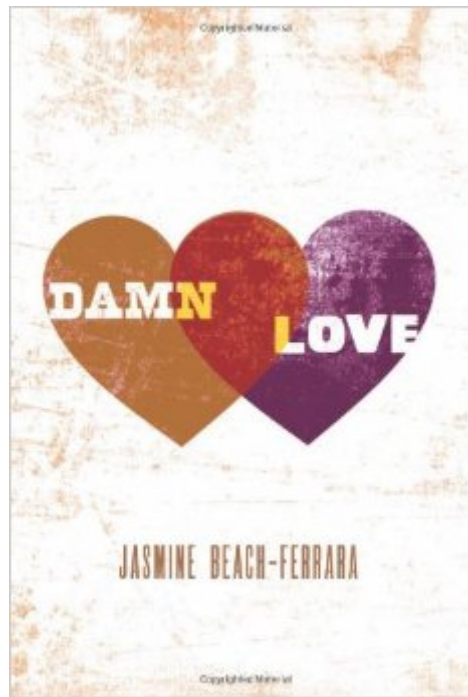


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Damn Love



Synopsis

Set in San Francisco and North Carolina, the linked stories in *Damn Love* introduce us to characters struggling with love in all its complicated forms, including a young doctor getting over a breakup with the help of a patient, a newly married gay man who reconnects with his estranged mother, a trio of physicists caught in a surprising love triangle, and a soldier who takes secrets with her to the Iraqi desert. Together, these stories report out from the fault lines of American life, uncertain territory where identity, risk, and desire co-mingle, and where reconciliation can be found in even the most flawed efforts to connect.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Damn Love is an interesting collection of nine stories. They are linked by place—they are mostly set in San Francisco and Durham, North Carolina—and by characters. A minor character in one story will be the protagonist in another. Each story, however, stands alone and can be read in random order. You don't need to know, for example, that Weasel, the drug addict protagonist in the eighth story, is a patient of Ruth, the doctor protagonist in the first story. But because characters turn up in different roles in different stories, the book gains in richness and resonance. This is Jasmine Beach-Ferrara's first book. She has an MFA from the Warren Wilson Program for Writers, but does not suffer from what I consider the MFA-disease: glorious sentences in stories that have no content (or about young people in dead-end jobs and dead-end romances). She is a minister in the United Church of Christ and the executive director of the Campaign for Southern Equality, which promotes

LGBT rights in the South. On the evidence of *Damn Love* she has already had a full and interesting life. The main characters, male and female, are lesbian and gay. The stories evoke the ecstasy and pain of love—love unrequited, love requited, love lost, damn love. They involve love between two women, between two men, between parents and children, and between siblings. And it's never easy. Here's how one story begins: "In early May, Doctors Reddi and Lombardo shocked each other by confessing that they had fallen in love with the same woman. That Reddi and Lombardo were best friends and that this woman, Erin Champion, had been married to another woman for six years meant that it would be a difficult season for all of them. They knew this, and yet they could not help themselves.

First off, I need to say that this book is not a romance. In fact, the stories did not have any real positive resolutions, but show more of human nature and what choices each of these individuals made and how they lived with their choices. The stories are well written, and well narrated, but left me more melancholy and sad than before I had listened. I will caution you that if you need your stories to have a happy ending this is probably not for you. But, if you are adventurous enough to just want to listen to a well-narrated human interest story, give it a try. Since I listened to this book vice read it, and there were different narrators for each character, it was hard for me to get comfortable with the pacing or in a flow. But, saying that, it didn't take me long to figure out how these characters somehow loosely related to characters in the previous chapters. The dynamic between the characters was at times strong, and at others, passive. From the blurb I think I was hoping for some resolution to some big world-shaking problems, and instead what I received was a shot in the arm, a bit of a rough-up, then I had to pick myself up and move on to the next chapter. I did not at any time get to settle down and feel comfortable with these people, and I was given plenty of food for thought. This story is emotional, well-written and includes different LGBT characters. As a romance, it did not work for me, but as a human interest story, well, let's just say the characters still stick in my mind and my heart today. It is highly recommendable to people who do not mind a non-HEA, or even an HFN. It was roller coaster ride for my heart and one story in particular had me very sad of what could've been.

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