



## This Charming Man

*Marian Keyes*

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## **This Charming Man** Marian Keyes

'Everybody remembers where they were the day they heard that Paddy de Courcy was getting married'. But for four women in particular, the big news about the charismatic politician is especially momentous... Stylist Lola has every reason to be interested in who Paddy's marrying - because she's his girlfriend, yet she definitely isn't the bride-to-be ... Journalist Grace wants the inside story on the de Courcy engagement and thinks Lola holds the key ... while Grace's sister, Marnie, still can't forget her first love: a certain Paddy de Courcy. And what of the soon-to-be Mrs de Courcy? Alicia will do anything for her fiancé and is determined to be the perfect wife. But does she know the real Paddy?

Four very different women.

One awfully charming man.

And the dark secret that binds them all...

## **This Charming Man Details**

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Author : Marian Keyes

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## From Reader Review This Charming Man for online ebook

### Ngairé says

Gosh, another great Marian Keyes book - just when I thought she couldn't get any better. I don't want to make any rash statements here, but I don't think that Marian Keyes is writing "chick lit" (god, how I hate that term) anymore. She's writing serious fiction that also happens to be hilarious in places. Must admit that the first chapter or so of Lola's story threw me off a bit, kept checking to make sure the entire book wasn't written in that diary style, but after a while it totally grew on me to the point where I didn't even notice it anymore. And bless Lola, because she is really the bright spot in an otherwise pretty dark book. Not that I minded, because it still made me laugh out loud in places and it was so moving.

Keyes is so talented and funny - this and *Anybody Out There* definitely place her at the top of my favourite author's list (with Pat Conroy and Diana Wynne Jones), especially in terms of how consistently good her books are. I love that she's so Irish, and that she's so damn funny. I've read all her books, and I'm trying to remember, but I think this is the first time she's tackled the subject of violence against women before. The alcoholism has definitely popped up before - what a terrible thing to be an alcoholic in Ireland where people think there's something wrong with you if you don't drink at least three pints in the first half hour after they meet you (yes, I've had first hand experience - the whole Irish and drinking thing is not a joke).

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### Steve Lindahl says

I was telling my daughter-in-law recently how I give all the books I review either three, four, or five stars, because I don't finish the ones I would rate as one or two. *This Charming Man* nearly fell in that latter category. A great deal of time was spent developing the stories of Lola, Grace, and Marnie. Grace wasn't in bad shape, but the other two women were hard to take. Lola and Marnie were both struggling in their work because they were in such bad psychological states they couldn't do basic tasks. There were also other reasons why I wasn't enjoying the book. Paddy de Courcy, who was the title character, wasn't in it very much and all the other male characters seemed horrible. I thought Marian Keyes must hate men.

Then the book took a few turns and I found it well worth reading. One of the men whom I had seen as abusive turned out not to be violent but instead was supportive to his wife until he was forced to make a hard choice. I sympathized with him rather than hating him. Other male characters began to appear who were decent people. Circumstances allowed Lola to change her life long enough to get to a better place emotionally. Meanwhile Marnie's situation was explained further, so although her life continued to spiral down, I could appreciate why.

This novel has one of the best descriptions of alcoholism I've ever read. It shows the disease in detail from the point of view of the alcoholic and also from the points of view of the people who love her. It also covers the victims of domestic abuse in a way that helped me understand why some of the women stay in their situations. After reading the way Keyes covered these two issues, I was able to understand the weaknesses of the victims and appreciate their strengths.

Lola's chapters were written in a strange, journal voice I found annoying. Most of the pronouns were dropped, along with words such as *the* and *a*. After I got used to it, I could ignore the style. But I still believe it was a bad choice, one that detracted from the novel.

*This Charming Man* isn't an easy read, but in the end it's well worth reading.

Steve Lindahl – author of *White Horse Regressions* and *Motherless Soul*

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### **Jonathan McNamara says**

I stayed up all night reading this brilliant book. Marian Keyes has never come across as being afraid of tackling huge and important psychologically real issues. Make of that what you will. Under the girlish covers of her books I've always found pertinent issues; In 'This Charming Man' the issues are corrupt politicians, battered girlfriends, underhanded antics at work; steadfast firm friends as well as a wickedly funny turn involving cross-dressers (not trannies though one of them is gay). The characters are straight from the Keyes' domain; so human and full of their own faults and weakness that their virtues shine all the brighter for it. This is what Marian Keyes does best and there is no better way of starting to read her books than by reading this one.

