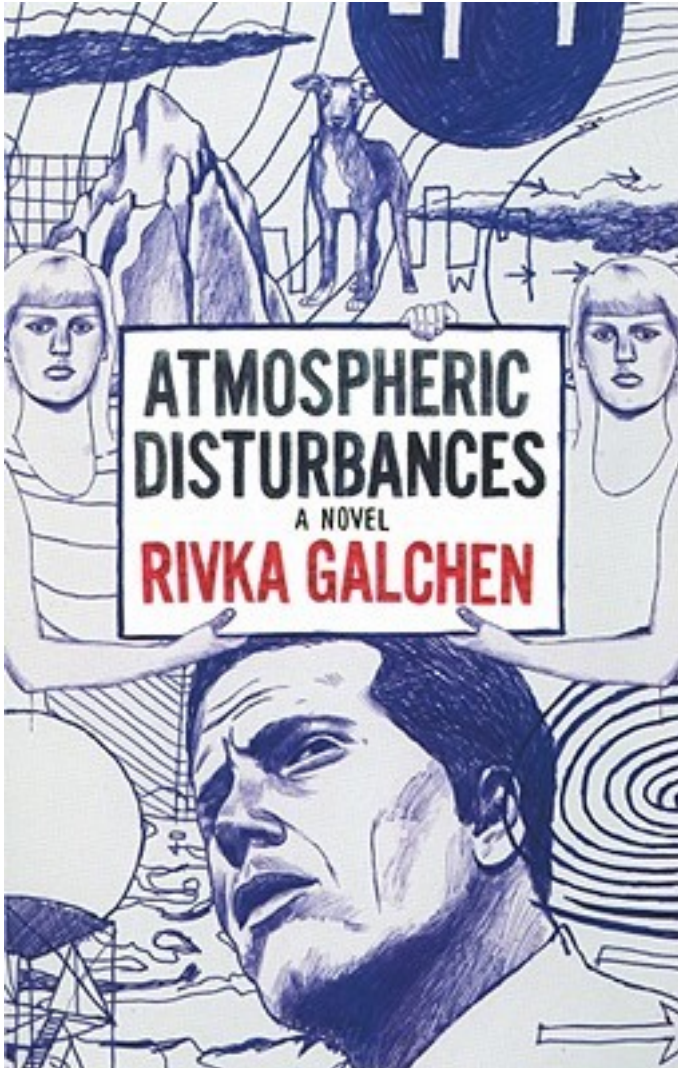

Rivka Galchen

Atmospheric Disturbances



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Author: Rivka Galchen

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Description

When Dr. Leo Liebenstein's wife Rema disappears, she leaves behind a single, confounding clue: a woman who looks, talks and behaves exactly like her. Certain that the original Rema is alive and hiding, Leo embarks on a quixotic journey to reclaim his lost love.

Insightful reviews

Tomiko: The first sentence of this novel is awesome: "Last December, a woman entered my apartment who looked exactly like my wife." The rest of the story deals with this predicament; the clearly delusional protagonist spends the entire novel (which, in my opinion, is about 75 pages too long) rationalizing and deliberating. The main character, Leo, is a psychiatrist who is constantly analyzing others, and he frequently dismisses these analyses when they apply to him.

This, in a way, is the author's crafty way of subtly (or, perhaps, not so subtly) analyzing Leo without overtly diagnosing him. Because Leo is the narrator, the reader is immersed in his way of thinking, not only subjected to his skewed perception of reality, but participating in it. Leo's psychosis is the crux of the story; though the novel purports to be about Leo's pursuit of his wife, it is truly about his mental state--it is the cause of all tension in the story, and the cause of every obstacle he encounters, every complication he strives to overcome. This, I believe, is why the novel felt as if it dragged on longer than was necessary.

Overall, a good read and very inventive, but by the end it just gets redundant.

Réza : Místy matoucí, ale velice zábavná kniha o identitě, psychózách, pravdě a meteorologii. (Nespolehlivý) vypravěč je psychiatr, který se jednoho dne rozhodne, že mu někdo vymění manželku a odpoví hledá se svým pacientem a se slavným meteorologem Tzvi Gal-Chenem, který je ovšem skoro deset let po smrti. Autorka je psychiatřka, jejíž otec je meteorolog Tzvi Gal-Chen.

Tyler Taylor: I posted this on a blog in 2008. It's pretty wordy.

"Last December a woman entered my apartment who looked exactly like my wife."

So begins the short-story-seamstress Rivka Galchen's debut novel. "Atmospheric Disturbances" (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008) tells the story of Dr. Leo Liebenstein, a New York psychiatrist whose wife has disappeared and been replaced by a double, sending him on a quest to find her and a missing patient, Harvey, who believes himself to be a secret agent working for the Royal Academy of Meteorology. Galchen lets Leo create an imposter wife, a simulacrum, for it is through this absurd filter that he can analyze his marriage. The minute to omniscient emotional intricacies of a lengthy relationship are investigated through such an original perspective and by such a strong talent that the novel has been called everything from "witty and tender" to "erudite and chock-full of heartache." As the writer-daughter of one

meteorologist and one computer programmer, Galchen succeeds in her personal quest to unite the oft considered separate disciplines of the sciences and the humanities. This book looks at love (and weather) from a very human perspective. Local psychological movements propel the narrative, but the book works as a microcosm because of the presence of weather (and love), two universal elements.

