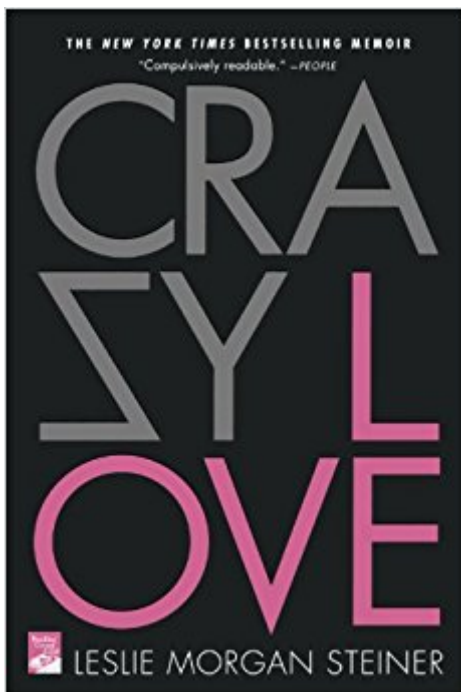


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# Crazy Love



## Synopsis

At 22, Leslie Morgan Steiner seemed to have it all: good looks, a Harvard diploma, a glamorous job in New York City. Plus a handsome, funny boyfriend who adored her. But behind her façade of success, this golden girl hid a dark secret. She'd made a mistake shared by millions: she fell in love with the wrong person. At first, Leslie and Conor seemed perfect together. Then came the fights she tried to ignore: he pushed her down the stairs, choked her during an argument, and threatened her with a gun. Several times, he came close to making good on his threat to kill her. With each attack, Leslie lost another piece of herself. Why didn't she leave? She stayed because she loved him. Gripping and utterly compelling, *Crazy Love* takes you inside the violent, devastating world of abusive love and makes you feel the power and powerlessness of abuse that can take place anywhere and to anyone. *Crazy Love* draws you in -- and never lets you go.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a young editor at *Seventeen* magazine, recovering from a history of alcoholism that permeated her family, Steiner met a man she thought was a knight in shining armor. Handsome and charming, Conor had a more troubled background than her own, raised in poverty in Boston by an abusive mother. Deep in vulnerability and denial, she let down her defenses and justified every time he struck her, even as he got progressively more violent. She gave up her magazine job and moved with Conor to a small town in Vermont and later to Chicago, where they both pursued MBAs. Along the way, she took on financial and emotional debt as Conor became increasingly more demanding and violent. He nearly killed her before she found the strength to admit to herself and others what

was going on. Steiner, author of the acclaimed anthology *Mommy Wars* (2006), offers readers a courageous and revealing look at domestic abuse and one woman's effort to free herself.

--Vanessa Bush --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Compulsively readable. People (3.5 stars) [Readers will] cheer as Steiner slowly regains her sense of self and escapes this crazy love. The Washington Post In steady, intimate prose punctuated by surprising, refreshing streaks of humor this courageous, empowering survival story brings the phrase 'battered woman' into terrifying focus. Kirkus A courageous and revealing look at domestic abuse and one woman's effort to free herself. Booklist Harrowing. TheDailyBeast.com Riveting | An elegant stylist, Morgan eschews the easy pop psychology route in favor of a thought-provoking peek into how violence and abuse curdle into distorted thinking. Minneapolis Star Tribune In this gripping, compulsively readable story of romantic love and its dreadful underside, Leslie Morgan Steiner has written a classic. What makes love turn to violence? How can a woman know she is at risk? These are some of the questions elegantly addressed in Steiner's important book about how she survived a marriage which almost killed her. Her painful journey from love to fear to sanity is ultimately heartening and serves a profound lesson. This book should be required reading for all women. Susan Cheever Crazy Love reminds us that sometimes a marriage can go from being a mere skirmish in the battle of the sexes to becoming a full-on physical war. The book stands as a warning to all women to be vigilant when they pick their spouses, to always have an exit strategy in mind, to know where the money in the marriage is, to pick up as much education as possible -- all for the possible day when they may find themselves battered, broke, terrified and alone. It can happen to anyone, and every woman should prepare herself for it. Carolyn See, author of *Making a Literary Life* A harrowing cautionary tale that should be read by every woman who thinks romantic love can overcome all. I read this book in one terrifying gulp and plan to have my daughter read it. Every mother should do the same. Elsa Walsh, staff writer for *The New Yorker* and author of *Divided Lives* After a few moments of disbelief--how could a nice girl from a nice family marry such a cruel and dangerous man?--I found myself cheering for this woman who gets off the floor--literally--and goes on to save her own life. Crazy Love is a deeply affecting account of cruelty and abuse in a marriage doomed from the start. It is a reminder that while bad behavior can be explained it can never be excused, and that while placing blame is rarely useful, letting go is. Leslie Morgan Steiner's candor is wrenching and ultimately inspiring. Jane Juska, author of *Unaccompanied Women* and *A Round-Heeled Woman* Leslie Morgan Steiner has written a

memoir that is as seductive as a whirlwind romance. This is a book for every woman -- and man -- who has ever felt, as Steiner writes, that "leaving was easy. The hard part was figuring out where to go."

