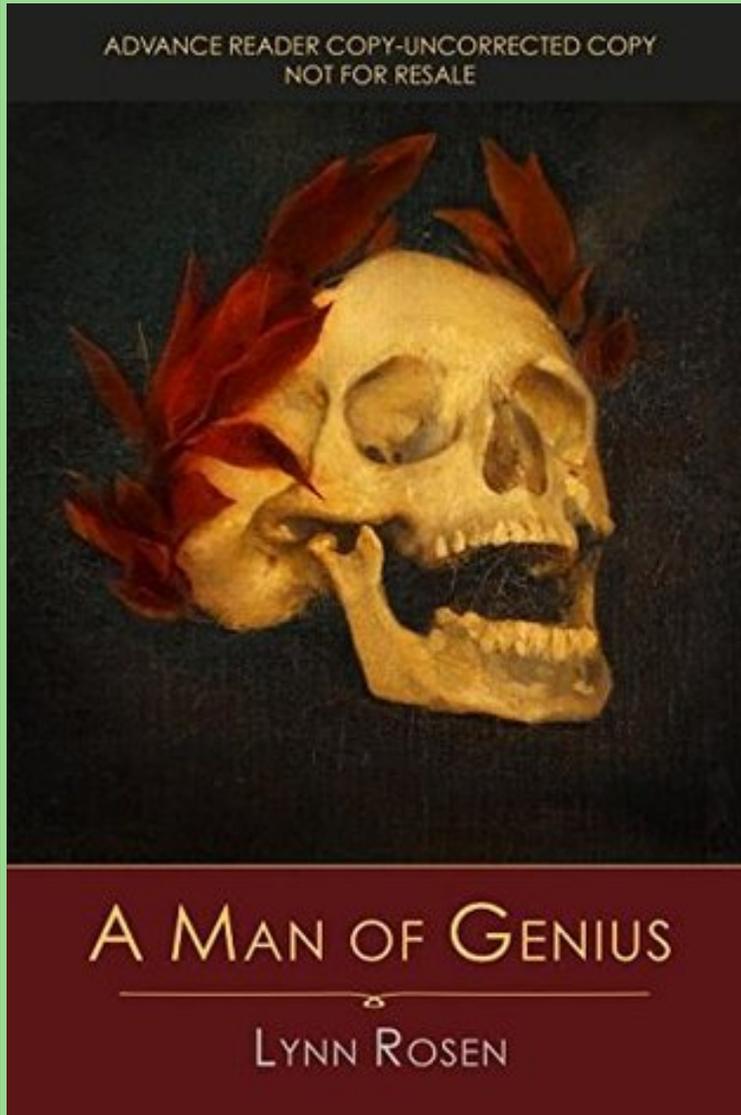


# bookish thinking

## Book of the Week #11



### Lynn Rosen “A Man of Genius”

**I received a copy of this book via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.**

When the famous but complicated architect Samuel Grafton-Hall dies, his will sets in motion the Machiavellian scheme he has thought out for his

second wife Elizabeth. It is up to her to confront his past and decide about a complicated question which he refused to face. Or she could act against his will, after being finally free from living under his thumb. Also wrapped up in this are the aging lawyer Arthur (our narrator after having investigated the truth) and his young, ambitious colleague. As well as, in the past, the architect's first wife and his lover, and a murder.

The plot sounds relatively simple - and it is. But the real strength of this debut novel lays within the characters acting in this plot. It is their strong personalities and their morals that make this novel so ambiguous and complicated to resolve. It is definitely a book to read multiple times or to discuss with a book club. Every reader will probably find their own answer.

Get a dictionary ready, because this novel throws around quite a few three- or four-syllable words that are rarely used. However, that was never presumptuous or arrogant, it just added to the overall voice of the story. I quite enjoyed the unreliable narrator who is himself immersed in the plot. From time to time, he even interrupts and comments on the action: A unique feature that only added to the overall complexity. The same can be said about the open ending. It is not a lazy getting it over with from the author, but rather a clever open ended cue for discussion.

The point is not the author teaching us a lesson, it is her challenging us and our beliefs, as well as asking us: How would you have decided? Therefore, the unapologetic *“Nor can I respond to the other clawing question: Who lived and who died...? In the end, does it make any difference? Isn't the more perplexing and consequential question: What should Elizabeth have done? If answered, the response would define its author. Sorry, I'm not yet prepared to commit.”* from the narrator serves as the perfect ending.

Lynn Rosen presents a brilliant novel with a complex moral and personal issues at the center. It includes characters, scope, and voice that make you forget this is a literary debut. Definite must-read for thoughtful fans of literary fiction and for book clubs!

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