Don't be wuss. Get out there and spread the word of Marian Keyes.

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### **Darshan Elena says**

Dear Ms. Keyes,

Sometimes I cringe over my reading selections and dawdle before diving in... That is how I tend to approach your writing. Then I dive and there is nothing that can pull me away. As an author within the genre of chick litterers, you excel, charming the likes of me again and again.

I love your awareness of intimate violence and how state mandates regarding citizenship and immigration sustain and extend. How eloquent, daring, and ethical is Dee in this regard! I love the wit, kink, and humor of Lola and Chloe/Cossadine when it comes to romance and sexual loving. But I sputter over the how limited your characters' political sensibilities are.

The worlds you create are so white, overwhelming so. Characters such as Lola (darling though she is!) have an awareness of their whiteness, racism, and xenophobia, but it is an awareness that enables indulgence. But Ibrahim as Osama, Nnamdi as an upstart with a generous derriere? Please. Lola's - or rather your - conscious invocation of racism, rendered charming through context and word play, is what makes me cringe and lament my fleeting addiction to your books. How I wish the worlds of your characters were more varied, diverse, and heartfelt... If wishes were horse-faces!

Sincerely,

Darshan Elena Campos

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### **Heidi says**

I liked this book, but do not read if looking for funny, uplifting read. The reviewers on back of dust jacket have obviously not read book or have seriously different sense of humor than I do.

Book is story of five/six various women who have all come into contact with same politician man who is quiet frankly shit, he's a shit man and is very very nasty. This book is each woman's road into ruin via this

horrid politician as it deals with issues such as abuse, cross dressing, rape within a relationship, manipulation, adultery, alcoholism, and depression. Very little is funny in this book. That being said I enjoyed the book as is one of darker marian keyes books. Book had slight flaw in that the ending could have been meatier... left me wanting more of a dramatic finish less of a trickle more of a waterfall/downpour effect but we can't always get what we want, none the less. If any of you read this... read this book I need to discuss it with someone desperately, is good book discussion book... not necessarily fluffy read but good discussion read

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### **mary says**

After an initial love affair with Keyes, I went off her. Her earlier novels, the ones I'd found at least, each focused on one member of a family, and I was getting weary of them - started forgetting who was who, etc.

But *This Charming Man* is a treasure. In the two weeks it took me to finish it, I have fallen in love with Grace and her unique family, Lola and her trannie, and a boatload of other characters as they work so hard to figure it all out.

*This Charming Man* is the first book ever to occupy both my "CHICK LIT" and my "HIGHEST HONORS" shelves.

OK, Keyes, I'm back on board; queueing up for your latest.

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### **Amanda says**

Marian Keyes makes me veer from insane giggling to fury to sorrow at/with her characters. She can be so funny and then make you feel such empathy for the protagonists. This book has four narrators who all have a relationship (of some sort) with Paddy de Courcy, a slick Irish politician. Issues in *This Charming Man* include domestic violence, alcoholism, depression, and severe lack of self-confidence - and it's still filled with humor that made me laugh like crazy.

One of the narrators is an alcoholic who is so far into denial and depression that she doesn't even see her drinking as a problem - very much like Rachel of *Rachel's Holiday*. Keyes writes powerfully about a subject she knows well from her own experience.

My favorite narrator is Lola, a 'stylist' (and who knew there was such a job?) with a most individual way of expressing herself.

Next time I have a little hangover, I am going to be sure and use the phrase "rough as a badger's ass." Oh yes, I certainly am.

What I learned:

The difference between cross-dressers and trannies.

What a stylist does.

What a culchie is.

That Marian Keyes hits another one out of the park.

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### **Ivana Books Are Magic says**

I've read *This Charming Man* in one ago. Two nights go, or to be more precise, sometime between midnight

and six am. It wasn't because it was one of the best books I've ever read. It was more that I was feeling rather horrid, couldn't sleep and decided that I might as well read my way through the night. Not that it wasn't a good book. It was, actually, a surprisingly good read.

