



**Title:** Rescue

**Author:** Elizabeth Richards

**Description:**

Paige Austin has interesting work, a stable marriage, and a circle of women friends that help soothe the ache where life has left empty spots: the place in her heart that her beloved father held, and the one she would have filled with the child she can't conceive. Still, hers is a world that seems to rotate agreeably on its axis until her husband's son, Malachi MacGowan, walks into it. Suddenly, Paige is watching herself spin in a brand-new direction as she begins to lose sight of everything she'd thought she was about.

Thrown out of private school, Mal is the reprobate stepson Paige hardly knows who has come to live with her and his father in their Manhattan apartment. Paige's friends proffer effusive counsel on stepmotherhood, but nothing prepares her for Mal himself. An impossibly tall, smart-talking young man, he makes her feel certifiably old and yet edgily, wonderfully alive.

In a few electric days, Mal and Paige seem to forge a connection neither of them can fully fathom. She is no longer childless, and Mal basks in a love unprecedented in his seventeen years. Then, as abruptly as he arrived, he stalks away into an existence defined by friends and activities Paige can only imagine. Left with an unraveling marriage and a wounded heart, she attempts her own kind of escape ... until Mal's inevitable crisis crashes in.

**Reviews**

**Publishers Weekly:**

A 40-year-old New York City wife finds her disappointment in being childless alleviated through the care she offers her troubled 17-year-old stepson in Richards's fast-paced, witty second novel (after *Every Day*). Unable to conceive with her corporate lawyer husband and reluctant to adopt, Paige MacGowan finds baby hunger threatening to spoil her otherwise happy life. A professional bookbinder and second wife of Ian, Paige is also depressed and needy following the recent death of her adored father. Looking after "the littles," the four children in the after-school day-care program she runs, helps somewhat, but it isn't until Malachi, Ian's smart, antagonistic, sarcastic son from his first marriage, is kicked out of school in Brooklyn for selling drugs, and his mother turns to Ian and Paige to provide a home for the "delinquent," that Paige's emptiness begins to fill up. Though she first met Mal when he was 13, Paige has been careful to keep her distance from his disapproving attitude; now, she finds herself giving up her home office so that he can use it as a bedroom. As she tries to provide Mal with the structure and love he needs, Paige begins turning away from Ian, who in turn feels upstaged by his own son. A coterie of sister second wives give Paige advice and support on how to deal with a stepchild, but just when she thinks she has Mal on course, he rebels in a melodramatic fashion. Richards excels at dialogue, capturing teen lingo and other colloquial conversation, and speeding the plot along with admirable dexterity.

Though Mal never seems as exhausting as he's meant to be, Paige is a completely realized character, a recognizable middle-aged woman facing the opportunities and limitations of the second half of her life.

***Los Angeles Times:***

[Paige is] a very strong character, well-built by Richards using humor, a talent for dialogue, and a writer's careful observance of love between people of all ages.

***Boston Globe:***

The quirky rhythms and breathless pace of *Rescue* give us a visceral sense of Paige as a woman who runs to keep from standing still ... Sophisticated dialogue, a shrewd depiction of the stepparent-stepchild courtship [and] a touch of class.

***Sidney Offit, author of *Memoir of the Bookie's Son*:***

The characters that populate *Rescue* are real people with real problems, and she brings them to the reader with dialogue that is right on pitch. This fast-paced, empathetic novel of complex family relationships is told, too, with an elegant blend of warm feelings and wit.

***Shelby Hearon, author of *Life Estates*:***

Elizabeth Richards speaks to all of us who are lost, who do things we wish we hadn't, who learn almost too late to live differently.

***Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey:***

Resonant with compassion and humor.