



## A Reliable Wife

*Robert Goolrick*

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## **A Reliable Wife** Robert Goolrick

Rural Wisconsin, 1909. In the bitter cold, Ralph Truitt, a successful businessman, stands alone on a train platform waiting for the woman who answered his newspaper advertisement for "a reliable wife." But when Catherine Land steps off the train from Chicago, she's not the "simple, honest woman" that Ralph is expecting. She is both complex and devious, haunted by a terrible past and motivated by greed. Her plan is simple: she will win this man's devotion, and then, ever so slowly, she will poison him and leave Wisconsin a wealthy widow. What she has not counted on, though, is that Truitt a passionate man with his own dark secrets has plans of his own for his new wife. Isolated on a remote estate and imprisoned by relentless snow, the story of Ralph and Catherine unfolds in unimaginable ways.

With echoes of "Wuthering Heights" and "Rebecca," Robert Goolrick's intoxicating debut novel delivers a classic tale of suspenseful seduction, set in a world that seems to have gone temporarily off its axis.

## **A Reliable Wife Details**

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Author : Robert Goolrick

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## From Reader Review A Reliable Wife for online ebook

### Lora says

**Actual rating: 1.5 stars generously rounded up to 2**

**There are some spoilers.**

This novel centers around Ralph Truitt, a man who's been wronged many times — and his misfortunes are far from over. Mind you, Truitt isn't a saint, but in this reader's opinion he doesn't deserve what happens to him in this novel.

It all starts when Truitt puts an ad in the paper looking for a "reliable wife". But the woman he comes to marry is anything but reliable. (She's also a faithless scheming bitch, but more on that later.) Catherine Land is a woman with a plan and a mission. She is to marry Ralph Truitt, then slowly poison him until he dies and she becomes sole possessor of all his possessions. After this she will reconnect with her lover, Tony Moretti. But Tony Moretti is actually Antonio Truitt, Ralph's non-biological son. (Sounds like a soap opera, doesn't it?) Catherine and Antonio (or Tony, whichever you prefer) set all of this up. You see, when Catherine saw Ralph's ad in the paper and showed it to Antonio it raised all of his old hatred for his father. He saw his father's loneliness as the perfect why to not only get back at his father but also to kill him. All he had to do was get Catherine to do his dirty work.

So, Catherine marries Ralph and soon after she is sent by Ralph to get his son back. Ironic, yes, but Ralph wants to make things up to his son and try to undo his wrongs. (Also, the author is trying to incorporate twists into this sex-filled mess called a novel.) As you can imagine, when Catherine goes to get Antonio lots of fun adultery ensues. But Antonio is also angry that Ralph isn't dead yet. So, Catherine returns to Ralph without his son and then the poisoning commences.

*A Reliable Wife* could've just as easily been titled *The Misadventures of Harlots*. Everyone has sex on the brain 24/7/365. And if they aren't thinking about sex, they're having it. It truly never ends! And none of it is sex y , either: there is adultery, rape, and even talk of sex with an unconscious partner. I don't know about you, but none of that interests me.

Catherine is probably one of the most deplorable characters I've ever read about. Among many other blunders that I won't bore you with, she deludes herself into thinking that Antonio loves her when he's clearly only using her as a means to kill his father.

Somewhere around page 140 I began to skim the hell out of this. I quickly grew tired of the endless talk of the characters getting high on opium and morphine in both their past and present and the minutiae of their endless sexual excursions and reminiscence.

The very fact that this is a #1 *New York Times* bestseller just reaffirms my belief that that list is crap and there's a lot of people who will forever love trash.

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### Denise says

I read this novel in one day, my first novel of 2010, and I could not put it down. It is the type of novel that gets under your skin and is difficult to shake for several days. It was a unique story, the characters were extremely compelling, and the atmosphere was very dark and Gothic. If this novel was ever made into a movie, I would expect it to be set in perpetual snow and gray fog.

Other reviewers here have set forth the main story here so I won't reiterate it. I agree with those who said they never really felt 'close' to any of the main characters, but I don't think the author intended for us to feel close to them. They were not very sympathetic people, but they were compelling with all of their flaws.

I loved how the characters and their secrets were unpeeled, layer by layer as the novel progressed. I also loved the stunning twists and turns. I really could not put it down and highly recommend it.