At the novel's open, the reader watches the initial meeting between Leo and the woman he's convinced is a double sent home in place of his wife. He senses the switch immediately—the simulacrum brought home a dog, something the real Rema would never do—and passively rejects her. He recognizes his wife's cornsilk blonde hair, her baby blue coat with jumbo charcoal buttons, even the way in which she unzips her boots, but he's sure this isn't his wife. "It was just a feeling, that's how I knew. Like the moment near the end of a dream when I am sometimes able to whisper to myself, 'I am dreaming,'" he explains. It is evident, though, that his rejection stems from adoration, from a loyalty to his wife. In moments of weakness he even lays kisses on the simulacrum's wrists and feet, remnants of the woman he loves.

Professionally, Dr. Liebenstein is occupied by Harvey. Harvey suffers from, among other things, a heightened sense of relevancy. He is convinced of his ability to control weather phenomena and that the Royal Academy of Meteorology is sending him secret messages through page six of the New York Post. These messages often contain orders which send Harvey throughout the country on various meteorological missions, resulting in a high frequency of disappearance. Searching for a treatment instead of a cure, Leo succumbs to the simulacrum's tremendously unethical suggestion that he pretend to also be an agent for the Academy. This practice isn't unheard of. In fact, it wasn't always considered unethical. Psychiatrists of the 1960s and 70s would commonly engage in a patient's delusional reality in order to make some sort of alliance. Perhaps fittingly, there was also once shared a belief that all of those who care for the mentally ill become so themselves.

Leo is a character of droll tragedy. Having lost, over time, the strongest love he has known, he seems caught in the eye of heartache, searching and grasping through a wayward fog of delusion. The winds of confused longing carry Leo out of office and across the South American continent in search of Rema. Just like Esther Greenwood's descent into mental illness, Leo's slide is convincing. But it is also unique, this because Galchen tricks us. Good readers will pick up on hints intimating Leo's psychological deterioration (in case a transcontinental search for his real wife isn't proof enough) and may even pat themselves on the back; but we're hesitant to come to any conclusion regarding Leo's sanity because he uses the techniques of his profession to not only identify the very same traits we've come to notice, but also justify his insane logic. A second reading gives seemingly mundane character observations new life. Early in the novel, when discussing Rema, Leo says that "she'd been inflicted by a very American idea of identity, to think that who you were mostly consisted of what you did to get paid — that seemed silly to me." He - a psychiatrist losing his mind.

This relationship between writing the human character and professional study is a practice championed by Galchen, whom, like Chekhov and William Carlos Williams, attended medical school, taking all of her electives in psychiatry. The work of her late father, Tzvi, a professor of mesoscale meteorology, is directly quoted throughout the work. She quiet brilliantly captures the

hidden poetry in scientific language, which is haunted by history and incidental allusions. In a recent interview with *The New Yorker*, Galchen said, "I wanted the narrator of my novel to co-opt the rhythm, the cadence, the vocabulary of science, even as he so obviously misappropriates them to whatever purpose suits his emotional needs." Fans of language in general will find delicious bits of humor throughout (in one such instance she introduces the term 'dopplerganger effect,' a pitch-perfect play on doppler radar).

Leo's investigation leads him to the enigmatic guidance of the meteorologist Dr. Tzvi Gal-Chen, the secret workings of the Royal Academy of Meteorology and their cosmic conflict with the 49 Quantum Fathers—a rouge agency with the worst intentions—and the, ahem, heightened sense of relevancy which leads him to consider the possibility that he, or Rema, or Harvey might lie at the center of all of this.

Part of the reason this novel works so well is that balance Leo maintains, walking the border between logical and mindless. There's a quote from Aristotle often mistranslated to mean "Philosophy begins in wonder," but a better translation reads as, "Philosophy begins in the uncanny." This suggests that philosophy begins at the moment when what you think you know as truth becomes a little less stable. Is Leo crazy, or is he just married? Because that's what this novel really is, behind all of the science and unfathomables, it's a novel about the nature of marriage. It's about how people change over time, about how the participants in a long relationship can lose track of the sense that they're both dynamic and slowly chip away at themselves, hoping for a lasting, comfortable fit. And this is what makes meteorology an ideal metaphor for love; it is unpredictable and, essentially, unreadable. If we can't read the weather, in all of its blunt honesty, how can we continue to feed the delusion that we could ever completely know another person? Like a surrealist painter, Rivka Galchen's work seems absurd until you recognize that it takes root in something very concrete. This book will influence, whether you realize it or not. It's the sort of story which you'll come to realize reads you even more than you read it. This is the perfect book for hurricane season

Stacia: This was once a random choice from the library cabinets & I hit a winner. The cool, scientific tone was once ideal for the tale of psychological derailment from reality. the tale cited a few scary options approximately fact (what it truly is vs. what we perceive), how we rationalize things, how we have interaction or detach from the realm round us, how we cope. i would suggest it to some, yet I comprehend it isn't really a ebook that would attract others.

