



Rebecca Forster

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## INTIMATE RELATIONS

It's two in the morning when a domestic disturbance brings Finn O'Brien to an artists' colony housed in an abandoned brewery. Inside the detective finds a bizarre gathering of Los Angeles elites, a man in a rage, and a young woman beaten to death, her face obliterated. As he hunts a killer, Finn finds himself in a surreal world where art and science create strange bedfellows, money and desire birth shameful descendants, and the deadliest relationships of all are the most intimate.

### 1. Curious or uncomfortable

This is one of the most unusual books I've ever written. I know how I felt writing it. How did you feel reading it? Were you curious about the subject matter or did it make you uncomfortable enough to want to put it down? Did your views change over the course of your reading? Why?

### 2. Real life

This book was inspired because AI invaded my personal space when Google chose one of my books for their artificial intelligence project without my knowledge. At the same time my son was asked to write an article about a couple that painted realistic female dolls. Together we felt the world tilt a little. Did we want to know these things existed? Did we want them to impact our lives? Did we want to upset our status quo? How about you? How much 'science' do you want applied to your personal lives? How much are you willing to accept? Were you aware that AI is being aggressively pursued?

### 3. Of course it's about love — and power — and money

Can love, power, and money ever exist on an even playing field? Can love ever win in that game? If not, who is the victor? Power or money? Can power exist without money?

### 4. Bev went to the dark side...

Finn's ex, Beverly, has gone rogue. She has become a narcissist and is willing to do anything to stay connected to the rich and powerful. Her life is empty, and she has become cold and cruel. Given that Finn and Bev married young, and that they went through a trauma together, is her change of character as realistic as Finn doubling down on his search for true justice? Have you seen this happen in real life?

#### **4. Pygmalion**

If you could 'create' your perfect partner, what characteristics would you endow it with? If the perfect partner was the result of science, would you care? Is that where humanity is headed?

#### **5. The crime**

At the end of **Intimate Relations**, it is revealed that the murder of a beautiful young woman had nothing to do with hatred or revenge, but with the jealousy of a betrayed woman who still loved her husband. Did you feel sympathy for Emi? If you were on the jury, would you convict her of any crime given that her intent was to destroy a machine and not take a life?