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### **Jessica S. says**

The story had potential, even though it's been done a hundred times. A lonely, rich man places an ad in the paper for "a reliable wife," and a beautiful, mysterious woman answers, with the hidden intent of killing him and taking his fortune.

The main problem I had with this book was the length--it could have easily been cut in half had the author not felt the need to repeat and over-elaborate on every little detail. It took an immense amount of discipline not to fast forward through every other chapter. (If I had read the book versus listened to the audio book, I would have skimmed through pages at a time.) It seemed like the author added pointless storylines to the plot just to pack pages. Nothing but fluff.

I also found the characters weak, boring, and annoying. The three main characters were borderline nymphomaniacs, which got a little monotonous. I'm not disputing the fact that the story required a bit of sex, but really, if I had a nickel for every time the author used the word "desire," I'd have a damn lot of money. Next, please!

Bottom line: boring, boring, boring. I'm being very generous by giving this book two stars. I can't believe NPR recommended this book--I guess there's no accounting for taste.

Koz, if this book is on your to-read list, I suggest you remove it. I can guarantee you'd hate it.

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### **Annalisa says**

Halfway through this book, sick of every character having a wanton, unquenchable libido, I wanted to shout at Goolrick, "If you want some that bad, get some and then come back to the story." It wasn't raunchy or descriptive or anything like that. It was just an undertone that tainted the novel with an erotic feel. I didn't question one lustful character with a history of excessive sleeping around, but every single one was a bit much. I will give Goolrick credit that despite this being historical fiction and my distrust of modern authors to capture the right attitude of sex in historical fiction, I found myself believing all these characters in the shady side of town. I think Goolrick got the flavor of the era right. The characters were a little too much European-flavored tragic, but I liked that nobody was perfect and I didn't know if good or evil would prevail in them.

While Goolrick has some beautiful, poetic moments with his writing, he relies on them too heavily to tell his story instead of just telling the story. The number one rule in writing: show don't tell. I offer A Reliable Wife as exhibit A on why that rule exists. I trudged through the backstory in the first few chapters waiting for it to

pick up, but even as the story took turns I didn't expect, I wasn't given actual scenes, only summaries of events and what the characters felt and what we were supposed to take away from it. When the story veered back from St. Louis I was sure Goolrick was finally going to show us something, but no. He kept on this summary and analyzation through the end of the book. The most annoying of these is the incident with the Larsens. Pretty integral characters and a rather alarming twist that is written off in a side note without much explanation. There's a whole lot of crazies going on in this small Wisconsin town that aren't really elaborated on.

At the core of the novel is a great story. I can't even tell you what it's about because it unfolds like an onion from chapter to chapter. All I can say is it starts with a woman who answers an ad in the paper for a spouse from a lonely Midwestern man, but why she answers the letter or why he sends it out is something you'll have to find out for yourself. Even when you think you know who the characters are and what they are out to achieve, they surprise you. It makes for a book you don't want to put down, even if the writing is a struggle to get through. I would love to see this done in a movie, if it were produced right.

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### **Robin says**

Even though I have already sent this, I am updating for my Best of 2009 list:

This was a terrific novel with the gothic feel of past novels such as REBECCA and the recent THIRTEENTH TALE. In 1907 Catherine Land answers an ad for a "reliable wife" to the wealthy businessman Ralph Truitt. He knows nothing of her sordid past nor does he have any idea of her plans, which is to leave rural Wisconsin a wealthy widow (in her suitcase is a small blue bottle filled with a nasty substance). But what gets in the way of her plans (and his, too) is the crux of the story and I couldn't turn the pages fast enough. I so, so wanted this to have a happy ending but considering the subject, I wasn't sure it would. And how did it end? You'll have to wait to read the book...

I think this is good for book groups as there is much to discuss.

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### **Suzanne says**

Wow... okay, this book got darker and darker, and basically delivered a gut punch that left me reeling and feeling a little sick! BUT at the same time, it was beautifully written -- even as the characters did some extremely ugly things. Some of my overwhelmed-sick-gut-punch feelings might have to do with how I gulped down more than half the book in one sitting (but this also speaks to its addictive readability!). The twists are classic/familiar ones, but I felt were combined in such a way as to form a unique constellation in this iteration. For me, this book reminded me somewhat of John Steinbeck's East of Eden at times, and then Gone Girl at other times -- which makes this sound a bit like a schizophrenic book perhaps, but it was such an interesting combination of literary vs. commercial and historical (setting) vs. contemporary (plotwise). A fast but emotionally draining read.

