

Domestic Affairs

by Eileen Goudge



About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of **Woman in Red** comes an intimate story of friendship lost and regained, old loves rekindled, and a baptism by fire that ultimately leads to the redemption of three very special women.

It begins with a betrayal that tears apart childhood friends, Abigail and Lila, when Abigail's mother, the housekeeper for Lila's wealthy family, is summarily banished, casting Abigail from the only home she has ever known. Now, twenty-five years later, Abigail is a self-made successful cookbook author and TV personality. When Lila, who married well and for decades lived the glittering life of a Park Avenue socialite, suffers a tragic reversal of fortune, she seeks out the help of her childhood friend. Penniless and all but unemployable, Lila approaches Abigail about a job, and Abigail gives her one: as her housekeeper.

But revenge is not as sweet as Abigail had imagined. Lila's reentry into Abigail's life brings along some unexpected complications and questions: will Abigail be reunited with her girlhood love, Lila's twin brother, Vaughn? Will Concepcion, the grief-stricken mother whose daughter perished in the fire that consumed Abigail's factory, succeed in crossing the border to track Abigail down and confront her about her daughter's death? Will Lila ever find love in the wake of her husband's suicide?

In this sweeping emotional tale, Abigail, Lila and Concepcion are thrown together and forced to unite in order to save one another... and themselves. Along the way they discover that the forces that have torn their lives apart have also shaped them in ways they never could have imagined?

Discussion Guide

1. Friendships are the foundations of our lives. Have you ever been betrayed by a best friend? If so, how has it affected you? Did the friendship survive?

2. Abigail is like many women, in the sense that she feels she has to do it all. How do you juggle work and family? What are the challenges and how have you met them?

3. **Domestic Affairs** is about the power of secrets to affect our lives. Have you ever harbored a secret that changed the course of your life? How might it had been different had you revealed the secret?

Author Bio

Eileen Goudge (b. 1950) is one of the nation's most successful authors of women's fiction, beginning with the acclaimed six-million-copy bestseller **Garden of Lies**.

Goudge is one of six children, and the joys and strife that come with a large family have informed her fiction, much of which centers on issues of sisterhood and family. At eighteen she quit college to get married, a whirlwind experience that two years later left her divorced, broke, and responsible for her first child. It was then that she started writing in earnest.

On a typewriter borrowed from a neighbor, Goudge began turning out short stories and articles. For years she had limited success --- selling work to *McCall's*, *Reader's Digest*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle* --- but in the early eighties she took a job writing for a new young adult series that would become the phenomenally successful *Sweet Valley High*.

Goudge moved her family from California to New York City, where she spent several years writing young-adult fiction, creating series such as *Seniors*, *Swept Away*, and *Who Killed Peggy Sue*? In 1986 she published her first novel of adult fiction, **Garden of Lies**, inspired by a childhood anxiety that, because she did not resemble her brothers and sisters, she had been secretly adopted --- a suspicion so strong that, at twelve, Goudge broke into her father's lockbox expecting to find adoption papers. (She did not.) The tale of children swapped at birth was a national sensation, spent sixteen weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, and eventually yielded a sequel, **Thorns of Truth** (1998), which Goudge wrote in response to a decade of fan mail demanding she resolve the story.

Since then, Goudge has continued writing women's fiction, producing a total of thirteen novels to date. Her most popular works include the three-book saga of Carson Springs --- **Stranger in Paradise** (2001), **Taste of Honey** (2002), and **Wish Come True** (2003) --- a small, secret-ridden town that Goudge based on scenic Ojai, California. She has also published a cookbook, **Something Warm from the Oven**, which contains recipes that Goudge developed as a reprieve from the stresses of writing novels.

Goudge met her current husband while conducting an interview over the telephone. Entertainment reporter Sandy Kenyon was so taken with the author that he asked if he could call her back when the interview was done, and after weeks of late-night conversations they met in person and were married in 1996.

Goudge lives with Kenyon in New York City.

Critical Praise

"Eileen Goudge, author of **Woman in Red**, has written a beautiful and heart-wrenching story of the love and closeness two women share as teens only to be destroyed. Now they share a need to take solace in each other and restore their once-close relationship. This story will reach into your soul and place you into the characters' thoughts. Highly recommended reading!"

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