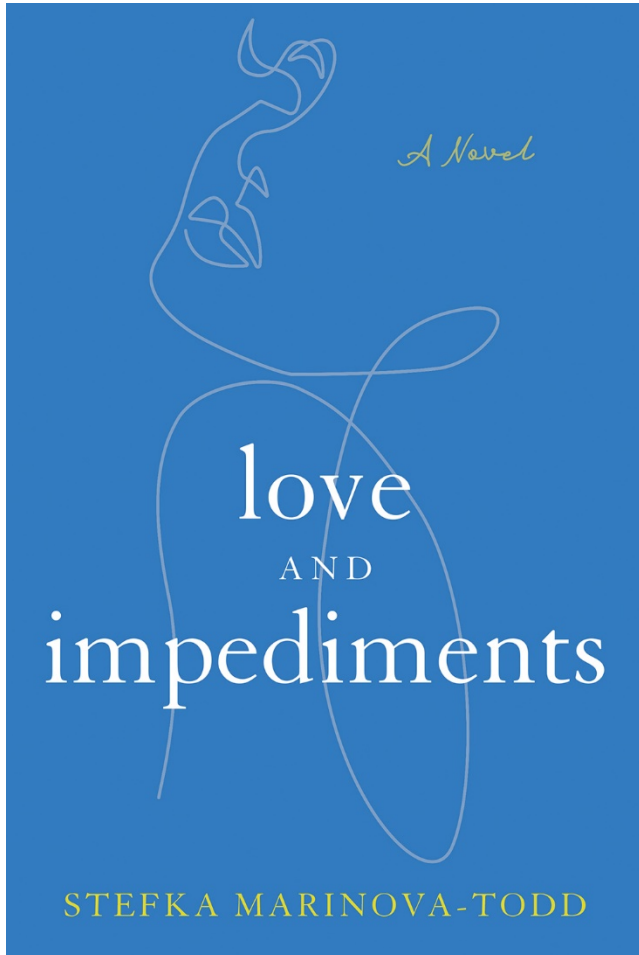


Reading Guide



LOVE AND IMPEDIMENTS

Stefka Marinova-Todd

A university professor's solid theory on happiness is challenged by none other than an international soccer star.

Marta Aneva, charming, self-reliant, and bright, is a university professor who does not seem to be living the best of lives. She is still saddened by the breakup of her long marriage, and when faced with new setbacks in her work, she fears that a coveted promotion will elude her as well.

Marta takes a six-month leave from her university in Toronto and travels to Uruguay, where she seeks to experience a new way of living. She takes a position as a private English tutor to the two young children of a handsome and self-absorbed soccer star,

Eduardo Rodriguez. The age gap between Marta and Eduardo is only the beginning of their differences. Regardless, Marta is disconcertingly attracted to him.

When she suspects that her feelings might be reciprocated, she must decide whether she is willing to sacrifice her independence and career for the promise of love. Ultimately, will her choice be the right one, one she will never regret?

DISCUSSION POINTS:

1. *Love and Impediments* draws on the author's experience growing up in Communist Bulgaria. What impact does this have on the novel as a piece of fiction?
2. Why does Marta choose to go to Uruguay? Would you make a similar choice for a travel destination?

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3. Much of the tension in the story comes from Marta's changing perceptions of the various people she meets in the course of the novel. Which one of them has the most impact on her life? Why?
4. Marta is generous and overly concerned about the wellbeing of others. What in her past life has made her the person she is at the beginning of the story?
5. What changes most about Marta, and at what point in the story do you think the change is most clearly revealed?
6. Part of the story is set in Montevideo and part in Toronto. Is the contrast between these two locations significant?
7. What is the significance of oysters in the story? Pearls? Fireflies? How important are these devices to the story?
8. If you find yourself in a similar position to the one Marta is in at the beginning of the novel, what do you imagine you would do?
9. Now, if you are in the position she is in at the end of the novel, what do you imagine you would do? Would you have acted differently earlier, and why?
10. How do you interpret the ending of the novel?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:



Stefka Marinova-Todd was born and raised in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, and has spent all of her adult life in North America. A university professor of bilingualism at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, she has a B.A. in Developmental Psychology from York University in Toronto, and a doctorate in Second Language Acquisition from Harvard University Graduate School of Education. *LOVE AND IMPEDIMENTS* is her first work of fiction.