The cover and the synopsis make you think chic-lit but you're be wrong. It is a book about abuse. Sexual, mental and physical abuse. It is a book about obsession and addiction. It is a book that features a set of deeply troubled characters. One of them is an alcoholic and hence there is a lot of writing about alcoholism, how it destroys both the individual suffering from it and those around him/her. Shattered relationships, utterly destroyed individuals, troubled and destroyed family dynamics...definitely not your typical chic-lit novel. Nevertheless, there is humour in this book. There is even a bit of romance, so there is a fair chance it could be attractive to a wide audience of readers. A bit of suspense, a bit of mystery, a bit of psychology and a bit of romance. There is a bit of everything in this one. Fascinating stuff.

This novel is more that I thought it was. It is deeper than it seems at first glance. However, I do have some issues with it. I mentioned domestic abuse. Well, there are some very graphic description of violence in this novel and somehow it doesn't sit well with its often 'lighter' tone. This novel is so mixed and varied in terms of the style it is written in, and while it makes it a fresh and an interesting read, at times it doesn't feel appropriate. It is like the book got stuck in between the worlds. Either it should have been darker, and gone deeper in psychological portrayal of characters, or it should have taken it a bit easy on the violence descriptions.

If you pick up such a serious topic and base your book on it, you should really give it your all- you know what I mean? If someone (even if he is a fictional character) causes life treating injuries to so many women, it is something that should have been dealt seriously (and in the book, it could have been dealt with in another way). Should you really have jokes and border chic-lit style mixed with themes of domestic abuse? Perhaps it is not a bad thing, perhaps it gets more people to read about such a difficult topic, but this mixing of styles makes the novel seem less real and not 100 percent authentic. That is just my opinion.

Anyway, there are four main (female) characters in this novel (Lola, Grace, Marnie and Alicia) and all four of them are startled when they lean that Paddy is getting married. Paddy is a popular young politician, who is also very handsome and charming. Lola is the stylist who is dating Paddy at the moment. The novel opens with her and all the chapters devoted to her character are written in first person narration. The next to take up her space in the narrative is a Grace, a journalist whose sister has had a troubled past with Paddy. Her narrative is written in first person as well. Grace's narrative is followed by that of Marnie, her twin sister and hers is written in the third person. Alicia, the lady who is getting married to Paddy is surprised herself to hear the news about her engagement because he hadn't even bothered to ask her first. It remains unclear whether it is something he had planned or not.

## LOLA

Lola is an adorable character. Very easy to sympathize with, very human and decent sort of girl. I enjoyed her character development. Some things she did weren't convincing, but on overall I did like her character...there was just one thing that I didn't cared for and that is the style of writing the author chose for her. I have a confession to make. I struggle to understand bad English. I know what you might think-what do you mean, it's not even your mother tongue. Say what you want, but sentences that make no grammatical sense get on my nerves, alright? I don't like them. The dropping of pronouns and indefinite articles...you might say, well, some people speak like that...yet I'm not convinced. Are people really getting that lazy? Do they really talk like that all the time? Yes, we shorten our sentences in everyday speech, but all the time? I don't think so--Here it is done in such an extent to make Lola appear a simpleton. I didn't like it. It was a wee bit overdone.

## GRACE

Grace is my favourite character in this book. Her inner struggle seemed the most convincing. In the course of the novel, she is presented with a moral dilemma that brought to light the complexity of her character. There are a lot of layers to her character and there is more than might meet the eye. I felt that her psychological portrayal was done rather well. Grace is the solid kind of woman, the one that everyone can lean on. Interestingly enough she has the same effect on this novel. It is as she made the story seem more plausible. Her relationship crisis was so easy to relate her. Grace's love for her troubled sister was tangible. It was easy to feel for her, it was easy to like her...Grace has this way of making you open up to other characters as well.

## MARNIE

The writer really did a great job with making this character come to life. The descriptions of Marnie's neurosis, chaotic behaviour and 'dark thoughts' were extremely believable. You could really feel that you are witnessing the way in which Marnie's mind was slipping. As Marnie's fragile psychological health gets shattered, the writer is showing to us what the depth of depression and addiction looks like. Marnie is the most troubled character in this novel. At times incredibly selfish and self-indulgent, Marnie is a woman who is going nowhere fast. She is suffering from depression, she is an alcoholic, she's making horrible choices all the time, she hurts everyone around her- and yet the writer makes you feel for her. One thing that bothered me is that I didn't really understand her relationship with Paddy. There was a lot of 'explaining it' going on towards the end- but still, I didn't feel I got it.

