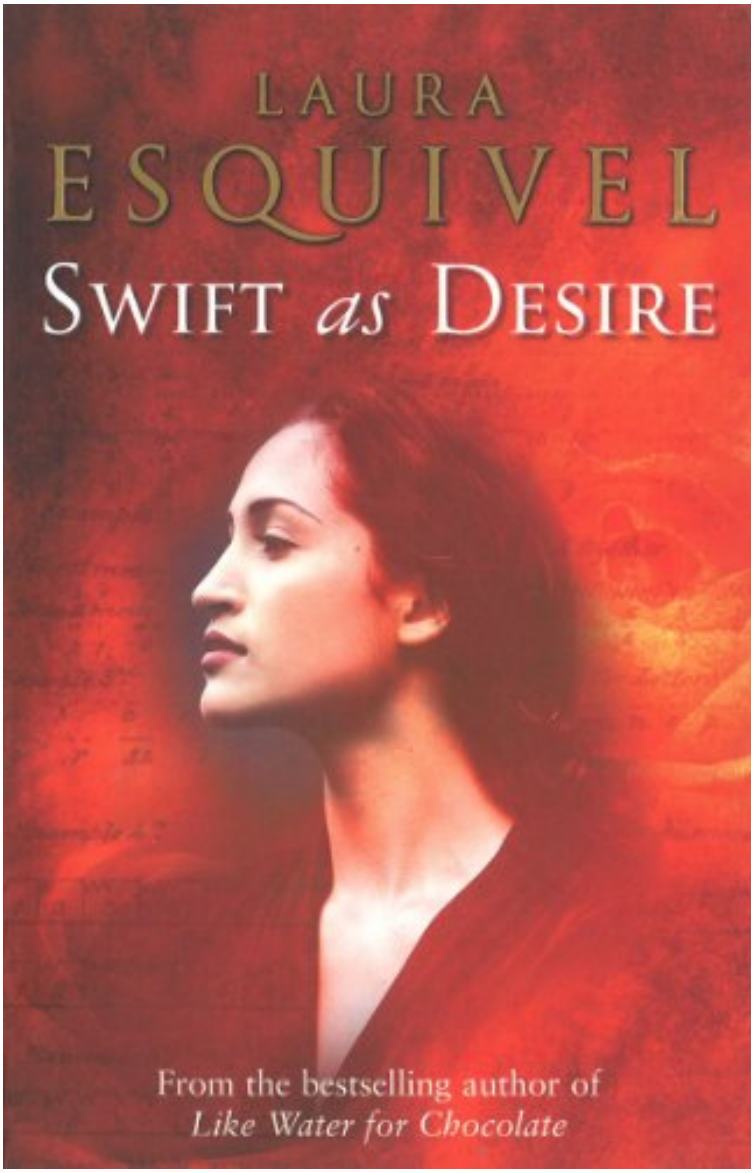
Swift As Desire



Par Laura Esquivel
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(Read free ebook) Swift As Desire

Par Laura Esquivel : Swift As Desire before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Swift As Desire:

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurDon Jubilo entered the world smiling rather than crying like other babies, and his life mission is to bring happiness to everyone's lives. Even as a young boy, acting as interpreter between his warring Mayan grandmother and his Spanish-speaking mother, he mistranslates words of spite into words of respect, so that their mutual hatred turns to love. When he grows up, he puts his gift for hearing what is in people's hearts and interpreting it to others, to good use in his job as the village telegraph operator. But the telegraph now lies abandoned, obsolete as a means of communication in the electronic age, and don Jubilo is on his deathbed, mute and estranged from his beloved wife, Lucha, who refuses to speak to him. What tragic event has come between such two sensuous, giving people to cause this seemingly irreparable rift? What

