



## The Law of Similar

*Chris Bohjalian*

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## **The Law of Similar** Chris Bohjalian

From the number one bestselling author of *Midwives* comes this riveting medical thriller about a lawyer, a homeopath, and a tragic death.

When one of homeopath Carissa Lake's patients falls into an allergy-induced coma, possibly due to her prescribed remedy, Leland Fowler's office starts investigating the case. But Leland is also one of Carissa's patients, and he is beginning to realize that he has fallen in love with her. As love and legal obligations collide, Leland comes face-to-face with an ethical dilemma of enormous proportions.

Graceful, intelligent, and suspenseful, *The Law of Similar* is a powerful examination of the links between hope and hubris, love and deception.

## **The Law of Similar Details**

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Author : Chris Bohjalian

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## From Reader Review The Law of Similar for online ebook

### Sue says

Probably I would not have picked up this book had my Book Group not been reading and discussing it later in the week. I looked at the 320 pages, and wondered if I could plod my way through it by Wednesday. But then I started reading, and literally could not put it down. Leyland and Carissa became real. Despite the fact that I got a bit irritated with them at times - after all, Leyland is a bit of a hypochondriac and Carissa can be a little intense. But I lived their tale and here in sunny Florida felt the Vermont Christmas snow on my face. What a story Chris Bohjalian told; full of disaster, love, moral choices and the inevitable way that we all make the wrong decisions. Now I can look forward to his other books, which I bought and never got round to reading. And what a wonderful discussion this will raise for a Book Club meeting. A great and enjoyable read!

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### Kendra says

This book is very similar to *Midwives* (written by the same author) and I enjoyed it about the same. Leland narrates as he shares the story of a month that changed his life. Leland's wife died in a car accident and left him with a baby daughter. A few years after his wife's death, Leland meets Carissa Lake, a homeopath. Leland falls head over heels in a very short period of time...but at the same moment Leland is feeling blissfully happy, horror is happening within another family also involved with Carissa. Leland fights to help Carissa and struggles to control his own life, now spinning out of control. I enjoy Bohjalian's style of writing. The story flows and the characters easily come to life.

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### Rose says

Chris Bohjalian's great talent is to bring his readers into the lives of ordinary people at the moment that those lives begin to unravel. With great compassion and suspense, he demonstrates the struggles that ensue. You embrace every character in their very human nature.

In *THE LAW OF SIMILARS* he introduces you to yet another moral dilemma; alternative medicine, specifically, homeopathy. How much are we responsible for our own decisions for our health? When things go wrong how far will we go to desperately protect someone we love?

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### Marylène says

This book was tough to get into. It didn't catch my interest in the beginning, but once I got closer to the middle of the book, it got better for me. The book was well written, but the story was just ok for me. By the end of the book it was much more invested and then a bit of disappointment again at the very end. I thought something bigger would happen.

## **Tom Hooker says**

Most books have a main character who is good and who does good things throughout the book. Bohjalian's book, "The Law of Similars" is a bit like watching a train wreck as the reader morbidly watches a very sympathetic main character risk disassembling his life and career before our eyes. Leland Fowler is an assistant state attorney whose wife was killed in a tragic car accident two years before. He bravely continues, working as a single father to raise his daughter, and to do good work in the state attorney's office. But inside, he's falling apart. Then he meets a young woman, a homeopath, who gives him a homeopathic remedy with amazing results. But he falls in love with her, and she with him. Shortly after, one of her patients suffers anaphylactic shock after eating a cashew (which he's deathly allergic to). He lapses into a coma. The man's wife believes the homeopath encouraged him to do this, and she contacts the state attorney's office to try to file criminal charges. Leland instructs the homeopath on how to answer the state attorney's questions, and helps her rewrite her file notes to cover what Leland perceives is her potential liability, all the while concealing his relationship with her.

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## **Jessica says**

For years, people I trust have been telling me to read Chris Bohjalian. Now that I've finally gotten around to it, I'm sorry I waited so long. This is the best kind of "gripping tale" that book jacket copy is always promising us. It's a thriller, but not a sensational one. These are ordinary people in ordinary circumstances -- no government conspiracies or serial killers to plump up the plot. It's just a convincingly complicated tale about bad decisions compounded by lust, loneliness and desperation. He tells us right up front that the protagonist has done something bad, but then conjures up a character so appealing that you can't help but root for him anyway. Bohjalian's writing is so good that my heart raced and my stomach roiled with dread as I turned the pages, waiting for the moment when Leland's tangled web of lies would give way beneath him. Very few books have ever inspired that kind of physical reaction in me.

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## **Kristen says**

This was an interesting story - I learned a little about homeopathy - but I get really frustrated with Bohjalian's style. I find his writing unnecessarily dramatic, and I wish he would stop with this foreboding sense of doom he uses throughout his books. With this book, and with *Midwives*, it caused me to be very disappointed at the ending, which in both books I felt was not worth all of the build-up.