## ALICIA

In her past life, she used to be a friend with Marnie and Grace....and Paddy. Her infatuation with Paddy seems to be the ruling force of her life. She settled for a loveless marriage with a gay man, but when she became a widow, she welcomed a change to date Paddy again...and to become Paddy's wife. Her actions made sense, but there was space for her character development at the end, but she was just left hanging.

(...and finally there is).....PADDY

As I said, there are some things I didn't like about this book. Take the villain protagonist- i.e. Paddy. We never learn that much about him, do we? The synopsis says he shapes the lives of these women, but to what extent is that true? He is obviously an abuser and a bully, but in many ways he seems unconvincing and not that well developed. I can't phantom why all the ladies were drawn to him. There is a lot of talk about his good looks, but that's like Martian to me. I wouldn't have a clue what should make a man psychically attractive-according to modern standards anyway. I like to think that women are above such superficial things, but I'm obviously not right. Looks seem to play an important part in power balance in modern dating- but I'm not up to date so I really don't know what passes for sexy these days. Now, about Paddy's charisma, that was mentioned often enough, but never exactly made evident. In other words, it was talked about not showed. The other question is- how he got away with it all? There are no proofs of his superior intelligence. Moreover, he is a rising political star not the president of the country, so it is unclear as to why he has so much power (not to mention money).

## OTHER CHARACTERS

There is a number of other characters in this novel that I won't really talk about because this review is too long as it is, but I must say I was impressed with the majority of them. Marian really has a knack for introducing new characters and making them slide in effortlessly.

## THE ENDING

The happy ending felt wrong. There are some other aspects of it that I found troubling, but I'm not sure how to get into it without making a spoiler, so I won't. Ending in which everyone gets and feels better certainly

feels like a relief after all the 'horror' most of the female characters went through, but it doesn't feel realistic. Not at all.

Finally, despite it being somewhat messy and underdeveloped in some parts, I'm giving this book four stars because I love how ambitious it is. This novel has a heart. It tackled some rather difficult themes and while I'm not completely satisfied with how it was done, I admire the effort and the work that went into it. This charming man is a novel well worth reading, a novel that managed to bring its protagonists to life and develop an interesting story with elements of suspense and romance in the process. The writing is very good, even if a bit chaotic at times (with the change of styles and everything). It is a novel that has its flaws, but in light of its freshness and boldness, I think these flaws deserve to be somewhat overlooked.

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### **Barbara Elsborg says**

I found this book disappointing. The different fonts for different voices were not needed and rather aggravating. The clipped voice of Lola was beyond annoying. I just couldn't see the requirement. It was insulting to the reader as if we couldn't tell the difference between the voices.

I've no problem with the subject matter - but what the hell did these women find charming about him?? With only a few snapshots of his bullying violence - how could we see what they saw in him? He is a manipulator and I know how evil these sort of physically violent men can be - but where was the balance? Lola was obsessed with him - why? I don't mean - how could she let herself be beaten - I mean what was so wonderful about him? A few lines telling us he's charming and much loved is not enough.

So the book failed for me. Much too long and rambling.

The only character I really liked was Grace but the issue between her and Damien didn't ring true. Too contrived and convenient.

I thought the alcoholism part was very well done. The dialogue was snappy and fun. The vision of the viciousness of Paddy was also very well done. I could well believe the sudden violence. Pity I didn't see the Charm.

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### **Annie (Under the Covers Book Blog) says**

“This book was a totally new experience for me but I'm glad I tried it.”

**Read this review in its entirety at [Under the Covers Book Blog](#)**

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### **george says**

Lola. Grace. Marnie. Alicia. Four very different women with one connection: Paddy de Courcy. Told from each of the four women's viewpoints, *This Charming Man* explains how each of the women is deeply affected by this one man. All of the women are struggling with something, despite her outwardly normal appearance. The story starts with the announcement of de Courcy's engagement and the women's different reactions. From there we get to see why each woman reacted in her own way--and the reasons are shocking, but not all that diverse.

I really like Marian Keyes and this is one of her best novels to date in my opinion. It helps that she addresses the issue of domestic violence in depth (one of my main causes seeing as I am a former DV/SA advocate).

