



Tigers in Red Weather

Liza Klaussmann

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Nick and her cousin, Helena, have grown up sharing sultry summer heat, sunbleached boat docks, and midnight gin parties on Martha's Vineyard in a glorious old family estate known as Tiger House. In the days following the end of the Second World War, the world seems to offer itself up, and the two women are on the cusp of their 'real lives': Helena is off to Hollywood and a new marriage, while Nick is heading for a reunion with her own young husband, Hughes, about to return from the war.

Soon the gilt begins to crack. Helena's husband is not the man he seemed to be, and Hughes has returned from the war distant, his inner light curtained over. On the brink of the 1960s, back at Tiger House, Nick and Helena—with their children, Daisy and Ed—try to recapture that sense of possibility. But when Daisy and Ed discover the victim of a brutal murder, the intrusion of violence causes everything to unravel. The members of the family spin out of their prescribed orbits, secrets come to light, and nothing about their lives will ever be the same.

Brilliantly told from five points of view, with a magical elegance and suspenseful dark longing, *Tigers in Red Weather* is an unforgettable debut novel from a writer of extraordinary insight and accomplishment.

Tigers in Red Weather Details

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From Reader Review **Tigers in Red Weather** for online ebook

Abby says

I really, really, really wanted to like this book. The book jacket compares its contents to the writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Patricia Highsmith, two writers whom I adore (and a mash-up made in heaven). I also live in Cambridge and pass many of the same streets as the book's protagonists.

I loved the atmosphere (and the period details) of the novel but found the plot somewhat tedious and boring. The first four sections (told by Nick, Daisy, Helena, and Hughes, respectively) are mostly one-dimensional character sketches told with predictable dialogue and banal prose (e.g., the condensation of a martini glass is described as "sweat" or "sweaty").

Not much happens in the first four sections, and then there is a rush of events and action in the final section (that narrated by "Ed" in his first-person voice). Unfortunately, the events in the last section are simply too disjointed from the earlier narrative that they strain credulity and the author introduces too many tangents that remain unresolved. For example, why does Ed say that Frank Wilcox is his biological father (or does he)? Whatever happens to Avery Lewis after he gets the money he was after? Ultimately, the author leaves too many loose ends, rendering this novel incredibly unsatisfying...

Brenda says

Silly me, I scanned the reviews of this book and came away with the impression it would be a light beach read about a pair of cousins after World War II, their children, a little bit historical fiction and family drama and intergenerational perspective, something similar to J. Courtney Sullivan's *Maine*.

I was wrong.

Nick and Helena are two cousins, close in age, who go their separate ways after World War II comes to a close. Nick to be reunited with her husband Hughes, who is distant after his return from wartime Britain, and Helena with a skeevy insurance man who has grand plans in Hollywood. They each have children and the cousins reunite during the summer at their family home on Martha's Vineyard. The story is told through alternating family members, including Nick's daughter Daisy and Helena's son Ed. Sounds like a breezy beach vacation through post-war America with a little family drama right?

Not quite. There is a seriously creepy vein running through the story. And I'm not just talking about Ed, the super creeper cousin. Towards the end of the book, Nick and Helena start to give off *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* vibes. The entire novel is darker than the cover would convey. I can not even begin to describe this without spoiling the story, so I will stop. The one thing I am left ruminating over is whether I couldn't stop reading this book because it was good, because the suspense was masterful or whether I was just so confused by having my expectations dashed.

Amy says

Maybe I'm just tired of drunk rich people.

Jane says

This story, which jumps around time periods ranging from 1945 to 1969, follows Nick and her cousin Helena, their husbands, children Daisy and Ed, and a variety of other Martha's Vineyard residents. It has everything: murder, secrets, betrayal, regret, longing and lust. It is a great summer read about hot summer nights, gin drunk from jelly jars, and sneaking around in the shadows. This debut novel by Herman Melville's great great granddaughter is told from 5 different perspectives. The story unfolds skillfully and smoothly. I got this book as an Advanced Reader Copy from TLA and knew it would be good. I couldn't put it down!

Robert says

I just need to stop reading historical fiction. Like right now. But I keep trying, like the little kid who keeps reaching for the electric burner, even though he's bound to burn himself for the thirteenth time and once again lose several layers of skin in the process, or like the woman who just can't stop dating that man-child with the six-pack abs and commitment issues and the Mickey Mouse voice, because damn it she can bounce quarters off his belly button, and that ought to be worth a few more rounds on the merry-go-round.

