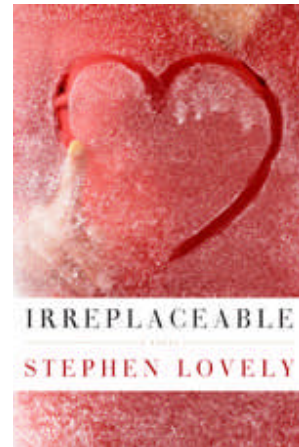


A Review of
Irreplaceable (a novel)
Author: A novel by Stephen Lovely

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient



One criteria I use for evaluating a novel like this is to see how long it takes me to read the book. Some get read in a day or two, often starting slowly but once into their story, it can't be put down until you reach the ending. Other daily priorities get put aside, sleep is sacrificed in staying up to get to that final chapter, etc. For me, that's a highly recommended book, in general. Naturally there are other factors to consider, but if it takes me a week or longer, then that story didn't capture me and this book, **Irreplaceable**, did take me longer than a week to complete, so you get some idea of my rating of this one. (Note: in fairness, many other readers felt it was a page turner of excitement and would rate it much higher)

The storyline bounces between that of the donor husband, and his wife's heart recipient. It moves back and forth in time using flashbacks to fill in the story. There something of a thriller theme when the villain of a driver that caused the accident that led to the donation tries to track down the recipient by way of stalking the donor family to claim "credit" for making this "gift of life" possible. Kind of weird, huh?

While there is evidence of the author's research in getting the general facts of the donation process and the transplant waiting and surgery fairly accurate, it felt at times that they were pasted into the story in an attempt to add realism rather than being an integrated part of the storyline itself. Stephen Lovely's seven years working as a night clerk in a pediatric ICU setting provided both the inspiration and insights to write this story, his first novel, of heart transplant and organ donation. In describing the two sides of the communication between recipient and donor, he portrays a different tale than most we see of this in that the donor husband at least resists engaging in that contact which is initiated by the recipient, and therein lies the tale and an interesting but abrupt conclusion.

While you may enjoy some emotionally satisfying moments in its reading, including some sensual scenes, this is not a book with your fairy tale, love story ending, but then real life is often like that.

Note: **Irreplaceable** is available in hardback from Amazon.com.

Interesting additional resource: In May 2009, an on-line web transplant support group hosted an all day opportunity to discuss this book with its author, Stephen Lovely, and archived those exchanges. To link to transplantbuddies and read that them click on:
<http://www.transplantbuddies.org/tbx/messages/12043/48211.html?1241493997>

Brief bio:

Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. '94, retired after 37 years with Unisys Corporation in 2005, is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program, NKF and UNOS as well as a nationally recognized speaker and author. His own book, **A Gift from the Heart**, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be obtained by contacting him at GLEASONJIM@AOL.COM.