

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Rebecca Hardiman is a former magazine editor who lives in New Jersey with her husband and three children. *Good Eggs* is her first novel

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Despite their large age gap, Millie and Aideen have quite a lot in common. How are their circumstances and personalities similar? What makes them understand each other so well?
2. Although they all have various frustrations with one another, the Gogarty clan clearly love each other. What are some ways they demonstrate their affection, albeit in perhaps untraditional ways?
3. Each of the three narrators makes at least one big mistake over the course of the novel. Did you empathize with their decisions at all? How does author Rebecca Hardiman make Millie, Kevin, and Aideen sympathetic despite their mistakes?
4. Why do you think Aideen wants to be friends with the notorious Brigid? What draws them together?
5. Did you see the twist with Sylvia coming? What were some signs indicating Sylvia wasn't exactly who she said she was? Why do you think Millie was so willing to place her trust in her caretaker?
6. Were you surprised that Aideen goes back to Millburn? Do you think her parents were right in sending her to boarding school in the first place?
7. One theme throughout the novel is wanting the freedom to choose your own path in life. Despite their best efforts, Millie, Kevin, and Aideen often run into problems with being able to make their own choices. How does each character react to a lack of freedom?

8. There are many funny scenes in the novel, in addition to its humorous tone. Which moments made you laugh, and how did they make you feel about the characters?
9. In Chapter 15, Millie thinks to herself, “Millie Gogarty is a survivor, a citizen of the Republic of Ireland whose mother clutched her brown rations books doled out in wartime with the triumphant sense of rising to the occasion; she is a great believer in making do.” Much of *Good Eggs* is about Millie learning to do more than “make do” and embrace life fully. Do any other characters need to learn this lesson too? If so, in what ways do they learn it?
10. We learn that Millie’s baby daughter died in infancy. Do you think this explains any of Millie’s character traits?
11. What do you think life will be like for the Gogarty family in one year? What will have changed, and what will be the same?
12. In what ways does the author evoke the Irish setting? How does it contrast with the scenes in Florida?
13. Do you think all the main characters in the novel are proverbial “good eggs”?

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BOOK REVIEWS

Booklist

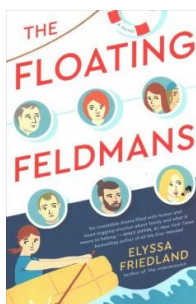
In her poignant and often hilarious family-drama-turned-caper debut, Hardiman, with a light tip of the hat to James Joyce’s *Dubliners*, masterfully inhabits the lives of three generations of the Dublin Gogarty family. The widowed matriarch, Millie, 83, is a kleptomaniac with idiosyncrasies and personality to spare. On the poignancy spectrum, she is painfully aware and panicked by time passing. Her son, Kevin, a 50-year-old, professionally obsolete, unemployed celebrity-rag writer, is a stay-at-home father of four. He feels and fights time’s passing, too. His oldest daughter, Aideen, 15, is a sullen handful whom he humorously pegs as “The Troubles”. Kevin and his often-absent wife decide in exasperation to send Aideen to a private boarding school they can’t afford. Escapades ensue as the tables turn on Millie’s filching ways, Kevin steps to the edge of unfaithfulness, and Aideen goes on the run after a prank gone wrong. Each of the three is lonely and on their own odyssey to find someone who cares. With catch-your-breath-or-pause-for-a-think prose, the sprightly plot is deepened by explorations of the human condition—first love for Aideen, regret and failure for Kevin, and Millie’s awareness of an ever-swelling never-again list. Hardiman’s final, almost Leprechaunish touch, is deftly satisfying. -- Mary Ellen Prindiville (Reviewed 1/1/2021) (*Booklist*, vol 117, number 9, p34)

Publisher’s Weekly

Hardiman’s rollicking debut dives into the stories of a good-hearted but mischievous Dublin family. Millie Gogarty, an 83-year-old widow drawn to petty theft, “seems to have so little control over her slippery fingers,” as well as over her tongue. Her long-suffering son, Kevin, 50, has been out of work for two decades. Kevin and his wife, Grace, have four children, including the rebellious 16-year-old Aideen, who deliberately smashes her sister’s mirror (“no regrets there”), steals money from Grace, and is about to be shipped off against her will to a boarding school. When Millie is caught shoplifting again, Kevin arranges for a caretaker, an American named Sylvia Phenning, to

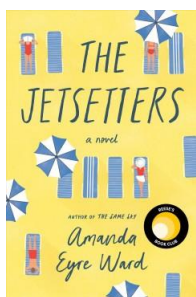
keep an eye on her. Millie objects, but ends up getting along so well with Sylvia that Millie lends her money to pay for her nephew's surgery in the U.S. However, in this hilarious, zippy novel, nothing is as it seems. While some of Millie's escapades are so exaggerated that they move into slapstick territory, the prose is consistently sharp, as is the Gogartys' hilarious banter. Full of surprises, Hardiman's endearing novel stands out for its brilliant insight into the mixed blessings of family bonds. Agent: Lisa Erbach Vance, Aaron M. Priest Literary. (Mar.) --Staff (Reviewed 11/30/2020) (*Publishers Weekly*, vol 267, issue 48, p)

READALIKES



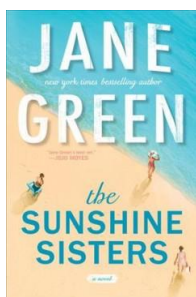
***The Floating Feldmans* by Elyssa Friedland**

Organizing a family reunion cruise for her 70th birthday in the hopes of resolving long estrangements, Annette reveals difficult secrets that challenge long-held perceptions about the more troublesome members of her clan.



***The Jetsetters* by Amanda Eyre Ward**

Winning the grand prize in an essay contest, a single mother reunites her estranged adult children on a 10-day cruise while confronting long-buried secrets from their dysfunctional shared past.



***The Sunshine Sisters* by Jane Green**

Receiving a sobering health diagnosis, a once-uninvolved mother-turned-Hollywood star calls her estranged adult daughters home in the hopes of ending her life, triggering old rivalries and secret fears that challenge family bonds.

OTHER MATERIALS

Download a copy of the publisher's book club kit at <https://www.rebeccahardiman.net/book-club-kit>

