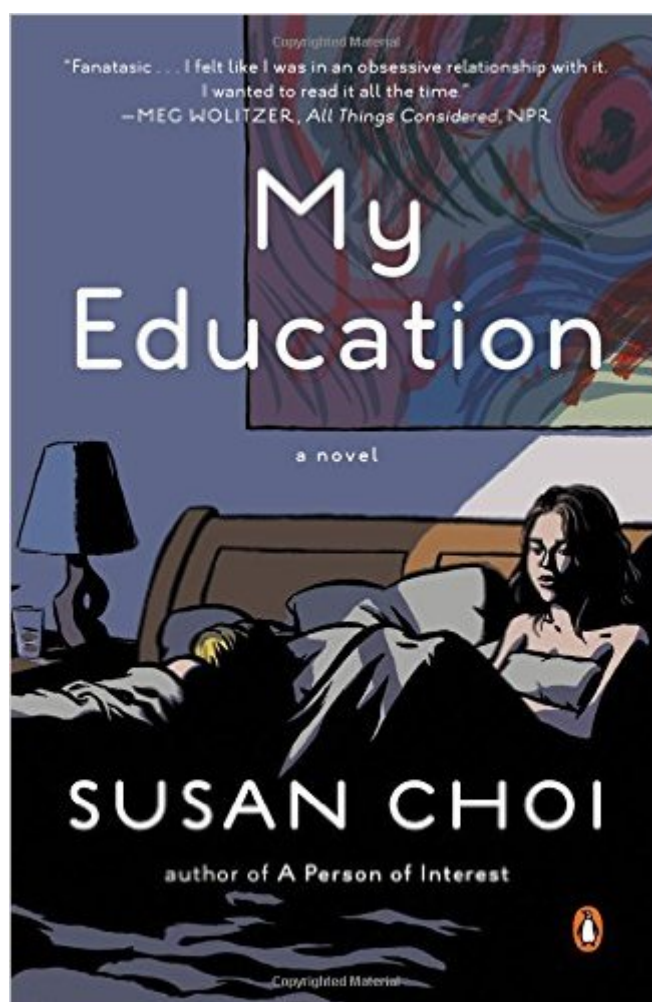


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My Education: A Novel



Synopsis

An intimately charged novel of desire and disaster from the author of *American Woman* and *A Person of Interest* Regina Gottlieb had been warned about Professor Nicholas Brodeur long before arriving as a graduate student at his prestigious university high on a pastoral hill. Heâ™s said to lie in the dark in his office while undergraduate women read couplets to him. Heâ™s condemned on the walls of the womenâ™s restroom, and enjoys films by Roman Polanski. But no one has warned Regina about his exceptional physical beautyâ”or his charismatic, volatile wife. My Education is the story of Reginaâ™s mistakes, which only begin in the bedroom, and endâ”if they doâ”fifteen years in the future and thousands of miles away. By turns erotic and completely catastrophic, Reginaâ™s misadventures demonstrate what can happen when the chasm between desire and duty is too wide to bridge.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is 1992, and Regina Gottlieb, our narrator, is entering grad school. She keeps hearing about the notorious Professor Brodeur who is very handsome, but accused by gossip of various sexual crimes. Curious, she takes one of the professor’s classes, even though she has never read any of the classics. Eventually she becomes one of the professor’s teaching assistants. Laurence, the other teaching assistant, married with a lovely wife and child, always attired in Brooks Brothers everything, becomes a friend. When the two are invited to the professor’s home, Regina finds herself caught in a sexual attraction that turns into an affair with the wrong person. This novel is a story of a certain coming-of-age; the education involves friendships and misplaced passions. As I

read, the novel brought back memories of some of my own youthful passions and indiscretions. Even so, I must admit to not quite liking Regina, even as I identified with some of her feelings and even some of her actions. Many of us have had that "great passion" - the one that involves obsession and quite pushes aside any moral qualms. Susan Choi so perfectly captures that in this novel - the sexual conflicts and tensions that arise in our youth and the price we usually pay for them. Smartly written, with deft, clever prose, I can see this one winning an award or two. QUOTES: My mother's voice was known to interfere with radio broadcasts and to summon stray dogs; in her late girlhood, when her nuclear grin and her lightning-fast hands had landed her a job as a typist with the U.S. Armed Forces based in Manila, she'd been useful for mustering troops who could otherwise sleep through all bugles and bells.

The story: It is 1992 and Regina Gottlieb, 20 years old, is starting her graduate degree. From the very first time she sees him at a poetry reading, Regina is mesmerized by Nicholas Brodeur, the seductive English professor with a rather shocking reputation. Although she is well aware that it may not be the smartest thing to do, Regina accepts a job as his assistant and slowly finds herself entering the world Nicholas and his wife, Martha, inhabit. Getting closer to Nicholas and Martha means a distance develops between Regina and her house-mate, friend and occasional lover, Dutra. While it is Regina's fascination with Nicholas Brodeur and his reputation that entices her into his orbit, he won't be the subject of her fantasies and desires. A passionate affair will follow, but instead of Nicholas it will be the person closest to him who captivates Regina to such an extent that she disregards the consequences her feelings and actions will have, both for herself and for those around her. And it won't be until 15 years later that the conflicts that started in 1992 and their lasting consequences come to the surface and have a chance of being put to rest. My thoughts: I am not entirely sure how I feel about this book or what to say about it. This is a rather typical coming-of-age story in that it portrays the journey a young woman makes from the innocence and happy-go-lucky lifestyle so typical of teenagers to the very real and harsh consequences that an affair and first deep, but unattainable love can bring. And the gravity of everything Regina encounters and experiences jumps off the page in the form of long and at times seemingly mindless descriptions of everything she sees, feels, does and experiences. And that is where my main issue with this book lies.

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