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### **Tara Chevestt says**

They say that men think about sex approximately every seven seconds. This book mentions sex

approximately every seven seconds and seeing the author is male, I no longer question the seven second theory. The storyline is a pretty good idea. Man places an ad in the paper for a reliable wife. Woman responds with hidden intentions of killing the man slowly with arsenic, making herself a wealthy widow. However, upon meeting the man's son, her plans may or may not change. The son addition may shock some readers. Personally, I seen it coming. It's a bit twisted, much like the rest of the novel.

Truitt is always thinking about sex. Catherine is always thinking about sex. Moretti is always thinking about sex. And I don't mean simple sexual thoughts like, "Oh, I'd like to go a round or two with that.." but thoughts like "He wanted to slice her open and lay inside the warm blood of her body." When one of these three is not thinking about sex, at least two of them are "going at it." Meanwhile, while this sordid tale unfolds, the townfolk in Wisconsin are throwing their children down wells, eating entire dictionaries, or chopping off their hands.

Two stars. Need I say more?

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### Jackie says

This book, the #1 IndieNext list pick for April 2009, is an infinite loop of love turning to hate and hate turning to love and what all that kinetic passion does to the people who experience it. Set mainly in rural Wisconsin in the depths of the winter of 1907, this is a story of a wealthy man and his mail-order bride at it's very basic root. Both of these people have dark histories that they are trying to forget--or are they? They are strangers to each other--or are they? All that is true in this book is that nothing is quite as it seems. Ulterior motives abound. Yet, in a strange and twisted way, it basically ends in a version of "and they lived happily ever after". Don't worry--that isn't really a spoiler. It's a long and crooked path to get to that ending, with many Victorian flourishes along the way.

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### Maria Clara says

Cuando terminas de leer un libro como éste, no puedes dejar de preguntarte cómo puedes transmitir todo lo que sientes, en unas pocas palabras. O cómo puedes plasmar las sensaciones que anegan tu alma, sin hacer antes un dibujo de cada palabra; de cada párrafo; de cada página que has pasado, ávida. Sencillamente es imposible. Es como querer retener un puñado de aire en un puño cerrado. Sólo puedo decir que olvides la carátula, que olvides la sinopsis, que olvides estas palabras... y lo leas. Sólo eso.

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### Shannon says

At first I was drawn to this book because of it's apparent similarities to the movie, Original Sin, which I happen to love and think is both dark and sexy - hey, it's a guilty pleasure. This book though, is a lot different from what I originally imagined it would be. It's incredibly well-written, dark and poetic, sexy, disturbing, and sad. **I was surprised at some of the twists and turns the story took and I have to say I was pleasantly misled into thinking I knew what was going on.** This is one of those stories that I know will stay with me for a long time, but also one I'm not sure I could reread.

*Ralph Truitt places an ad for a "reliable wife" in the classifieds and Catherine Land answers. He speaks to her through letters and she sends a picture and he in turn sends her a train ticket to come live with him as his*

*wife. When she arrives she looks nothing like the picture she sent and he realizes that the woman he has brought into his life is not what she seems. But then, neither is Ralph Truitt. His past is dark and his future is uncertain - will he ever find love or any kind of release from the tedium of his life?*

**I enjoyed this book immensely, but this story was like driving past a car crash that you have to slow down and stare at, hoping to see something gruesome.** Once I started reading I couldn't put it down and I had to know what was going to happen with the characters. Sex, love, insanity, and death are all major themes of this novel and I think the author did a fantastic job of weaving them throughout the story.

I loved the way Catherine was portrayed; she likes sex, money, reading, flowers, and good food. She's very complex and hard to read at first, but the more you get of her story, the easier it is to relate to her. I thought she was both weak and strong, loving and conniving, and an incredibly well-developed character. She struggled with her sense of self and what she thought she deserved throughout the novel. She's unique, but she's also "every woman."

Ralph on the other hand, I liked from the start, even though I don't think I was supposed to. I don't think it helped that I imagined a slightly older Clive Owen when I thought of him. Ralph had a hard life, but his main problem is he blames himself over everything bad that had happened to him. From an early age he's made to believe that he's a wicked child that will grow into a wicked man, his veins filled with a poison that will kill anything he touches. It's not until he meets Catherine, who is both a cause and relief for his pain, that he truly feels he has the right to be loved and live a full life.