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## **Brandy says**

I started this book genuinely liking the main character Leland but finished up really very much disliking him. Serves me right for automatically wanting to like a character just because of his circumstances, in this case the fact that he was a widower with a small child. Turns out he was a selfish, obsessive, hypochondriac who made one bad choice after another from the beginning of this book to the end.

The plot itself is compelling whether or not a homeopath is responsible for the death of a patient. The

"drama" created by Leland was absolutely ridiculous. He sacrifices his job, his health and compromises himself as a father all because he thinks he's falling in love with his homeopath. REALLY??? What is he 15? I know people act irresponsible but this guy really took it to unbelievable levels.

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### **Rina says**

A widower, attorney Leland Fowler, and his little girl live in a small town; he works in the larger city nearby. He has a malady that has not been served well by his medical professionals. He, though skeptic, turns to a homeopath, Carissa Lake. After two years of being a widower, he finds himself falling in love. But the coin turns when one of her patients falls into a coma and she is under investigation. Leland the straight arrow finds himself faced with a moral and ethical dilemma. The story is an examination of the fragile threads that hold people together when the worst that can happen really does, and the unexpected ways we are made well. Another wonderfully researched and put together book by Chris Bohjalian. And only 425 large print pages, which flew by. Keep them coming CB!

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### **Marie Theron says**

One cannot put this novel in the same class as the excellent *Midwives* by the same author. There is almost no tension and everything is predictable.

Homeopathic medicine is not sacrosanct, we use it all the time and can buy it readily, and I cannot imagine a homeopath hiding 'the cure' or withholding it. It is really sad that the Richard character was banned from having more of the so-called 'cure', and driven to his tragic self-experimenting. He was keen for a breakthrough and Carissa fobbed him off as if she alone had the right to a 'wonderful secret'.

The history and quotations were interesting. There are some good passages and metaphors but good writing alone does not make a good story. Much ado about nothing!

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### **Karen says**

I thought the premise and plot idea for this book was really intriguing and had a lot of promise. But in the end, it just didn't deliver for me. The introduction of Richard Emmons earlier in the story was choppy and not at all fluid. There was much jumping back and forth but the transitions weren't handled well.

The idea of a homeopath dating a state's attorney who then finds herself potentially libel for a patient's negative reaction and complicating her relationship with the attorney was very interesting. It could've delved more into the legal aspects, but didn't. I also felt like the ending was a cop-out. How did the author resolve these things? Well, I think he took the easy way out and side-stepped resolution.

It was a quick read and an easy read and some of the medical/homeopathic and legal/ethical issues held my

interest. But the ending was not satisfying.

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### **Heather says**

I was introduced to Chris Bohjalian's writing through my mom, who read his book, *Midwives*, when it was hot on Oprah's Book Club list and who later recommended that I read it (but not until after I'd already delivered my first child). Several years later I read another of his books and enjoyed it as much as the first, but it's taken me another year to read another. This third book piqued my interest because it deals with the science of homeopathy, a healing art that I briefly researched in college and have maintained an interest in ever since.

I enjoyed this book, if more for the storyline and its believability than for the writing. This is the story of a mid-30s widowed father and public attorney in Vermont who comes down with a cold that lasts for well over six months, and for which he desperately turns to a local homeopath for a cure. What follows is the story of how his experience with homeopathy varies so widely from another man's experience and interpretation of how homeopathy heals on the principle that "like cures like", and the aftermath of allowing himself to fall in love for the first time since his wife died.

What distracted me from the story was Bohjalian's repeated use of the phrase, "And so". He not only uses this two-word combination in the middle of his sentences, but also when beginning sentences and paragraphs, and with a frequency that made me cringe every time I saw it written yet again. I'm probably only sensitive to this because I tend to use that phrase to begin my own sentences in my own writing, but the difference between us is that I write casual and widely unread blog posts, and this is a novel in which more formal writing is called for and is deserved. If I hadn't read other, better formed, works by Bohjalian this detail alone might have turned me off of reading anything else by him, and I believe that he has since corrected this issue, given that this book was published over a decade ago.

Don't let my editorial criticism of this small detail keep you from reading this book, though. If you've read and enjoyed any of Jodi Picoult's works, it's likely that you'll also enjoy books by Bohjalian, as they cover many of the same legal/medical parameters that she often centers her books around

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### **SteffieStar says**

Chris Bohjalian...I am Leland, I hear, feel, taste & understand his dreams & wants! You so have a special GIFT with words my Friend!

I've always been interested in homeopathic medicine, your story helped me understand the Law of Similar. Let likes be treated by likes.

The curative virtue of medicines thus depends on their symptoms being similar to those of the disease, but the stronger.

It follows that...disease can be destroyed and removed most surely, throughly, swiftly and permanently only by a medicine that can make a human being feel totality of symptoms most completely similar to it but stronger.

Dr. Samuel Hahnemann,  
Organon of Medicine, 1842

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### **Saleh MoonWalker says**

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### **Katie says**

I love Chris Bohjalian's books and have decided I'm going to read all his stuff (I love discovering authors like this!) and this one was quite good, although definitely not my favorite of his (it'll be tough to top "Midwives"). I just find his writing very compelling, gripping, and I generally like his topics (medical/legal mysteries, but very character-driven--and I love all the Vermont settings).