mystery lies behind the death of their son, Ramiro, whom no one ever mentions? Can daughter Lluvia bring reconciliation to their parents by acting as an interpreter between them, just as Jubilo did for his grandmother and mother when he was a boy?This bittersweet story of the humble telegraph operator with a talent for curing misunderstanding, for hearing sand dunes sing and insects whisper, is based on the story of Laura Esquivel's own father, just as the much-loved LIKE WATER FOR CHOCOLATE was inspired by her mother's family. Romantic, poignant, touched with graphic earthiness and wit, Esquivel shows us how, in our computerised world of excess, keeping secrets will always lead to unhappiness, and how old-fashioned speaking to each other can redress and heal all our wrongs..comLaura Esquivel's Swift as Desire, an enchanting and sensuous romance, reflects upon an undying love and the will to overcome an unspeakable tragedy. As in her bestselling novel Like Water for Chocolate, Swift as Desire is rich with metaphor, coated with magic, and very much about the power of desire. Jbilo, a telegraph operator blessed (or cursed) with the ability to hear what people feel, radiates joy from his birth. He spends his life mediating for others and salvaging their relationships, until disaster strikes his own life and causes him to question, even loathe, his supernatural gift. He who knew that no matter how quiet the air was, there were always hearts beating, planets spinning in the heavens, bodies breathing, plants growing; and all producing sounds, but he hadn't heard anything! He hadn't heard anything! Writing the novel as a tribute to her father (himself, a telegraph operator), Esquivel integrates her belief in the power of words. Swift as Desire is an engaging and enjoyable story that anyone with the slightest interest in a sensually romantic novel will find quite desirable, indeed. --Yvonne SchindlerExtraitChapter 1He was born happy and on a holiday. Welcomed into the world by his whole family, gathered together for the special day. They say his mother laughed so hard at one of the jokes being told around the table that her waters broke. At first she thought the dampness between her legs was urine that she had not been able to contain because of her laughter but she soon realized that this was not the case, that the torrent was a signal that her twelfth child was about to be born. Still laughing, she excused herself and went to her bedroom. As she had gone through eleven previous deliveries, this one took only a few minutes, and she gave birth to a beautiful boy who, instead of coming into the world crying, entered it laughing. After bathing, doa Jesusa returned to the dining room. "Look what happened to me!" she announced to her relatives. Everyone turned to look at her, and, revealing the tiny bundle she held in her arms, she said, "I laughed so hard, the baby came out." A loud burst of laughter filled the dining room and everyone enthusiastically applauded the happy occasion. Her husband, Librado Chi, raised his arms and exclaimed, "Qu jbilo!"--"What joy!" And that was what they named him. In truth, they could not have chosen a better name. Jbilo was a worthy representative of joy, of pleasure, of joviality. Even when he became blind, many years later, he always retained his sense of humor. It seemed as if he had been born with a special gift for happiness. And I don't mean simply a capacity for being happy, but also a talent for bringing happiness to everyone around him. Wherever he went, he was accompanied by a chorus of laughter. No matter how heavy the atmosphere, his arrival, as if by magic, would always ease tension, calm moods, and cause the most pessimistic person to see the brighter side of life, as if, above all else, he had the gift of bringing peace. The only person with whom this gift failed him was his wife, but that isolated case constituted the sole exception to the rule. In general, there was no one who could resist his charm and good humor. Even Itzel Ay, his paternal grandmother--the woman who, after her son had married a white woman, had been left with a permanent frown etched on her forehead--began to smile when she saw Jbilo. She called him Che'ehunche'eh Wich, which in the Mayan language means "the one with the smiling face." The relationship between doa Jesusa and doa Itzel was far from good until after Jbilo was born. Because of race. Doa Itzel was one hundred percent Mayan Indian and she disapproved of the mixing of her race's blood with doa Jesusa's Spanish blood. For many years, she had avoided visiting her son's home. Her grandchildren grew up without her being very involved in their lives. Her rejection of her daughter-in-law was so great that for years she refused to speak to her, arguing that she couldn't speak Spanish. So doa Jesusa was forced to learn Mayan in order to be able to speak with her mother-in-law. But she found it very difficult to learn a new language while raising twelve children, so communication between the two was sparse and of poor quality. But all that changed after Jbilo was born. As she desired with all her soul to be near the baby, his grandmother began to visit her son's house again, which had never happened with the other grandchildren, as if she had no great interest in them. But from the first moment she saw Jbilo, she became fascinated with his smiling face. Jubilo was a blessing to the family; he appeared like a gift from heaven that no one expected. A beautiful gift that they didn't know what to do with. The difference in age between him and the youngest of his siblings was several years, and a few of his older brothers and sisters were already married and had

