



A Woman's Guide to Search & Rescue: A Novel

Mary Carroll Moore

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Two sisters form an unexpected bond in the formidable Adirondacks in the beautiful novel A Woman's Guide to Search and Rescue.

In Mary Carroll Moore's novel *A Woman's Guide to Search and Rescue*, estranged half-sisters reconnect and form a unique family alliance.

The daughter of two pilots, Red is a North Carolina musician who knows how to fly. Her band, Sleek, has a growing fan base. But Red's success attracts trouble: her childhood friend, Billy, stalks her from prison. Vengeful and possessive, he sends a criminal associate to threaten Red's manager and ex-husband, Vern. Billy's henchman leaves Vern comatose, and circumstantial evidence makes it seem as though Red was involved in the attack.

To escape the situation, Red flies a Piper Cub—hoping to increase her speed and travel “under the clouds”—to upstate New York to find sanctuary with her migraine-prone half-sister, Kate, who is part of the local search-and-rescue unit that arrives when Red's plane crashes. Red also solicits the help of Kate's daughter, Molly—an LGBTQ+ artist and a passionate Sleek fan who helps Red find hiding in a rural cabin while her ankle heals (and while she plots her next move toward Canada).

Red is an impulsive, expressive heroine; her characterization contrasts with tenacious, self-contained Kate's. Red's arrival also confirms Kate's decades of suspicion regarding her free-spirited father John's other family. In the end, John himself proves to be an elusive presence who creates both division and unity. “A restless soul,” he keeps in touch by sending postcards and photographs, and his most recent mailing from Ottawa includes pictures of his latest lover—and yet another daughter. Still, he is not focal; it's the differences between the sisters (and their shared inclination toward adventurous, expansive behavior) that direct the novel's progression.

The prose captures the formidable natural beauty of the Adirondacks, whose hardy residents are recorded skiing through “acres of white” to reach each other's snowbound homes. Indeed, nestled among the immense mountains and endless skies are close-knit neighbors; everyone knows everyone else's business. Once Red is ensconced in this tight community, the book moves forward at a measured, engrossing pace, following along as a bond develops between Kate and Red. However, Red's entanglement with Billy results in occasional notes of menace and melodrama, and her legal and criminal dilemmas are resolved with unconvincing speed.

Exploring distinct family complications and connections, the novel *A Woman's Guide to Search and Rescue* soars and glides with emotional finesse.

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