Now, there's a whole other half to this novel that I can't even discuss without spoiling the surprise. **Maybe I'm dense but I didn't see the twist coming.** Even up to the last page I wasn't sure how things would end, and I was again surprised at how they did. The ending was satisfying and just about perfect. I look forward to reading more by this author and I hope he gets going on his next novel!

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## **Dagný says**

I kindled this book, inspired by a stormy Friday night home alone, hoping for a romantic transportation to a Wisconsin winter a century ago. The premise is good, some fellow, (a rich rural industrialist) advertises for a reliable wife and this female character turns up much prettier than the picture she sent, but that is just the least of her deception. Anyway, on it goes, murky pasts and dramatic ongoings, but soon I found myself realizing that this book was a hollow, repetitious, skeletal frame. There was no particular reason to read each sentence ( although I did, dutifully) Once something got established it was repeated in a way that reminded me of the Lutheran masses of my childhood; the minister would repeat the sentences with slight variations, it was a style appropriate for the ecclesial layout of a point; the device had a hypnotic quality. Here I found myself turning the pages listlessly, unengaged; there was no food there. There are a million references to sex, but no heat, no heartbeat, no actual physical or emotional happenings; just insipid formalistic cataloguing of references. One falls into a hypnotic stupor.

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## **Lou says**

**Beautifully written emotions of loss, love and redemption. The plot is well woven and exciting you take a step into the darkness of the heart and of their mistakes and losses of love and finding of new love and chances of redemption. You really want love to be found and the relationship to work for the two main characters but also you anticipate who will be killed off an enjoyable easy read, atmospheric set**

**in rural Wisconsin 1907 during bitter cold snow.**

<http://more2read.com/?review=a-reliable-wife-by-robert-goolrick>

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## **Sarah says**

I waited two days from the time I finished this to update my review. In all seriousness, I could not decide between three and four. I couldn't figure out if I loved it or liked it.

There were certain parts that I thought warranted five stars, but others that I simply didn't care for. The opening scene of Ralph Truitt waiting for the train, with the whispering town all around him was so evocative, desperate, and beautiful. The parts in St. Louis after Catherine Land found Truitt's son dragged on for me. But then after she got back, the storyline began to soar again.

I don't know: I think it was the son that ruined everything for me. I know he was supposed to be with fault and unlikeable, but I really just didn't see him as a fleshed out character. He was this caricature of what a lost, bitter son was supposed to be...and he was boring because of this.

Had Goolrick focused less on him, there would have been less action, yes. But the development and evolution of Truitt and Land's relationship held enough tension and suspense in and of itself that it could have been its own book without these other distractions.

So I guess in the end I say two stars whenever the son's around, and five for the rest.

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## **Dorothy says**

Read, read, skim skim skim, read, skim skim, read, skim read. Oh dear. I found this book hilarious, which is certainly not what the author intended. Enough already after ten pages. I get the point: the guy is damaged and lonely. Enough already about snow, enough already about libraries, enough already about oysters and champagne. Even enough already about sex. Could never have imagined sex scenes could be this boring and repetitious.

Sorry for any spoilers that follow, but I couldn't care less.

I think this is what happened with the author: he had a pretty good idea. Rich man sends away for a mail-order bride, but she is really after his money. "Such things happen," to quote the author. But that isn't much of a story, so he invents a former lover who is really the man's estranged son, so they are both plotting. But then the author is forced to make it more complicated and it fell apart for me. Why is the son estranged? Oh, the author makes him think his dad killed his mother. Oh, so now we have to invent a dead first wife. The whole thing becomes unbelievable. This is a man who obsesses about trains being on time, has private detectives spend ten years looking for his son, and he doesn't bother to have them spend ten minutes investigating the woman he has sent for??? I mean, this isn't some country yokel ordering a wife. Oh, but I forget, if he had investigated the woman there wouldn't have been a story. And then the author wouldn't have made piles of money by having book clubs like mine read this stupid book.