Because like that little kid I want to reach out and just one time find the burner turned off, or like the woman I just want to meet a man who looks like Brad Pitt but has a bit of substance for once in her damned life. Well, not me personally, but I feel your pain sister. With historical fiction, I am beginning to think it's a bit personal, and I am beginning to think I'm the only one who hasn't been let in on this wonderful, exotic secret that will somehow change my life, but maybe not. And it's frustrating and intoxicating and I keep coming back for more. Just spin me one more time, and this stint is bound to be different.

And I end up...right back where I started. Let's start with the dialogue shall we. Now I love me some good dialogue. I want to hug it and squeeze it and kiss it and pat its little forehead and somehow find a way to make it my own. More often than not (and this novel is no exception), I end up disappointed with the overused phrases tossed in my direction. It reminds me of the jellybeans often found beneath the sofa cushions. Just don't eat them. Sure, they might have been great and wonderful three months ago (like the dialogue might have been snappy and witty about two or three generations ago), but I'm not feeling the love now. And I want to feel the love.

The characters proved a bit too unlikeable. Heck, let's face it, at least one or two were probably borderline bastards. And that works for me, if the others pick up the slack and shine brighter than a Colt revolver. But I'll be honest: I didn't really like any of the sons-a-bitches. Again, sometimes that works when it's done correctly, but yeah, that wasn't really working for me either. The characters were just a bit too full of themselves, or completely and totally self-involved (like six-pack abs guy).

Let's talk about setting. I love Massachusetts and Boston. I love the Cape and the North Shore with its quaint little towns and storybook houses. I love it even more when its spring or summer or fall, and when there isn't a foot of snow on the ground with layers of ice packed underneath. But this didn't really feel like Massachusetts to me. Something was just a bit off, and that's probably a rather quick way of summing up

TIGERS IN RED WEATHER.

Cross-posted at Robert's Reads

Diane S ? says

What an impressive first novel. Starts out rather innocently as two close cousins are on a train, post World War II, both going to begin new lives. The atmosphere of the novel is wonderful, I felt fully immersed in this time period and in their lives as well. The tension of the novel builds as more and more facts are related about the characters lives. Narrated by the five main characters, we soon realize there is much more to this story than the innocent beginning would have one believe. Soon the suspense and the tension builds, time passes, and many secrets are slowly revealed. The ending was somewhat shocking but I felt very fitting. Would definitely recommend. ARC from NetGalley.

Brittany says

Wow...what a debut! Somehow this book manages to exist as both beach-read and book-club material. The plot is riveting, which makes the book hard to put down, but it is the superb character portraits that kept me reading long into the night. The narrative technique used is very effective, and the author succeeds in creating multi-dimensional and fascinating characters whose inner lives are revealed in tiny bits until the picture is complete. Each of the five sections is narrated by a different character; each character offers another perspective on pivotal moments in their shared lives over a 20-plus year period. This was so much more powerful than a traditional narrative. The writing is straightforward and honest; it also offers tremendous insight on the inner workings of marriage and the historical setting. Highly recommended!

Laura says

What a waste of time!! Definitely chick-lit is not my cup of tea.

Michelle says

4.5 stars, rounding up to 5. I don't give too many 5 stars, and certainly not two in a row, but I seem to be on a roll.

Granted, this has all the things I love about good summer fiction. Historical, sprawling beach manse, family secrets. Throw in a nod to The Great Gatsby and I was sold. I'm surprised by the relatively lackluster ratings on Good Reads because I thoroughly enjoyed this start to finish. In this we have cousins Helena and Nick (Nick is a girl; but get it? A nod to Gatsby, also her daughter is Daisy; I could probably write an entire paper on the parallels with Gatsby but I'll spare you) though the story is told through multiple viewpoints. The author weaves these multiple viewpoints excellently and I loved how the same scene was told various ways with little bits of "mystery" in the first telling, which kept me engaged. I adored the relationship between Helena and Nick as well as Nick's relationship with her husband. There was something to love and/or pity

about all the characters, and I do mean all of them. The author treats each, even the worst, with kindness and humanity. Overall an enthralling beach/poolside read (indeed I read it in one sitting at the pool). Fantastic.

