



A Change of Luck

Julia Markus

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Elaine Netherlands is taking charge of her life—with zest. Divorced, independent, on the brink of a new career, she feels exhilarated by possibility. Then her nineteen-year-old step-daughter, Nola, shows up at her door after three years of silence. Nola needs money—a loan so that her rock group, Second Hand, can get to California. And Elaine wants to give it, wants to say, “Go for it, girl, you can do it.” But wouldn’t this mean another confrontation with her former husband, Larry Netherlands, the fashionable New York photographer of beautiful women?

Should she side with Nola? Elaine makes a wrong turn as she drives from Manhattan to Connecticut. Finding herself lost in the woods in the middle of her life’s journey, she does what any self-respecting late-twentieth century person would do—she gets to a clearing and takes an option on one of the town houses being built there. And it is then that she meets Mario Picard, a contractor with a French-Canadian crew, and her wrong turn leads her to a change of luck.

So begins Julia Markus’s latest novel, a comedy of the spirit, which blazes a path through the density of our times. In its pages, Elaine contends with professional reversals, real estate, love, sex, co-dependency, and loss, and emerges tested but triumphant. With humor, wit, and intelligence, *A Change of Luck* looks squarely at the dark in our society, but finally affirms the power of hope.

Julia Markus, an English professor at Hofstra University, received the Houghton Mifflin Literary Award for her first novel, *Uncle*, which was followed by three well-received novels, *American Rose*, *Friends Along the Way* and *A Change of Luck*, as well as her critically acclaimed biographies, *Dared and Done: The Marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning* and *Across An Untried Sea: Discovering Lives Hidden in the Shadow of Convention and Time*. She has won a National Endowment for the Arts grant and two National Endowment for the Humanities grants. Her most recent book is *J. Anthony Froude: The Last Undiscovered Great Victorian*.

"Elaine Netherlands, novelist and former wife of a famous New York fashion photographer, is learning a few lessons about life. Having established a post-divorce independence, she finds her orderly existence thrown topsy-turvy when she takes a wrong turn en route to visit friends in Connecticut and impulsively buys an option on a townhouse. She meets a handsome contractor on site and falls in love. Concurrently, her stepdaughter comes back into her life with a request for money and her ex-husband becomes ill and seeks emotional support. Although Elaine had sought to get away from a traditional role in which females "find their lives in others," she finds herself with many needy individuals in her life. She becomes involved with Anonymous Rooms (a self-help group modeled on AA) in an attempt to take care of her own needs while coping with the growing burdens placed on her by others. The story and issues are contemporary, and the protagonist triumphs in the end."

—**Kimberly G. Allen, National Assn. of Home Builders Lib., Washington, D.C.** Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"*A Change of Luck* is uncanny in its perception of depiction of the dislocation that can occur in life, where moral change, desire, and love come into play. This is very much a contemporary novel, touching upon many of today’s pressing issues, written in the unique voice of a fine and always entertaining novelist."

—**Oscar Hijuelos, author of *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love***

“From Andy Warhol’s funeral to Connecticut Coop futures, from speedballs to co-dependency groups, this book defines a time and place: America on the cusp of the century. It’s funny and sad, full of hope and despair, and I couldn’t put it down—not least because of its deadpan satire of the publishing industry.”

—Meredith Tax, author of *Rivington Street* and *Union Square*

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