children of their own. So it was almost as if Jbilo were an only child, and his playmates were his nieces and nephews, who were the same age as he. Because his mother was busy simultaneously fulfilling the roles of mother, wife, grandmother, mother-in-law, and daughter-in-law, Jbilo spent a lot of time in the company of the servants, until his grandmother adopted him as her favorite gran child. They spent most of the day together, taking walks, playing, talking. Of course, his grandmother spoke to him in Mayan, which meant that Jbilo became doa Itzel's first bilingual grandchild. And so, from the age of five, the child became the family's official interpreter. This was a fairly complicated matter for a small child, as he had to take into account that when doa Jesusa said the word mar, she was referring to the sea in front of their home, where the family often swam. On the other hand, when doa Itzel said the word K'ak'nab, she wasn't referring only to the sea, but also to the "lady of the sea," which is the name given to one of the phases of the moon and is associated with large bodies of water. Both of these entities have the same name in Mayan. So, as Jbilo translated, not only did he have to be aware of these subtleties, but he also had to pay attention to his mother's and grandmother's tone of voice, the tension in their vocal cords, as well as the expression on their faces and the set of their mouths. It was a difficult task, but one which Jbilo performed with great pleasure. Of course, he didn't always translate literally. He always added a kind word or two to soften the exchange between the two women. Over time, this little trick managed to help them get along a little better each day, and they eventually grew to love one another. This experience helped Jbilo to discover the power of words for bringing people closer or pushing them apart, and that the important thing wasn't what was said, but the intention behind the communication. This sounds simple, but it is in fact very complicated. When Jbilo's grandmother gave him a message to translate, generally the words didn't coincide with what she really wanted to say. The tension around her mouth and vocal cords gave her away. Even to an innocent child like Jbilo, it was obvious that his grandmother was making an effort to swallow her words. But, as strange as it sounds, Jbilo heard the silent words clearly, even though they had never been spoken. And he understood that this "voice" that remained silent was the one that truly represented his grandmother's desires. So Jbilo, without thinking much about it, frequently translated those imperceptible murmurings instead of the words she spoke out loud. Of course, it never crossed his mind to do this to be naughty, just the opposite; his ultimate objective was always to reconcile these two women, both of them so beloved and important to him, to say out loud the magic word that neither of them ever dared to speak, the word that had to do with repressed desires. The frequent disagreements that arose between his mother and his grandmother were a clear example of this. Jbilo had no doubt that when one of them said black, she really meant white, and vice versa. At his young age, what he didn't understand was why these two women made their lives, and as a consequence the lives of everyone around them, so complicated, since any argument between them had repercussions on all the rest of the family. There was never a strife-free day. They always found reasons to fight. If one said that Indians were lazier than Spaniards, the other would say that Spaniards smelled worse than Indians. There was no shortage of arguments, but without a doubt, the most sensitive were those that had to do with the life and customs of doa Jesusa. Doa Itzel had always worried that her grandchildren would be brought up in a lifestyle that, to her way of thinking, wasn't appropriate for them. This had been one of the main reasons why she had avoided coming to the house in the past. She had wanted to avoid seeing how her daughter-in-law was raising the grandchildren like little Spaniards, but now she was back and was determined to save Jbilo, her favorite grandchild, from the loss of his cultural heritage. So he wouldn't forget his origins, she was always telling him Mayan stories and legends as well as accounts of the battles the Mayan Indians had been forced to fight to preserve their history. The most recent was the War of the Castes, an Indian insurrection during which approximately twenty-five thousand Indians lost their lives, and in which as it happened Jbilo's grandmother herself had played an important role. In spite of the Indians' ultimate defeat, something good came out of that battle, because later her son Librado was placed in charge of one of the country's largest exporters of henequn--the fibers from an agave plant used for making rope and other materials. He had then taken the unusual step of marrying a Spanish woman. Mestizaje, the mixing of races, was not as common in the Yucatn peninsula as it was in other regions conquered by the Spaniards. During the colonial period, Spaniards had rarely spent more than twenty-four hours at a time in the encomiendas, the large royal land grants where the Mayans worked as laborers. They didn't mix with the Indians and when they married they did so in Cuba, with Spanish women, never with Indians. So the marriage of a Mayan Indian man to a Spanish woman was highly unusual. But for doa Itzel this union represented a danger more than something to be proud of. And the proof lay in the fact that none of her grandchildren, except Jbilo, spoke Mayan, and that they preferred to drink hot chocolate made with milk

