

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Clare Pooley graduated from Newnham College, Cambridge and spent twenty years in the heady world of advertising before becoming a full-time mum.

Realising that her 'wine o'clock' habit had spiralled out of control, Clare started writing a blog, [Mummy was a Secret Drinker](#), which has had nearly three million hits. Her memoir, *The Sober Diaries* was published in 2017 to critical acclaim.

Clare's debut novel - [The Authenticity Project](#), was inspired by her own experience of exposing the rather grubby truth about her own seemingly perfect life. It's published in thirty-two languages, was a Radio 2 Bookclub pick, winner of the RNA Debut Novel Award and a New York Times bestseller.

Clare's second novel - [The People on Platform 5](#) (titled *Iona Iverson's Rules for Commuting* in the USA/Canada) was published in Spring 2022.

Clare's third novel - [How to Age Disgracefully](#) is out in June 2024.

Clare's talks include a [TEDx talk - 'Making Sober Less Shameful'](#), a talk for [Radio 4's Four Thought](#), and numerous podcast interviews.

Clare lives in Fulham, London with her husband, three children and two border terriers.

[Author's website.](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This story is told from the perspective of four main characters. Which did you like the most and why?
2. The main characters in *How to Age Disgracefully* are a teenaged single father, a menopausal empty-nester, and two septuagenarians. Which of these stages of life do you think is the hardest to navigate?
3. *When age makes you invisible, secrets are easier to hide.* Is this true? Can you think of any examples?

4. Which of the characters in the novel do you think changes the most during the course of the story?
5. Art and Daphne are both criminals. Are there mitigating circumstances? Can you forgive them?
6. 6. Ziggy also breaks the law—getting caught up in drug dealing. Why does he do this? Does he have any other choice?
7. We never meet Ziggy’s mum. What are your impressions of her and her parenting?
8. Is Lydia’s revenge on Jeremy justified and proportionate? Should she take him back?
9. In Clare Pooley’s author’s note she says that older characters in novels are often stereotyped. Is this true? If so, what are the stereotypes you’ve noticed?
10. If you had to choose a permanent carer for Maggie Thatcher, who would it be and why?

Penguinrandomhouse.com.

BOOK REVIEWS

Booklist

It is said that it takes a village, but in the London neighborhood of Hammersmith, it really just takes a community center. But sadly, the Mandel Center is struggling, which is very much on point for the few brave souls who launch a seniors' social club. Its manager, Lydia, a menopausal empty nester withering in a dysfunctional marriage, tries to jolly them with crafts and jigsaw puzzles, but the regulars are too feisty for that. When the local council threatens to demolish the building, Daphne, an enigmatic spitfire with a take-no-prisoners attitude, rallies the regulars in a scheme to not only save the center but also to get revenge on Lydia's cheating husband. They're an unlikely cohort--failed actor/recovering kleptomaniac Art; Ruby, who stealthily knits Banksy-style art installations; Anna, a former long-haul trucker who now rocks a motorized mobility scooter; and Ziggy, a teenage father with a daughter at the daycare, whose mad tech skills endear him to the otherwise prickly Daphne. Throw in a madcap bus ride, a mangy dog, and an audition for a reality TV show, and the result is a lovably quirky, reassuringly wise, and memorably inspiring romp that shatters ageist stereotypes. For fans of Fredrik Backman and Rachel Joyce. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Readers seek out best-selling and wily comedic novelist Pooley for just the sort of cheeky break from stress they crave.

Publisher’s Weekly

Pooley (Iona Iverson's Rules for Commuting) charms in this rollicking tale of six wily members of a London Senior Citizens Social Club whose zest for life improves the outlook of their community center's part-time worker. Lydia takes a job managing their club as respite from her condescending husband, who she suspects is having an affair. She expects docile card games and is surprised to meet such a vigorous group of older people. Among them is Art, a former soap opera actor who keeps himself entertained by shoplifting; Daphne, a busybody who rarely talks to the others and enjoys the "sensation of power that an imbalance of information imbued"; and Ruth, a "small but fierce-looking" knitter whose unauthorized public art earns such headlines as "Mystery Yarn Bomber of Hammersmith Strikes Again!" When the local council decides to sell the community center to a real estate developer, Lydia's motley

crew attempts to block the deal by pulling off various stunts, like sabotaging a meeting between the council and an architect. Along the way, their tenacity helps Lydia rediscover her self-respect. Pooley's clever and delightfully farcical scenes are laugh-out-loud funny, often thanks to the frank Daphne. This ought to satisfy Pooley's fans and win her new ones. Agent: Hayley Steed, Janklow & Nesbit Assoc. (June)

Kirkus Reviews

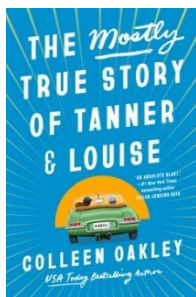
Young and old work together to save a community center at risk of closure in Hammersmith, London. After hiding in her apartment for 15 years, Daphne starts to feel like she doesn't want to be invisible anymore. On her 70th birthday, she decides that she'll find a way to step outside for longer than it takes to buy groceries a couple of times a week. It's time to make friends and, perhaps, find a partner. She joins a senior citizens' club that's starting up at the local community center, and her growing circle soon includes Lydia, 53, a one-time stay-at-home mother who's trying to fill the empty hours of her day now that her girls are at university; Art, 75, a one-time bit-part actor who has a house but no savings, no jobs, no money to pay for heat, and a shoplifting addiction; Art's best friend, William, a family man and retired paparazzo; Ziggy, a 17-year-old single dad living on a council estate with his mom, trying to finish school and take care of his 8-month-old daughter, Kylie, while avoiding being sucked into seedy dealings; and a host of others--including an aged mutt dubbed Maggie Thatcher. Fans of Richard Osman's Thursday Murder Club series will enjoy this delightful romp that on its surface is about senior citizens--whom everyone tends to discount--and others coming together to save the local community center but really is about so much more: aging, love, crime, friendship, making mistakes and living through them, and life's complicated emotions and choices. A frothy, fun, and well-paced cozy mystery--in which no murders take place. Copyright (c) Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

READALIKES



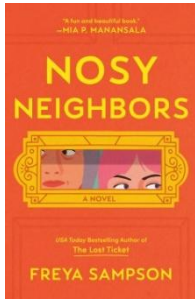
***Sylvia's Second Act* by Hillary Yablon**

Divorcing her cheating husband, 63-year-old Sylvia and her best friend, Evie, a glamorous older widow, set up a new life in Manhattan. They pawn jewelry and rough it in tiny apartments until Sylvia revives her decades-old wedding planning business and realizes her entire second act is right in front of her.



***The Mostly True Story of Tanner and Louise* by Colleen Oakley**

After a freak accident derails Tanner's college soccer career, she moves in with Louise, an older woman whose family thinks she needs a caregiver. But there's more to Louise than Tanner expects--and when Louise's past comes to light, the two go on the lam.



***Nosy Neighbors* by Freya Sampson**

When their apartments in Shelley House face demolition, sworn enemies 25-year-old Kat and 77-year-old Dorothy put their differences aside to save their historic building, but when one of its residents is murdered, the duo seek justice to restore peace in their community.