

## Triple Love Score

**Brandi Megan Granett**

Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing (Sep 1, 2016)

Softcover \$14.99 (304pp)

978-1-942545-40-8

*In Triple Love Score, sometimes life gives you what you want but not always in the form you expected.*

Brandi Megan Granett mixes romance, poetry, and Scrabble in the charming *Triple Love Score*. Through realistic characters who face unexpected problems, it explores the difference between pursuing your heart's desire and letting life's opportunities pass you by.

Sympathetic heroine Miranda Shane has settled in many aspects of her life. She watched Scott, the love of her life, walk away without ever confessing her true feelings. Rather than pursuing a writing career, she teaches college-level poetry. Her only creative outlet comes through simple verses composed via a Scrabble board. But in a surprising turn of events, her circumstances change when her Scrabble poetry becomes a viral sensation, a graduate student makes her the object of his affections, and a newly returned Scott reveals that Miranda's unrealized love may not have been unrequited.

Miranda's tendencies to move through her life passively are relatable. She has chosen to fall into a rut rather than actively reach for her goals because that is safer than risking failure. But while Miranda learns this important lesson, some of her flaws remain significant hurdles. Her frustrating inability to talk honestly to Scott falls into a classic genre romance trap where romantic conflict stems from failing to communicate. Despite not liking the idea of people influencing her love life, she appears willing to let others control her burgeoning career. These contradictions raise questions about the longevity of Miranda's newfound happiness.

The unique nature of Miranda's Scrabble poetry fits well with today's Internet-savvy world. Anyone knowledgeable about social media channels can easily imagine how her creations found a receptive audience. The ease with which she wins the publishing career she'd long given up on stretches believability, but it's balanced by the acknowledgment that the popularity of her Scrabble poetry is fleeting.

Granett's crisp prose injects wry humor into the situations Miranda finds herself in—especially those that most people would find stressful. *Triple Love Score* remembers that even when life is terrible, there are patches of joy to be found. Miranda's developing relationship with Scott's adorable daughter embodies this sentiment. The only area in which Granett's hopeful approach fails is Miranda's liaison with the graduate student. Such a relationship is inherently problematic, but the initiation of the affair worked within context. As the novel proceeds, however, and Scott begins to win over Miranda, the affair's existence fades into the background. The plot element escapes becoming extraneous, but only by making a reappearance that is both predictable and superficially handled.

While a sweet tale of a rekindled relationship forms the core of *Triple Love Score*, the narrative is less a love story and more about a woman's journey to reclaim her life. Even though it handles heavy topics such as illicit affairs, estranged families, and drug abuse, the novel remains a light read. The upbeat tone provides an effective contrast to the theme that forms the backbone of *Triple Love Score*: sometimes life gives you what you want but not always in the form you expected.

VERNIEDA VERGARA (September 28, 2016)

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