Carol says

This is not the worst book I've read - I wouldn't want to give it that accolade. The dialogue is monotonous - 'can I get you a martini', 'yes, I'd love that', 'a dash of something?' and so on. There is hardly a scene in the book when someone isn't drinking alcohol, in itself tedious, as if the author could think of nothing else that people do when congregating. The characters are inconsistent - four of them are tinged with insanity, Nick, Helena, Ed and Avery as if this touch of weirdness added depth to their characters. They wander in and out of this unhealthy state to fit the particular point of the story rather than coming from within each of them. This is a great novel if you're into reading about dysfunctional people who apparently have the financial luxury to sit around and ruin their lives with their own neurosis/psychosis. I don't think there's a single happy character in the entire book.

The only redeemable adult might be Hughes, whose love for his wife, Nick (who, everytime I read her name, I had to stop and remind myself that she was female) survives her constant unhappiness derived from some sense that she's not "fulfilled" due to societal constraints.

I'm not looking for sunshine and rainbows, but it gets a little much when you're asked to believe that a 12 year-old character would possess the frustrations/anger of a 30 year-old.

Overall, it's a little dispiriting to think that EVERY character in this author's world is seething with inner turmoil and anger.

Lizfig says

It's a good and fast read, one step above a beach read. I have a couple comments.

The first half of the book I was sure this was going to end up being a 4 star but somehow, Klaussman decided to decelerate the plot halfway through. The first 3 characters' chapters were very much building momentum and it really propelled me forward but then on the 4th chapter I found myself losing interest... I really think she should have done the order differently, to create that sense of build up that I enjoyed so much in the first half of the book. The final chapter was perfectly chosen though.

The next comment is that I feel there were some superfluous characters who detracted from further developing the main characters (for instance, Daisy's theatre friend). The consequence of this type of narrative is that if you don't do it very well, the reader will be left feeling like they don't really know any of the characters at all- I had this sensation at the end of the novel. Perhaps removing a few of these accessory characters would have given us a chance to get to know everyone better. There were certain actions taken or not taken by certain characters (I won't spoil it) that just don't make sense to me and I really hate that feeling... they lose their sense of realness.

Finally, the ending left me slightly unsatisfied. I'm okay with tied or untied endings, as long as they're done

well. If you are going to leave things untied, the reader should at least have some sense of the different possible outcomes, the ability to speculate. Here, we really lose a sense of most of the main characters. I disliked that.

Erica says

Man, now I'm sad.

I was really enjoying this book for the first three parts but then the last two parts sunk it for me.

See, from where I'm sitting (and listening), the first three voices wove together a story about women, specifically how women relate to each other in relating to the first woman introduced, Nick. Nick is the showboat, the flaunty one, the one who loves attention, the one who hates responsibility, etc. Her best friend is her cousin, Helen, and they adore each other only Helen actually doesn't adore Nick quite as much as Nick adores Helen and Nick doesn't actually adore Helen as much as she needs her for a backdrop, as supporting cast, as the reflector so she can shine more brightly. As the women grow up, marry, and move apart, their lack of relationship becomes more pronounced, even though they maintain the veneer of cousinly love. Then there's Nick's daughter, Daisy, on the verge of teenagehood during a turbulent summer. She comes to understand things about life and she also has a traumatic experience. She needs her mother to help her through this particular set of growing pains and while Nick steps up sometimes, she's so lackadaisical about her role, much like she is about most of the roles she plays, that she does more harm than help. Daisy has to turn to her sociopath cousin, Ed, for support and understanding, though she doesn't quite understand that's what she's doing.

Helen fills us all in on what she did while living in Hollywood with her mentally unstable, unloving husband and how she became addicted to painkillers. Then we get to see why she hates Nick so much yet how she can't seem to separate herself from her cousin.

Had it ended there, I would have liked this book a lot more than I did.

But then Hughes, Nick's husband, gets his turn. He clears up his past for the reader and then repeats everything that we've already read. Verbatim. All the same conversations, the same moments. It's not even really his take on the situation, it's just him following along noticing and saying what we already know. He becomes a pathetic character and not one worth listening to.

Then sociopath Ed wraps up the story. I think we are supposed to infer that he had some sort of attachment disorder and perhaps ranged on the autism spectrum due to the staggering amount of pills his mother was taking during her pregnancy; the thing is, though, he's not an interesting, compelling character, not like, say, Dexter. In his part, his purpose is to clear everything up for the reader. If you suspected it, he'll confirm or deny it. It's like he has to spell out the story, telling us what we've already guessed at. Sadly, this revealing of All the Things! is a let-down. The excitement of not knowing but fully suspecting was a lot more enjoyable.