Srinivas: Did I learn this book? Did another person learn it for me? Did i think like i used to be interpreting this e-book yet another individual was once studying it for me? Did another person learn the booklet and that i felt like i used to be examining it? WTF! what's up with this book?!! there has been a definite allure and novelty to the unique conceit of this e-book which, i guess the writer prepare from her Psychiatry rotation and hearing her meteorologist father conversing shop. However, the entire good stuff approximately that concept disappear at approximately web page 100. Well, that isn't bad, right? The ebook held my recognition for approximately a hundred gradual pages. the matter is, there are one other a hundred and forty pages to move and Ms. Galchen has little to say. I examine Capgras syndrome in med institution and what I discovered in these few paragraphs was once enough. I realized not anything approximately meteorology in class and that i was once ok with that. This writer deals nothing. not anything by

way of leisure and certainly not anything enlightening.

Maria João Fernandes: "Não podemos prever o pace que fará amanhã correctamente se tivermos noções erradas sobre o pace que faz neste instante." É com base nesta afirmação que Leo justifica o inexplicável e incompreensível desaparecimento da sua mulher. Tudo começou num mês de Dezembro, quando uma mulher rigorosamente igual à esposa, entrou no apartamento de Leo. period tudo igual mas ela não period Rema. Normalmente, quando uma pessoa de quem gostamos desaparece, dirigir-mo-nos à policia. Mas Leo Liebenstein não tem um problema dito common e, portanto, a solução não pode ser tão vulgar como reportar o seu desaparecimento. Leo Liebenstein é um psiquiatra nova-iorquino (e não um psicanalista!) de fifty one anos que make a decision recorrer à meteorologia para procurar a sua mulher desaparecida. A dupla, o simulacro, a impostora que veio para a substituir não conseguiu convencer o nosso protagonista nem por um segundo. Foi o galgo em miniatura, uma cadela orfã avermelhada e sem nome, que denunciou a falsa Rema. A verdadeira Rema sentia indiferença pelos cães. Mais do que uma mulher, Leo eleva Rema a um nível transcendente, que supera o simples conceito de ser humano. A verdadeira Rema, a única pessoa que ama, "cheira a erva cortada e a pão e a limão". Gosta de nozes-pecãs, lentilhas, desenhos com chá, jornais estrangeiros e de beijar nas pálpebras. E é a ausência destes pequenos, mas importantes, detalhes que desmascaram o simulacro. Quanto a Leo Liebenstein é um homem simples: lava as mãos em água quente para se acalmar, tem sérias dificuldades em escutar os outros (o que o permite compreender e captar as mensagens subliminares) e é incapaz de mentir, seja em relação ao que for. Entre as restantes personagens são de destacar: Harvey, um paciente de Leo que acredita que tem capacidades especiais que lhe permitem controlar o tempo; Tzvi Gal - Chen, um meteorologista já falecido; Magda, a mãe fria e distante da verdadeira Rema; o enfermeiro nocturno, que apesar de não desempenhar qualquer papel nesta história, está constantemente presente na mente de Leo; Lola, a telefonista da actual Academia de Meteorologia que tem uma voz muito atraente; o psicanalista espanhol que passeia cães; a empregada do café que tem a cintura igual à de Rema; a ajudante de biblioteca que lembra a Leo um feto e o misterioso Anatole. Esta obra envolve o leitor numa perseguição alucinante que inclui agentes secretos, intrigas, traições e uma inexplicável presença de cães, que podem ou não ser fundamentais para a resolução de todo o enigma. Durante a sua busca pela verdadeira Rema, Leo viaja por Nova Iorque, Buenos Aires e Patagónia. Este romance baseia-se, principalmente, na falta de comunicação, no estado atmosférico e como ambos se relacionam com o desaparecimento de uma mulher, que ao ser levada, foi substituída por uma dupla. O nosso protagonista é o narrador da sua própria história. É um homem muito sensível, que tem uma mente extremamente analítica. Ele sabe que as suas acções o fazem parecer irracional, mas a verdade é que Ricka Galchen nunca dá a entender directamente ao leitor qual a verdadeira realidade da dimensão onde se desenrola o seu atypical enredo. Esta obra tem também um tom de humor que se reflecte na estranheza dos pensamentos do psiquiatra e na forma inadvertidamente cómica como ele os articula à medida que nos descreve os acontecimentos que o envolvem e as pessoas com que se relaciona. Relativamente ao desfecho, confesso que esperava um maior número de respostas para um ainda maior número de perguntas. Contudo, tendo em conta o conteúdo deste livro que exige ao leitor uma grande reflexão, mais do que uma simples leitura, considero o ultimate adequado, ainda que não do meu agrado. "Pressões Atmosféricas" é o primeiro romance da escritora canadiana Rivka Galchen. É um livro de leitura fácil, dividido em vários capítulos com

títulos sugestivos e explicativos (pormenor que me agrada bastante). Apesar de não ter sido uma das minhas leituras preferidas, foi, sem dúvida alguma, uma experiência diferente.

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