instead of water. For anyone else, it would be amusing to hear the heated discussions these two women held in the kitchen, but not for Jbilo, because he had to translate for them. On these occasions he had to be even more attentive than usual, because he knew anything they said could easily be interpreted as a declaration of war. One day the air in the kitchen was particularly heated. A couple of hurtful messages had already been hurled across the room, making Jbilo feel very uncomfortable, especially because the unhappiness his grandmother's words caused his mother was obvious. Most unbelievable, though, was that neither woman was really fighting about how to make hot chocolate. That was just a pretext. What doa Itzel was really saying was: "Look, nia, for your information, my forefathers built monumental pyramids, observatories, and sacred temples, and they knew about astronomy and mathematics way before your people, so don't you come trying to teach me anything, especially not how to make hot chocolate." And doa Jesusa, who had a sharp tongue, had to repress the urge to counter: "Look, woman, you are used to looking down on anyone who is not of your race, because the Mayans are so great and so wonderful, but they are separatists by nature and I'm not about to put up with that kind of snobbishness. If you disdain me so much, then don't come to my house anymore." Finally the situation grew so tense, and each woman was defending her point of view with such passion, that Jbilo began to fear something terrible would happen. So when his mother, summoning up her courage, said: "Son, tell your abuela that I don't allow anyone to come into my house to tell me how to do things, because I don't take orders from anyone, especially not from her!" Jbilo had no choice but to translate: "Abuela, my mam says that we don't take orders in this house . . . well, except from you." Upon hearing these words, doa Itzel changed her attitude completely. For the first time in her life, she felt her daughter-in-law had acknowledged her rightful position. Doa Jesusa, on the other hand, was taken by surprise. She never imagined her mother-in-law would react to such strong aggression with a peaceful smile. After the initial shock she too responded with a smile and, for the first time since her marriage, she felt accepted by her mother-in-law. With just a simple change of meaning, Jbilo had been able to give each of them what they had been seeking: to feel appreciated. From that day on, doa Itzel, convinced her orders were now being followed to the last letter, stopped interfering in the kitchen; and doa Jesusa, confident that her mother-in-law finally accepted her way of life, was able to approach her suegra, her mother-in-law, affectionately. The whole family returned to normal thanks to Jbilo's mediation, and he in turn felt completely satisfied. He had discovered the power of words and, having acted as his family's translator since his early childhood, it wasn't too surprising that instead of wanting to be a fireman or a policeman, he expressed the desire to become a telegraph operator when he grew up. This idea crystallized one afternoon as Jbilo lay in his hammock next to his father, listening to him talk. The Mexican Revolution had ended several years earlier, but all kinds of stories were still circulating about what had happened during the war. That afternoon the topic was telegraph operators. Jbilo listened eagerly to his father. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to wake up from his compulsory siesta to hear his father's stories. The tropical heat forced the family to sleep in hammocks installed at the rear of the house, where there was a breeze from the ocean. There, beside K'ak'nab, they rested and talked. The gentle rhythm of the waves had carried Jbilo off into a deep sleep and the murmur of conversation brought him back in a delicious ebb and flow. Little by little, his father's words intruded upon his sleep and made him aware that he was back at home and that it was time to exercise his imagination. So, setting his tropical drowsiness aside, he rubbed his eyes and devoted himself to listening intently to his father. Jubilo's father had just begun telling a story he'd heard about General Pancho Villa and his corps of telegraph operators. It has been said that the importance Villa always gave to telecommunications was one of the key factors in his success as a military strategist. He was well aware that it was a powerful weapon and he was very adept at its use. An example of this was the unusual way he used the telegraph in his siege of Ciudad Juarez. Because of its strategic location, the border city was an important stronghold, and it was very well provisioned. Villa didn't want to attack the city from the vulnerable position of the open desert, and he couldn't cross the border for a better approach, so he decided to capture a coal train on its way from Chihuahua to Ciudad Juarez and use it as a kind of Trojan horse. He loaded his troops onto the train and when they reached the first station along the route, they seized the official telegraph operator and replaced him with Villa's own head telegraph man, who sent a telegram to the federales saying: "Villa is pursuing us. What should we do?" Their answer was: "Return to Ciudad Jurez as fast as you can." And that's just what Villa's men did. The coal train arrived in Ciudad Jurez at dawn. The federales allowed it to enter the city and by the time they realized that instead of coal the train was filled

with armed men, it was too late. And Villa was able to take Ciudad Juarez with a minimum of bloodshed.