• Veronica Chambers, author, *Mama's Girl*  
Bright, beautiful and battered. Leslie Morgan Steiner didn't think of herself as a victim until it was almost too late. Hers is a success story that shows how excruciating a declaration of independence can be and how much happiness can come from it. Read it and cheer.

• George Lardner, author of *The Stalking of Kristin* and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his Washington Post series investigating his daughter's murder by her ex-boyfriend  
Most love is crazy -- at first, it's that can't eat, can't sleep feeling. Then it moves into a comfortable, warm, hopefully, still sexy state. Leslie Morgan Steiner shows us with wrenching clarity when crazy is good and when crazy is something you need to leave. A must read for anyone in a consuming relationship.

• Iris Krasnow, author of New York Times bestseller, *Surrendering to Marriage*  
If you've ever read your daughter the story of Cinderella or Sleeping Beauty, you should make sure she knows the story Leslie Morgan Steiner tells in *Crazy Love*, too. This book is for every woman who's ever thought, "I can change him. He'll change for me" and who hasn't thought that? Steiner's tale unfolds with all the harrowing inevitability of a horror movie, the kind where you watch the heroine start down the dark staircase to the basement with your heart pounding as you whisper, "No! Don't do it! Don't!"

That such a smart, kind, funny, vital woman could let herself be victimized this way seems almost unimaginable and yet Steiner makes you understand how it came to pass, and even appreciate, with a sort of disgusted awe, how expertly her husband manipulates her aching insecurities and longing for that great big happily-ever-after love we learn about in fairy tales. That she comes out the other side is miraculous. That she's brave enough to tell this frank and brutal story is, too.

• Sandy Hingston, "Loco Parentis" columnist for Philadelphia Magazine and author of *The Affair*  
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• Sandy Hingston, "Loco Parentis" columnist for Philadelphia Magazine and author of *The Affair*  
A vivid and compelling story that goes a long way to dispelling the myth that women who are abused by men are in some way at fault. This book will be cherished by any woman who has ever been in the grip of an abusive relationship.

• Jane Bernstein, author of *Bereft: A Sister's Story* and *Rachel in the World*  
Steiner's brave, insightful memoir reveals how independent and capable women can find

themselves trapped in violent relationships. More important, she shows that women can find their way out of abusive relationships. Her absorbing story will inspire every reader. To a reader with an abusive partner, it may well save her life.

- Elisabeth Joy LaMotte, psychotherapist and author of *Overcoming Your Parents' Divorce*
- Leslie Morgan Steiner pulls no punches in this brutally honest memoir of a brave, smart, fresh-faced young woman's descent into domestic hell. Domestic violence isn't picky and it doesn't only happen to "other people." All of us are vulnerable. Her story is proof that love can come on so strong it can kill you. Steiner's good news? Sometimes the end of the world is actually the very beginning.
- Monica Holloway, author of *Driving With Dead People and Cowboy and Wills*
- Leslie Morgan Steiner is the bravest woman I know. Not only did she save her own life, but now she has --opened her heart to save countless others. As one who has hidden to avoid the humiliation of a fat lip, I know how hard that can be. *Crazy Love* recounts the sad, sentimental journey that destroys the myth of physical abuse - that it doesn't happen to nice girls, or smart girls, or anyone you know. Steiner's vivid prose paints a clear picture of how it started, why she let it continue, and how she escaped to tell the tale. *Crazy Love* sets the record straight: love can be a four letter word.
- Leslie Lehr, author of *Wife Goes On*
- I read this book in one night. *Crazy Love* is a gripping, beautifully crafted and above all a painfully honest account of a woman (who by all accounts doesn't look the type) grappling with an abusive relationship. If you've ever been there or heard about a woman dealing with this situation and wondered, "why'd she stay?" read Leslie's unselfconscious account. Now I understand. Read *Crazy Love* and you will too.
- Stefanie Wilder-Taylor, author of *Sippy Cups Are Not for Chardonnay*
- Leslie Morgan Steiner has written a deeply compelling, brutally honest and important book about her relationship with a man who abused her, emotionally and physically. I couldn't put it down. It's a must-read for anyone who has been there or knows someone who has -- or just wonders how it happens. Most importantly, Leslie's own life offers living, breathing proof that women can not only break these destructive bonds, but move on to build successful marriages, families and careers.
- Dee Dee Myers, author of *Why Women Should Rule the World*