This one had all of that (compelling writing and interesting characters) but I found the ending kind of weird. It seemed to end a little abruptly - I expected there to be a lot more story there. Maybe he had a deadline and had to wrap it up, haha. But, still a good read and an interesting topic to think about (i.e. much like "Midwives", an "alternative medicine"-type practitioner--this time homeopathy instead of midwifery--allegedly commits a crime of negligence. Was she guilty? You decide!).

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### **Cece says**

Found this at a second hand bookstore even though it's a title I wasn't familiar with. I have read several of Bohjalian's novels and have enjoyed his writing. This one was a little off for me. Leland was a character I had a hard time relating to. The subject matter was intriguing to me, but the story fell flat. This certainly won't derail me from more of his novels, it just wasn't as good as his other works.

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### **Lianne says**

Interesting story about a lawyer who falls in love with a homeopath. One of the homeopath's patients falls into a coma and eventually dies. The back cover describes it as a thriller, but I see it more as a story of ethics, relationships, and responsibility.

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### **Shelly says**

I don't recommend this to anyone. This book reminded me of reading the train wreck that was The House of Sand and Fog. Lots of people making a lot of stupid decisions. People being entirely selfish. Not a single character you can actually admire or respect. I don't think this book has a single redeeming feature. It is awfully similar to Midwives (in terms of general plot), and I wonder if the author was just trying to borrow from the successes of that book.

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I enjoyed *Midwives*, and I'd feel okay recommending it to people. Since that time, I've read two other books by this author, and I've just got to say- read *Midwives* if you want, but avoid his other books at all cost!

I saw it on the library shelf, and I thought it had a nice title... [[Famous last words:]]

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## Heather says

The first Chris Bohjelian book I ever read was *Midwives*, in 1997. It's the story of a well-trained modern midwife who performs an emergency cesarean section on a woman she believes has died of a stroke during childbirth. But what if the woman she thought was dead wasn't, and she herself caused the fatal injury? The novel examines the debate over alternative medicine through a gripping personal account of tragedy. I devoured this book, and developed an instant love for the author. I would have read the phone book if he wrote it!

Fast forward a few years and I am thrilled to find a copy of Bohjelian's *The Law of Similar* on GoodReads. By this point I've read several of Bohjelian's books, and loved each and every one. *The Law of Similar* was sure to be another home run for Bohjelian, as far as I was concerned. I didn't even know the plot line, but it didn't matter-I wanted it!

Well, here's what it's about. The patient of a homeopath named Carissa Lake dies after eating a nut to which he knew he was allergic. His wife believes that Carissa told him to do it, and she tries to get the District Attorney's office to file murder charges against Lake. An assistant DA, Leland Fowler, widower and single father, is first assigned to hear the story from the dead man's wife, but there is a problem. He's been seeing Carissa Lake-both as a homeopathy patient and as a date. His feelings for her cause an ethical dilemma that will challenge everything.

Alternative medicine? Patient dies? Malpractice? Sound familiar?

Apparently, there is a belief in homeopathy that taking a small amount of something that causes the same symptoms you have will actually make the symptoms stop by jump starting your body's own healing processes. It's called the law of similars-and provided a very apt title for this book. I was stunned that the story was so similar to *Midwives*. I've read books by this author on transgenderism, foster parenting, gun control, and sexual assault. Bohjelian is not a one trick pony, telling only one story over and over again. What happened here? And *The Law of Similar*, published in 1999, wasn't even written that long after *Midwives*. If I thought the two stories were pretty much the same after 13 years, surely after only two years the author himself must have noticed what was happening.

I will say, the book itself was interesting and well-written, as always. Bohjelian's characters are always so well-written. Even when I don't agree with their motives I find myself understanding their perspective. I learned a lot about homeopathy from this novel, and while I'm still not sure how I feel about it at least I have some insight into the underlying philosophy. Leland's character especially moved me-a single father who lost his wife to a car accident, the scenes with his daughter were so tender, and the fact that he was so obviously at a loss about how to move on from the tragedy made him imminently sympathetic. I can't say that I dislike the book-I devoured it just like Bohjelian's other books-but why two books with such similar topics? I

suppose only he can answer that question.

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## **Mallory says**

*It is at night, after all, when without fail the strangest crimes in this world occur, and some of the biggest mistakes are made. I know. For years, I have helped clean up the mess that is left in their wake. - Leland Fowler*

Conventional medicine vs. traditional cures. A flippant remark with possibly fatal consequences. Morals gone astray. There's a lot to digest in this short, compelling novel. Much like *Midwives*, there is uncertainty about whether or not a crime has been committed. Although the story and setting were interesting, I didn't find much to like about either Leland Fowler or Carissa Lake and their ambiguous actions. Both seemed to shrink away from their lawful duty at the moment of crisis.

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