

Author Spotlight

LAUREN GROFF



Lauren Groff was born and raised in Cooperstown, New York. She graduated from Amherst College and from the University of Wisconsin–Madison with a Master of Fine Arts degree in fiction. She is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Monsters of Templeton* (2008), *Arcadia* (2012), *Fates and Furies* (2015), and the short story collections *Delicate Edible Birds* (2009) and *Florida* (2018). Her work has been featured in the *New Yorker*, *Harper's*, the *Atlantic*, and several *Best American Short Stories* anthologies. In 2017, she was named by *Granta Magazine* as one of the Best of Young American Novelists of her generation. In 2018, she received a Guggenheim fellowship in Fiction. She lives in Gainesville, Florida with her husband, two sons, and their dog.

Fates and Furies, an absorbing story of a modern marriage framed in Greek mythology, is a dazzling examination of a marriage and a portrait of creative partnership. Every story has two sides. Every relationship has two perspectives. And sometimes, it turns out, the key to a great marriage is not its truths but its secrets. At the core of this rich, expansive, layered novel, Groff presents the story of one such marriage over the course of twenty-four years.

At age twenty-two, Lotto and Mathilde are tall, glamorous, madly in love, and destined for greatness. A decade later, their marriage is still the envy of their friends, but with an electric thrill we understand that things are even more complicated and remarkable than they have seemed. With stunning revelations and multiple threads, and in prose that is vibrantly alive and original, Groff delivers a deeply satisfying novel about love, art, creativity, and power that is unlike anything that has come before it.

Prepared by Maureen Socha

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Discussion Questions for *Fates and Furies*

1. *Fates and Furies* is told in halves. Why do you think the author chose to narrate the story this way? How did the split storytelling affect your reading of the book? Might it be symbolic of the characters' inner lives?
2. Consider Mathilde's final decision—to keep her past a secret for so many years. Do you think she should have told Lotto the truth? Think about whether this lie was truly for the best; could they have been happy if Mathilde had told him everything? Why do you think she kept this information to herself?
3. How did the inclusion of Lotto's writing affect your reading experience? Did Lotto's plays help you to understand his character?
4. Discuss the way the author presents Lotto's writing talent. Mathilde has a significant hand in his success, but she is never recognized for it. Should she have taken the credit? Discuss the effect of stardom on Lotto's understanding of himself and his marriage.
5. *Fates and Furies* questions male vs. female perceptions of reality. Think about how the author approaches the notion of feminine anger. Mathilde is an incredibly angry character. Do the men in her life allow for this anger? Why or why not? Do you think Lotto is a misogynist? How does your vision of Lotto's world change after hearing Mathilde's side of the story?
6. Mathilde's relationship with Ariel is abusive. What does Ariel's presence in the story say about Mathilde's natural impulse toward revenge? Where is her reaction to her experience with Ariel directed at other characters?
7. Think about setting. As the characters grow, they find themselves in ever-changing spaces. How does each setting compel their actions and, eventually, their relationships? Specifically, discuss Mathilde's life in France, Lotto's childhood in Florida, and how these geographical differences affect their union in New York.
8. *Fates and Furies* spans a long period of time. Chronologically, the plot is very complex, though there is a central focus on Lotto and Mathilde. How do Lotto and Mathilde change over the years, together and apart? Do you think they had a happy marriage?