Antonio is a cardboard figure. We are mostly told he was like a child. That's about it. Where do the clothes come from? Is he a gigolo? Does he really afford the clothes he wears by playing piano in a whorehouse? And Antonio and Catherine—By not getting inside their heads in the restaurant scene the author misses a chance to show us something more psychologically interesting about them, but he doesn't let us know at that point that they were lovers because he wants to surprise us (surprise! surprise!) when she shows up at his house. Antonio is described, but we get almost no insight into him except he hates his father because he beat him and because he thinks his father killed his mother. And likes sex with Catherine.

And Emilia. Totally unbelievable. OK, she is a gold-digger. "Such things happen." But presumably she is a well-brought up impoverished, aristocratic, Italian Catholic gold-digger. Surely she knows where her bread is buttered. And she runs off with a piano teacher?? Really?

And the Larsens. Good solid people about which we are told almost nothing, and then suddenly Mr. Larsen chops his hand off because his wife doesn't want him touching her. Where on earth did that come from??

There are a one or two interesting things about the book. The idea that Truitt is so besotted with Catherine that he would allow her to poison him is one. Why? Is he just so besotted with her that he would let her do anything? What is the difference between lust and love? This is all just skimmed over.

The plot complication that Catherine finally starts to poison Truitt because Antonio is basically blackmailing her is a nice touch, and here the author develops Catherine's feelings more than he does elsewhere. It is finally here that she is faced with making a real moral choice—protect herself or save Truitt. But she knows that Antonio is really a creep and would throw her over as soon as he got the house and money, so what is she to do?

I think this could have been a good book if the author had cut out a hundred pages of repetition and showed us more of the characters, rather than just telling us everything. Can you imagine how Edith Wharton might have handled this plot? There is so much more the author could have developed. Why are there so many crazy local people—including Mr. Larsen? Again, he tells us what happens, he doesn't show us anything interesting leading up to it. Is it just the isolation? The religion? I assume from the names that most of the local people are Scandinavian Lutheran immigrants. Does this affect them? The author develops the religious angle with Truitt's crazy religious mother and her influence on him, but he could have done more with this. What about the difference in religion between Emilia and Truitt?

We know from the get-go that there is going to be a happy ending to all this, because, after all, that is the sort of book this is. So, to have a happy ending the author has to kill off Antonio, who could spoil everything, and then have Truitt forgive Catherine. Therefore he has Truitt, a middle-aged, out-of-shape man who has just gotten over being confined to bed with poison sickness AND been hit over the head with a poker able to chase down Antonio, who conveniently falls through the ice and drowns.

But THIS is what SHOULD have happened to the characters: Because Catherine refuses to poison Truitt Antonio makes good on his threat and sends Truitt a letter telling him that Catherine was a prostitute (but leaving out that they had been lovers). Catherine, not thinking that Truitt might already know this and forgive her, poisons HERSELF. Antonio runs off to Italy, finds out his Italian grandparents have no money, becomes a highly paid gigolo to middle-aged American women in Rome and dies in an opium haze. In his grief, Truitt allows his business to go bankrupt and lives out his life in loneliness and poverty, slowly selling off the furniture in the fake Italian mansion bit by bit, looked after by the loyal Mrs. Larsen, who now has mostly only potatoes to cook. Good riddance to them all.

## Raya says

I know they say sex sells, but this was ridiculous. If they weren't doing the deed, they were talking about it, or thinking about it, or it was just lingering in the air somehow. That by itself didn't make this a bad novel. It just lacked so much substance and the intrigue I was hoping for. It's like the author relied on sex to make up for a badly executed novel.

The premise of *A Reliable Wife* sounded intriguing. It's the early 1900's. A guy puts an ad in for "a reliable wife" and, indeed, gets a wife with a dark past and even darker intentions. I read this with the intention of reading a dark, gothic novel about two complex people who may or may not fall in love, kill each other, or all of the above. What I got was two people who moaned and groaned (quite literally) about their past lives, and did I mention the sex? I bring this up again because the author insists on throwing it in your face every other page or so, and also because this is how everyone relates to one another. It's also the only uniting factor between Ralph and Catherine, and so the ending is unconvincing, or maybe I just stopped caring.

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## Stacey Nerdin \_Scenic Life Designs says

Intense. Atmospheric (has been compared to *Wuthering Heights* and *Rebecca*, and I can see that). Sooooo good. Some of the sexual content will not be for everyone, and tipped my own scales in terms of comfort level, but I could not let this story go. Or maybe it couldn't let me go. You just get so consumed by what is going on. I \*had\* to know how it would end.

