



The Smart One

Ellen Meister

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Bev is the Smart One, who finally leaves her artistic ambitions in chalk dust (and her humor-impaired husband in the arms—and legs—of his nubile protégée) to become a schoolteacher. Clare is the Pretty One, who married well and seems to be living a designer version of the suburban dream. Joey is the Wild One, struggling to stay clean and sober now that she's used up her fifteen minutes of fame as a one-hit-wonder rock star.

They love each other but mix like oil, water, and hundred-proof gin . . . a combination that threatens to combust over family tensions, suspected infidelities, a devastating accident, a stunning confession, and the sudden reappearance of their handsome, now all-grown-up former neighbor, Kenny Waxman, who's back in town making his mark as a TV comedy writer.

It seems they'll never understand where their differences begin and their own destructive tendencies end. Then it happens: the sisters discover a decades-old body stuffed inside an industrial drum and begin a bold, heartbreaking, and sometimes hilarious journey that will either bring them together . . . or tear them apart for good.

The Smart One Details

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Author : Ellen Meister

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From Reader Review The Smart One for online ebook

Nancy PhD says

I loved The I

Other Life but this book was disorganized, weak plot, poorly written. It needed a good editor. Ellen Meister is a wonderful storyteller.

-r- says

This read like it was the author's first attempt at a murder-mystery, and I didn't love it. The twists and turns were frequently too obvious.

Also the main love interest likely sexually assaulted the main character, but we're supposed to think he's a good guy. No.

Kristin says

After unsuccessfully trying to read Gone With the Wind for 6 weeks straight, I picked this book up at the library purely by it's cover. I needed some good and easy chic lit, but ended up being pleasantly surprised. The author's ability to tell a story was beautiful, and I found myself unable to put the book down. It was everything a good story needs: romance, a murder, family feud's, and the realization that you really can go home again.

Debbie says

I adored "The Smart One". I expected typical chick-lit, something fun for the beach, but it was so much more than that. Every character is very well-drawn and the story takes some twists and turns that made it hard for me to put the book down. I love movies and books that are like real life - some sadness, some happiness, high points, low points, laughter, and tears. This book has all of that. Although the plot is a bit outrageous, it was fun and interesting, and rang true enough that it didn't hinder my enjoyment of the story.

Ms. Meister is a wonderful writer who brings her characters to life and has an enchanting way of telling a story. I was impressed with her creativity and imagination. This is one of the longer books I've read this summer, and I wish it could have been longer. It was fun to spend time with Bev (the smart one), her family, and friends. I eagerly look forward to reading more of Ms. Meister's work.

Julia says

Meister's second novel is a blend of romance and mystery for the Bloomrosen girls. Bev, Clare and Joey's childhood roles have followed them to their adult interactions. Bev, the "smart one", is living in her parents house while waiting to hear about teaching opportunities. Their old neighbors, the Waxmans, have move fulltime to Florida and Bev is to keep an eye on things as the realtors begin showing the home. The first couple through notice an industrial barrel under the crawlspace of the home's addition and the sisters roll it out for the garbage, making a very grisly discovery. Could one of their neighbor's be a murderer? Each sister faces individual demons in the novel and together, they argue and make up only as sisters can.

Krystal says

The book started off okay, actually, it drew me in. There were the cliché's of trio sisters, the smart one, the beauty and the wild one.

the book explored the pitfalls of buying into the stereotypes, and the relationships that are harmed because of them within a family, as well as individually.

My gripe with the book as a whole is that when a story line (there were several) sought to bring attention to the pinnacle in said story line, it was generally, with a person ending up in the hospital, or at least needing medical attention.

Dad, mom, smart sister, wild sister, neighbors dad...they all required medical intervention for the author to highlight the "moment". It's a bit of a stretch, and seemed afternoon soap opera"ishy"

Angela says

I waited a LONG time to get this book. My husband ordered it from Copperfield's Books for Valentine's Day.

The first thing that intrigued me about this book is it's about three sisters. As a sister who was considered "The Smart One" by my teachers (although my mother kept reminding me "The Talented One" had a much higher IQ than I did, although she did not apply herself), I immediately identified with Bev who is 35 and a compulsive failure. But how can she not be a failure when the whole world expects nothing less than the best from her?

I read an excellent article in MORE magazine almost a year ago about overachievers and phenoms who encounter a mid-life crisis once they discover they have grown up to become ordinary individuals. They did not enter the Football Hall of Fame or win the Pulitzer or an Academy Award. They may have a list of achievements but nothing that would warrant a headline in a newspaper. And they feel like failures. That's how the story opens with Bev feeling like a failure.

But her sisters also feel the limitations of their own lives and encounter their own crises.

Ultimately, the novel explores the juxtaposition of how others view us and how we view ourselves.

It is an excellent book for women (and men) who want to enjoy an entertaining read while learning a bit about themselves and their relationships with those they love.

TK says

I really enjoyed the characters and the Long Island setting. I grew up there so all the local details really brought me back! The author also has a sharp eye and the jokes throughout the book are great!

Michele says

The Smart One?

The main thing this book has going for it is the strong writing skills of the author, Ellen Meister. She has a knack for believable, natural dialog and good timing when it comes to humor. It's a quick, easy read--a great way to pass time on an airplane, which is where I got through most of this novel.

This is the story of Bev, the "smart one" of three sisters. Her older sister, Clare is the pretty one and her younger sister, Joey, is the wild one. If anything, Meister nails the common stereotypes of sibling labeling and relationships, and it's easy to believe these characters act the way they do in this story. Additionally there's the boy next door, Kenny, who is the funny one, I suppose--the angry youth turned studly romantic interest. He uses hackneyed humor to cope with his anger over a no-good father, whose past actions are central to the plot. Kenny's strings of jokes about little people and his behavior toward Bev really take his character over the top, making him highly unlikable. One wonders how "the smart one" can continue to want him.

