he meets the beautiful Fiona, herbalist and flower child, who assists in his quest while quietly and erotically shaking up his world. When, against all odds, he finds the elusive woman from the past, the ultimate discovery of how she truly fit into his father's life leaves him staggered, as does the reality of what's been stirred up with Fiona. But it's when he returns home to yet another set of unexpected truths that he's shaken to the core, ultimately forced to face who he is and just whom he might be able to love.

Lorraine Devon Wilke, author of the acclaimed debut novel, *After The Sucker Punch*, brings her deft mix of humor and drama to a whip-smart narrative told from the point of view of its male protagonist. *Hysterical Love* explores themes of family, commitment, balancing creativity, facing adulthood, and digging deep to understand the beating heart of true love.

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Full synopsis: (519 words)

Dan McDowell is thirty-three, gainfully employed as a portrait photographer, and marrying Jane Rasmussen in July. He's thrilled to be taking this seminal step with the woman he loves, doesn't mind the leap into adult life that will inevitably follow, and is certain he's finally gotten the mystery of love all figured out. Until Jane discovers he slept with a former girlfriend weeks after they'd started dating. His argument: it was once... maybe twice, it was three years ago; it was overlap. Hers: the party's over.

So it's next door to best friend Bob's, where Dan is offered solace and a room, for what, he assures his gracious host, will not be long. It's long. Dan's sister, Lucy, convinced of the "soul mate theory," suggests that Jane simply might *not* be his... soul mate, that is, and the ramifications of that send him spinning. With Jane immersed in her own interpretation of events and his plans shattering to pieces all around him, Dan is further shaken when Jim, his oak-tree of a father, the loud, opinionated, ass-kicking force that has overshadowed his entire life, is unexpectedly downed by a stroke. While his slightly daffy, always endearing mother, Esther, takes cheerfully to the nursing activities with Lucy's help, Dan is left to ponder the meaning of life and love, a quest profoundly altered when his sister shares with him stories their father wrote earlier in life.

Reading the thoughts and words of a man he loves but doesn't really understand proves a revelation, particularly when he discovers his father harbors an unrequited love in the form of a beautiful woman named Barbara, met and lost decades earlier. Dan is transfixed by this mystery, certain this woman was his father's soul mate and that life would have been far different had they gotten together. When he hears his father utter the name "Barbara" in a moment of disorientation, a light bulb goes off. Convinced that righting this long-ago wrong would set the world straight, and against the better judgment of pretty much everyone he knows, Dan sets out on a mission fraught with detours and semi-hilarious peril in search of the mysterious woman from the past.

Clues lead him to Oakland, California, where along the way he meets the lovely Fiona, herbalist and flower child, and life changes once again; Fiona assists in his quest while quietly and erotically shaking up his world. When, against all odds, Dan finds the elusive Barbara, the ultimate discovery of who she is and how she truly fit into his father's life leaves him staggered, as does the reality of what he stirs up with Fiona. He returns home to discover another set of truths about his family that shakes him to his core, but ultimately forces him to face who he is, what he wants, and who he might truly be able to love.

Mixing humor and drama in a narrative told from the first-person point of view of its male protagonist, *Hysterical Love* explores themes of family, commitment, balancing creativity, facing adulthood, and digging deep to understand the beating heart of true love.

Hysterical Love highlights:

- **2015 indieB.R.A.G. Medallion** Honoree
- **Kirkus Reviews** — "Wilke is a skilled writer, able to plausibly inhabit Dan's young male perspective... A well-written, engaging, sometimes-frustrating tale of reaching adulthood a little late."
- **Literary Fiction Book Review:** "Devon Wilke manages to convey the male psyche with a good-natured humor that seems eminently believable. *Hysterical Love* is a deftly told tale..."

- **Readers' Favorite Book Reviews:** "I just finished reading *Hysterical Love*, the newest novel by Lorraine Devon Wilke, and I must say, I simply adored it! Her writing style is witty, pointed and funny, even hilarious at times."
- **WE Magazine for Women:** "8 Books Worth Reading This Summer, 2015"
- **Barb Taub UK Book Blog** — "I never found a writer who was as good as DH Lawrence, but who could also get into a man's head and tell that story. Until now. Wilke is a kind of genius. Or a damn good writer doing a better job of getting into the head of the opposite sex than DH Lawrence anyway. She combines humor, terrific writing, and some none-too-gently acquired truths into a different kind of relationship story."
- **A Woman's Wisdom, UK Book Blog**—"This is one of those books which exceeded all my expectations. I was expecting a romance with a couple of twists but what I got was something far deeper and more satisfying. If you want a book with many layers and to be thoroughly entertained by a cracking story then this one is for you."
- **Crossroads Reviews** — "So worth the read. If you want a great laugh then pick this one up. The story was great, as were the characters. Unpredictable in so many ways. One to stick with you."
- **Johnny Tan, FMMK Talk Radio** — "*Hysterical Love* is a whip-smart narrative of modern family misadventure and romantic entanglement that is skillfully blended with humor and drama."
- **The Amy Beth Arkawy Radio Show** — "A humorous literary journey that weaves complicated romances and fragile family relationships with themes of realization and forgiveness."
- **Matters of the Mind Talk Radio, Dr. Peter Sacco & Todd Miller** — "A cathartic journey by a cultural gypsy."