*Crazy Love* by Leslie Morgan Steiner takes us into a disturbing, but all too common world of verbal and physical domestic violence through her personal story of being in an abusive marriage. Her experience tells us that everyone is vulnerable to domestic violence. Her story illustrates why women stay as long as they do in an abusive relationship and shows the lack of understanding and support many have while trying to navigate through their situation. Leslie raises awareness to the many red flags of an abuser and points out the fact that during the time period she was being

abused, there was little research on why men abuse. When focusing on why women stay, the victim is blamed for her "inaction" instead of putting the responsibility of abuse on the perpetrator. The courage it took for Leslie Morgan Steiner to publish such a personal memoir is inspiring. She shows that survivors of domestic violence can overcome their horrible experiences and thrive in our society. Leslie Morgan Steiner is a role model to all survivors.

I read this book in about a day. It was a good story -- a fast read -- and the author is definitely a good writer. I thought that the author was very honest, including information about her childhood, during which the insecurities were created that would ultimately make her accept being abused by her husband. I had one big problem with this book: the constant referencing to Harvard. Perhaps it was that the author was trying to remind us that even a girl, who grew up rich and who was smart enough to get into Harvard, could also become a victim of domestic abuse. However, the continual Harvard name dropping had the opposite effect for me: reading the book felt like the author herself was trying to prove to her own mind that she was somehow still worthy -- she went to Harvard goddammit! We already learned in the 80s that domestic abuse has nothing to do with class or race -- it crosses all boundaries. So why not just let us know at the beginning of the book that the author went to Harvard, and then be done with it? Instead, the effect of continually reminding me where she attended college distanced me from the book, as if the book was only for Ivy League graduates. My advice to the author is to put more trust in her material: the story is good enough without constantly reminding the reader of her (and her family's) Harvard status and high social ranking. The author would have gotten the same job done with perhaps just a couple of mentions, not with a mention on every other page.

Although the mother and father characters were not fully developed and there wasn't enough about the main character, Leslie, up front to help the reader know and care about her, the book speaks to the attraction, magnetic at times, abusive men have for women who have problems with their self esteem. These women may not even realize they have weaknesses. The abuser finds them and uses them to gain control. There were so many events early in the dating where I wanted to pull Leslie aside and yell "run!". So many telltale behaviors that she rationalized. Too many events where she figured she was the cause. I think the story in the end (chapter 3) sums up best the plight of women who love a man who becomes abusive. I'm also sure there were many more verbal slights, cold looks, and dead conversations than she has related. It may have been helpful for the author to have told more about her childhood and relationship with her parents and other family to

draw the reader in. I had a hard time getting into the first part.

I personally loved this book, but mostly because the male in it reminds me so much of my emotionally abusive ex-boyfriend. It really freaked me out. I got hooked and read this book over the span of 4 days (usually takes me 1-2 months to finish a book). Would recommend to anyone who has been in an abusive relationship!

This book should be required reading for teenaged girls and young women since it illustrates in great detail the utterly predictable pattern that abusive relationships take:1. They meet, he completely sweeps her off her feet - he is the most loving and charming man she has ever met and she falls head over heels for him;2. He tells her of his abusive childhood and she feels tremendous sympathy for him - plus she is determined to make up for all the love he didn't get as a child;3. He starts testing her loyalty in various little ways - she has misgivings, but rationalizes them away;4. He puts subtle psychological pressure on her to make a commitment to him (engagement, living together) after they've been dating only a few months; she mistakes his possessiveness for proof of his love and need for her;5. He makes her feel guilty for having friends, so she sees them less and less often;6. He makes huge decisions which directly affect her life (he quits his job to move to a remote rural location) without even consulting her beforehand;7. He hits her; she is shocked but doesn't leave because she is emotionally and financially tied to him;8. He abuses her again and again; she is miserable but keeps hoping he'll change;9. She finally leaves after he nearly kills her and she finally realizes he will never, ever change.

Morgan Steiner bravely shares her experiences with domestic violence in such a way that allows the reader to step inside the relationship and understand the complexities of her decision-making. She has deftly woven the story-line in such a way that the reader is carried along with the author as she falls in love, realizes, and then comes to terms with her abuse. This is a humanizing portrait of a social epidemic, and shatters stereotypes by demonstrating that domestic violence can affect educated, intelligent women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. It is a must-read for people living through abuse, and for those who know and love them. Perhaps surprisingly, this serious piece made me laugh and smile right along with its heroic author.

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