Overall the story is predictable. I was able to predict nearly every plot point and would have preferred to be surprised. But I stuck with it because I enjoyed Meister's first book, *Secret Confessions of the Applewood PTA*. The ease of her writing style made the hours I spent with this story a pleasant yet forgettable experience.

Christine Zibas says

Are we destined to live out our childhood labels? In Ellen Meister's new book, "The Smart One," three sisters battle to become more than their childhood identities. There's Clare, "the pretty one," and eldest sister; there's Joey, "the wild one," and youngest of the brood, and then there's Bev, the middle daughter, "the smart one," of the title. In this novel, they both do battle and express love for each other (two sides of the sisterly coin) as each sister seeks to find what will make her happy,

Add to their saga, the return of the next door neighbor's son, Kenny (once a source of contention between Joey and Bev) and the discovery of an industrial drum containing a dead body, and everything gets even more complicated among the sisters. Then there are the personal dramas. For Clare, it is a lack of fulfillment from her role as "the perfect mother." She wants more from her life and marriage, but all she's ever been known for is her beauty. That too, seems to be slipping away with time. For Joey, a one-hit wonder rock star, the main battle is to maintain a clean life after her struggles with drug addiction. In addition, Joey is searching for a new purpose and career, and reinventing her rock star persona is not the answer.

Largely, however, the story focuses on Bev, who seems to be having the biggest personal crisis. Even as she seeks to support her sisters' search for happiness, she's also trying to escape them. Besieged by feelings of failure, Bev cannot help but feel that she has disappointed everyone. Reeling from the effects of divorce and a failed career in the arts, she finally thinks she may have found the answer in teaching. Still, family expectations (as well as Bev's own) are so high that taking on a job like elementary school teacher seems a disappointing choice from someone with so much promise.

The irony of the story, of course, is that Bev may not be as smart about her life, her romantic liaisons, and her family relations as she thinks. Ultimately it is her loving sisters who show her just what can bring her peace and happiness. It's the sisterly relations that are the core of the story and what holds the book together. Author Ellen Meister seems to give mixed signals in the romance department, however. One potential beau for Bev just seems to drop from the picture, and the guy she does end up with doesn't necessarily seem the best choice, based on an incident from the past that, to this reader, seemed like rape. It appears that Bev still has something to learn about good choices before she can be called "the smart one."

Marisa says

The Smart One by Ellen Meister has been placed in my favourites bookshelf, where it will remain. Ellen Meister has become a favourite authors, I loved the way she wrote The Smart One, it was fresh, real, she had me from the start and I couldn't put it down until I read it through in one sitting. Loved the characters and all their flaws. The sisters were so human I was able to relate to each one like they were my friends. Loved the story, one thing for sure the title is misleading it makes it sound like your regular chick lit, this was not anything like a chick lit. It has depth and real emotions over family tragedy and overcoming obstacles like addition, and infidelity. Families that love each other forgive each other. Loved this book, I highly recommend others to read. First read Jan 27th 2014 retread June 16th 2016. Still a fantastic read. Second time through Library Request.

Karen says

I didn't understand a lot of the supposedly "chicklitty" type of behavior. The sister has sex with a man her other sister is interested in so that the interested sister doesn't have sex with said man and cheat on her husband. Wow that's a pretty intimate act to "save" your sister. The main character also has sex with a man with a "rage" problem that doesn't understand the word "no" turning it into a "rape" issue. Not amusing or cute in my opinion.

Sunshine says

I initially rated this book a 3, but it was just so addicting! It's an honest story, yet so unrealistic. I loved the characters. Very well thought out and believable. But the scenarios were a bit far fetched. Not necessarily impossible, but for all of those things to happen to a single group of people in succession like that? Highly unlikely.

But, alas, it was those improbable things that kept me coming back for more. It was such a captivating read. I honestly stayed home on Friday night just so I could finish it up. You really can just eat this up in one sitting.

And anyone who has any type of sibling rivalry will absolutely enjoy it. In my family, I was am considered the "smart one". And my older sister is considered the "pretty one". So it very easy to grow attached to these characters simply because you feel for them.

I highly recommend this book to anyone looking for a good beach novel. You'll get some laughs in, some shocking plot twists, and a couple tears here and there. Ellen Meister knows how to keep you interested.

Lindy Trimble says

This book was a crazy mess packed into a spaghetti bowl. To much mess going on at one time with everyone with a murder mystery there to tie it all together. Not my cup of tea.

Myfanwy says

My mother always told me, "Friends may come and go, but a sister is forever." She had six sisters, so she knew what she was talking about. My father had four sisters and I have three. I grew up in a world of sisters and feel like I have a pretty good handle on sisterhood, and so does Ellen Meister.

At the core of her charming, thrilling, and often hilarious new book--The Smart One--are sisters. Three sisters to be exact--Bev, Clare, and Joey--each playing the role she thinks is expected of her. It seems the sisters hide behind these roles of smart, pretty, and wild, especially when they are together.

It is only when they bond together to try to solve a decades old mystery that they learn the truth about each other: and that is that they no longer need these labels. In fact, maybe they are all smart, pretty, and wild. What's most important is that they love each other and they are there for each other (even when irritated with each other).

Like Ellen herself, this book has a lot of heart and these characters will stick with you long after you have finished reading. Like sisters to you, they are forever.

Read this book.