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## Amber says

### **\*\*Contains Spoilers\*\***

I read the summary, I was intrigued. I read the critical acclaim remarks, I was impressed.

I read the book and I was... disappointed.

While there are several places where the glimmer of genius shone through the prose--a turn of phrase or a beautiful sentence--it was by far one of the most self-indulgent, masturbatory works I've ever read. The Author is far too in love with his writing to see the flaws he creates. Four pages of "He wanted?" A convoluted, illogical thought where entire threads are dropped for chapters, then picked up and continued far too late. The entire thing culminates in rape and death.

The husband, a Mary-Sue who forgives far too much, is utterly unbelievable as a wealthy, lonely man who advertises for a wife. The wife, a well versed courtesan, comes across as flighty at best. She waxes poetic for several pages about her supposed resolve, only to show through every action that she has none. The son, the beautiful, prodigal son, is a waste of ink. He, in no way, grows throughout the text. He begins as a spoiled, rotten piece of shit. He ends the piece by raping his father's wife and waiting to die.

The story fluctuates between graphic, wanton sex and self-indulgent babbling about the "way things are."

I would not, in any way, recommend the book to anyone else. It gets two stars instead of one because there were some incredibly beautiful sentences.

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## **j e w e l s [Books Bejeweled] says**

This book just made it into my TWISTER HALL OF FAME at [www.booksbejeweled.com](http://www.booksbejeweled.com)

If you're in the mood for a quick easy read, you might want to skip this one. A Reliable Wife deserves your time to digest, enjoy, study. Filled with symbolism and theme, it is one of my all time favorite books. It is a suspenseful, plot twisted story that takes place in the early American 1900's. The setting is isolated, cold and creepy and the characters are wholly unpredictable. At the heart of the story is a smoldering power of sexuality. There are three main characters, all motivated by a kind of Victorian sexual lust you don't see in modern books. It is truly a fascinating literary experience.

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## **Sharyl says**

A Reliable Wife, by Robert Goolrick, is the story of how Catherine Land answers a rather pathetic sounding classified ad placed by a lonely, tormented rich man. From the beginning of her correspondence with him, Catherine is up to no good at all: she plans on slowly poisoning Ralph Truitt and having his fortune for herself.

Automatically, I expected this tale to turn into one of those beautiful, gradual love stories in which Catherine falls in love with Ralph and realizes the dream of having both love and money in her life. However, the story involves other people who make the plot more complicated, but not more interesting. In other words, I'm not raving about this book. I found the writing style to be incongruent with the time period, which was just after the turn of the century (1908), and I felt that the characters were not very fleshed out. Their past lives were told in a quick, glancing way, while the flowers Catherine loved so much were described in lush detail. There is a climatic scene near the end that seems to drag on and on, and just before the too-happy ending, the author actually beats into the reader what this story has been all about. Just in case she missed it.

One of the themes of Goolrick's book is that life in Wisconsin was harsh for most people back then, and people went mad and did insane things. This is true, but parts of this tale seemed either too unlikely or not explained well enough. Goolrick also commits repetition of information, which I found to be very annoying, besides being a detriment to the movement of the story.

I feel so weird for panning this book! It's not that Robert Goolrick is a bad writer, it's that this particular story was executed poorly. Despite its flaws, I did not have trouble finishing it, but I did wince as I did so. This is my humble opinion after hearing such good things about this book.

So don't throw tomatoes at me!

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## **Laura says**

A Reliable Wife by Robert Goolrick,

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With *A Reliable Wife*, Robert Goolrick has given us a rare treat, a story so good we are loathe to start another book for fear it will fail utterly in comparison.

It is 1907 and Ralph Truitt is seeking a wife. Catherine Land is the woman who answers his call. In the midst of a swirling snowstorm, she steps off of the train and into his life. She is not what he expected. Nor is he as naïve as she had hoped.

What follows is a skillfully told tale of lies and betrayals, of rampant passion and unchecked desires, and occasionally of hope and compassion. Fierce and original, sensual but never crass, Goolrick spins a remarkable tale that takes the reader from the sophistications of Chicago to a bitterly cold and barren Wisconsin winter to the opium dens and music halls of St. Louis.

the original title was to be *A Memory of Desire* (which I loved) but will be published under the more mundane *A Reliable Wife*.

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