

Garbo Laughs

Elizabeth Hay



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From the award-winning author of A Student of Weather , a funny, sad-eyed novel about a woman caught between real love and movie love--and real love doesn't stand a chance. This is a novel about movie love. Set in Ottawa in the 1990s, it is the quixotic tale of tall, thin Harriet Browning, inflamed by the movies she was deprived of as a child. Bent on seeing everything she has missed, she rapidly becomes so saturated with old movies, seen repeatedly and swallowed whole, that she no longer fits into this world. Equally addicted are her three companions- of-the-screen: a boy who loves Frank Sinatra, a girl with Bette Davis eyes, and an earthy sidekick named after Dinah Shore. Breaking in upon this quiet backwater, in time with the devastating ice storm of 1998, come two refugees from Hollywood, the jaded widow of a famous screenwriter and her movie-expert stepson. They are Harsh Reality. With them come blackouts, arguments, accidents, illness, and sudden death. But what chance does real life stand when we can watch movies instead? What hope does real love have when movie love, in all its brief intensity, is an easy option? In this brilliant and poignant comedy of secondhand desire, movies and movie lovers come first.

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