



Grown ups

By Marian Keyes

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Genre & subject

Brothers -- Fiction

Dysfunctional families -- Fiction

Family secrets -- Fiction

Domestic fiction

Humorous fiction

Synopsis

They're a glamorous family, the Caseys. Johnny Casey, his two brothers Ed and Liam, their beautiful, talented wives and all their kids spend a lot of time together - birthday parties, anniversary celebrations, weekends away. And they're a happy family. Johnny's wife, Jessie - who has the most money - insists on it. Under the surface, though, conditions are murkier. While some people clash, other people like each other far too much . . . Everything stays under control until Ed's wife Cara, gets concussion and can't keep her thoughts to herself. One careless remark at Johnny's birthday party, with the entire family present, starts Cara spilling out all their secrets. In the subsequent unravelling, every one of the adults finds themselves wondering if it's time - finally - to grow up.

Author biography

Marian Keyes is one of the most successful Irish novelists of all time. Though she was brought up in a home where a lot of oral storytelling went on, it never occurred to her that she could write. Instead she studied law and accountancy and finally started writing short stories in 1993 "out of the blue." Though she had no intention of ever writing a novel ("It would take too long") she sent her short stories to a publisher, with a letter saying she'd started work on a novel. The publishers replied, asking to see the novel, and once her panic had subsided, she began to write what subsequently became her first book *Watermelon*, published in 1995.

To date, the woman who said she'd never write a novel has published 13 of them: *Watermelon*, *Lucy Sullivan is Getting Married*, *Rachel's Holiday*, *Last Chance Saloon*, *Sushi for Beginners*, *Angels*, *The Other Side of the Story*, *Anybody Out There*, *This Charming Man*, *The Brightest Star in the Sky*, *The Mystery of Mercy Close*, *The Woman Who Stole My Life*, and *The Break*. Her books have all been bestsellers around the world, with a total of over 30 million of her books sold to date in 33 languages. *Anybody Out There* won the British Book Awards award for popular fiction and the inaugural Melissa Nathan Prize for Comedy Romance. *This Charming Man* won the Irish Book Award for popular fiction. Marian's latest book *Grown Ups* is publishing in hardback and eBook in February 2020.

Discussion starters

- In the book Ed leaves Clara when she stops seeking medical help for her bulimia. Do you think this was the correct course of action for him to take? Why or why not?
- Liam and Nell marry quickly, but separate after less than a year of marriage? Nell reflects that the marriage was never likely to last and that she entered it knowing it wasn't a forever marriage. What is your view of this attitude? Does it affect how you view Nell?
- Who is your favourite character in the book and why?
- Towards the end of the book Johnny claims that he never considered reigniting a romantic relationship with his ex-lover. Do you believe him? Why or why not?
- Jess is very upset about her 50th birthday celebrations. To what extent do you think she is right to be angry and hurt?
- Who has the most solid relationship in the book? Why?
- After Rory died Jess' in-laws never forgave her for marrying his best friend. Why? How would you sum up the relationship between Jess, Rory and Johnny?
- Does the menopause feature in 'Grown Ups'? If so, how and when? Is this question only acceptable coming from a middle-aged woman? Discuss!
- How is the ability to communicate effectively shown as a key life skill in the book?

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