



The Paternity Test: A Novel

Michael Lowenthal

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Having a baby to save a marriage—it's the oldest of clichés. But what if the marriage at risk is a gay one, and having a baby involves a surrogate mother?

Pat Faunce is a faltering romantic, a former poetry major who now writes textbooks. A decade into his relationship with Stu, an airline pilot from a fraught Jewish family, he fears he's losing Stu to other men—and losing himself in their “no rules” arrangement. Yearning for a baby and a deeper commitment, he pressures Stu to move from Manhattan to Cape Cod, to the cottage where Pat spent boyhood summers.

As they struggle to adjust to their new life, they enlist a surrogate: Debora, a charismatic Brazilian immigrant, married to Danny, an American carpenter. Gradually, Pat and Debora bond, drawn together by the logistics of getting pregnant and away from their spouses. Pat gets caught between loyalties—to Stu and his family, to Debora, to his own potent desires—and wonders: is he fit to be a father?

In one of the first novels to explore the experience of gay men seeking a child through surrogacy, Michael Lowenthal writes passionately about marriages and mistakes, loyalty and betrayal, and about how our drive to create families can complicate the ones we already have. *The Paternity Test* is a provocative look at the new “family values.”



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