There's a murder in the book. It should have had a big impact on everyone in the community but it only served to give people something to talk about at dinner parties and to ostracize a member of the island community. Even the murder's impact on Ed was anti-climactic. Yes. The murder was anti-climactic. That's a horrible way to use a murder.

I was bored and disappointed with the last two parts of this book and that took away from my overall enjoyment which is sad because I think this story would have really stuck with me had it just been written

from the female perspectives.

Augusta says

Tigers in Red Weather is a great beach read - intriguing, fast paced, dramatic. I liked that each section was narrated by a different character over the 20 or so years that the story took place so they filled in missing information from the other characters' narratives. The novel started off strong and ended strong but there was a lag in the middle (specifically in Hughes section). I also felt like I wish some of the characters had been developed more (Avery) or less attention had been devoted to them (Eva). I get that the author was trying to make a point that even those you are closest to can never really be known to you but at the cost of me feeling like I didn't understand some of their motivations. Nonetheless, a quick, creepy read.

Hannah says

This book wasn't at all what I thought it was going to be once I began reading it, which I think is due to the fact that the book summary located inside the front cover is misleading, or perhaps I relied too heavily on it to tell me everything that was included in the plot. This book was divided into sections and told its story from the five main characters' individual points of view. It was certainly an interesting take on the story, because I was able to see how each character perceived themselves and their world around them, and then compare that to how each person was described in the eyes of whatever character happened to be telling the story at that particular time. This enabled me to get a well-rounded view of each character, and showed that no matter what face they put on to the world, each character was suffering from something different inside (especially Nick and Helena, and their twisted relationship).

On the other hand, I thought this book was somewhat predictable at times, as well as containing a number of cliches. I felt like some of the events and happenings were a bit far-fetched and implausible (Ed's behavior leading to a life as a serial killer; Daisy and Tyler's relationship and engagement; Tyler's fascination with Nick; Nick's countless affairs that were meant to punish Hughes' one affair, which he kept apologizing for his entire life). By the time I was done reading, I hated all of the characters and could not identify with any of them. I was also confused at the author's choice to write the final chapters, which gave insight to Ed's character, in the first person. Perhaps she wanted Ed to be the pivotal, central character, thus choosing to end with his story and his thoughts in the first person, which must have been to force the reader to see things from his eyes. I did not like the fact that she made Ed wind up as a type of serial killer, forced to become evil through his family's various actions (it felt completely random), and I thought the ending was odd and inconclusive. Throughout the book, Ed kept referring to his odd behaviors as him doing his "research," which I did not quite understand. Ed's strange fascination with his cousin Daisy also made me uncomfortable, and for a while, I thought they would end up married themselves.

Michelle Cristiani says

Maybe I spend too much time here on goodreads, but as I read a book I imagine how I will rate it, and what my review will sound like. My rating of this story - about a family on Martha's Vineyard and the secrets they disclose over a few decades - ranged from 1-4 stars at any given time, and I settled on 2 just because goodreads calls that 'it was ok,' and that's pretty much how I feel about it. It kept me guessing (plus) but left

me with a lot of question marks upon finishing (minus).

There aren't too many characters here, and given that, they should be doubly strong. Yet, I didn't feel like I really got to know any of them. The story was unique in that there wasn't one clear protagonist, but I was also constantly grasping for who I could most relate to, who would pull me in to the story. I don't mind being a little unsettled as I read, but I'm not sure this was a good thing.

Klaussman's writing has many gems, and the point-of-view changes are brilliant. That Ed's last section is told in first person, and has a different literary pace than the rest, is literature at its best. There are parts though, that were unpolished enough to actually jar me out of the story. For example, the overly technical descriptions of a tennis match (which I happen to understand) and a boating excursion (which I don't). And some of the same phrases were repeated often. If I had a nickel for every time Hughes, speaking of Nick, wanted to 'go to her,' I'd be able to buy my own home on the Vineyard, which is saying a lot.

I'm not at all surprised by the awards and education Klaussman's received; she wove an interesting tale, and wove it well. But some human connection was missing for me. I couldn't help feeling, all the way through, that if this was her first novel, I can't wait to read her fifth. It's going to kick ass. But this one doesn't.