Like another reviewer mentioned, this was less chick-lit than a real novel; and it was good. My only complaint is that the American edition is crappily edited--it attempted to change some of the UK words into the American counterparts, but either didn't change all, or changed some but not all. For instance in one paragraph it mentions that the heroine needs fries for her hangover and then in the \*very\* next paragraph, she is described as having a plate of chips in front of her. If you're going to change it, change it all! It seemed like the changes were intentional throughout the whole book (always cookies, never a mention of a biscuit); but then in the last scene there is mention of children playing football (no need to worry, it's not ruining the book whatsoever)--but it's obviously soccer--yes, I realize it's the same thing, but they attempted to change everything else, so I was perplexed that this was left. But like I said, it was a shoddy job all around and it should have remained as Keyes originally wrote it--Americans aren't that dumb.

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### **Richard says**

889 pages and I read it in 8 days, so that probably says it all. Marian Keyes tells the story through the eyes of four women all connected with said 'Charming Man,' Paddy de Courcey. Paddy is charismatic, powerful and women go weak at the knees when he appears....oh and he is violent and manipulative.

It's a very fine book in that it deals with serious issues of domestic violence and manipulation and yet (as in all her books) is very funny.

I think you could pick up any Marian Keyes book and enjoy it but this is one of the more memorable ones. Her books are full of honesty, real people and the things we all do that make us cry and laugh.

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### **Lisa says**

This was a re-read and I'm so glad I have started to re-read because this is such a brilliant story with all the skills Keyes possesses to climb into other people's psyche and reveal their deepest thoughts and feelings. Her combination of dark humour and serious issues makes for a hugely entertaining and moving read. Truly excellent - I am sad that I have finished this book - I am missing the characters already!

Original review:-

Chick Lit at its best! Compelling story of four different women linked to one arse of a man. Written in four different styles and was both funny and emotional. Lola a sweet stylist, Grace a ballsy journalist, Marnie an alcoholic and Alicia the unfortunate wife. Absolutely loved it!

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### **Irene says**

3,5

Si tuviera que describir este libro, sería impactante. La autora nos hace partícipes de una realidad cruda y desgarradora, pero real. La forma de abordarlo de manera tan cargada de tacto y sensibilidad, me ha llevado a darle las cuatro estrellas. Por momentos puedes palpar esa desesperación, pero también se adereza con momentos muy cómicos y cotidianos. Como en todo no es todo sombras, si no que los personajes, poco a poco van abriendo la puerta a una realidad mucho más luminosa.

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## Emma says

You know what? I expected to read this book and think, urgh there's another chick-lit same-old same-old. I'm not the biggest fan of chick-lit but I can happily flit into the genre when I fancy something light-hearted. I didn't find this predictable, though, which is my usual qualm with chick-lit.

Lola is easily the funniest and most engaging of the characters; I found myself looking forward to her bits the most. Grace is sarcastic, witty, and the woman that binds all the plots together.

Marnie is the sympathy character: that said, I found the way her little weakness was portrayed as brutally honest, showing the selfishness and impulsivity that is typical of her little problem. (Don't want to spoil it) I LOVED the Friday night club at Lola's, and LOVED the way how it kept you on your toes: both the men I thought were the abusers weren't.

Absolutely brilliant. I didn't want it to end and I think I'll be reading some more from Keyes!

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## Becky Ford says

This is one of the best, yet one of the hardest Keyes' books I've ever read.

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## Keris says

Reviewed by Claire Allan

I doubt there has been such an eagerly awaited book as Marian Keyes' This Charming Man - how we have watched eagerly over the past two years as news of her latest book filtered out. There was going to be a character called Lola in it. It was going to deal with domestic violence. It was going to be very, very long (hurrah!).

My excitement reached a peak when I discovered a copy just in time for my holidays and as I stroked the gorgeous purple cover I was dying to dig in - because let's face it, you know what you're getting with Marian Keyes. She does funny. She does serious. She does perfect observation. She makes you want to turn the page. In terms of women's fiction she's like Ronseal - she does what she says on the tin.

To read the rest of this review, please visit [Trashionista](#)

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## Colleen Pence says

My favorite book I've read this summer is, This Charming Man, by Irish author, Marian Keyes. I'm a huge fan of hers and have read all of her books. They've been thoughtful, delightful and entertaining. But This Charming Man weaves together compellingly stark portrayals of alcoholism and domestic violence in a serious, yet sassy, page-turner that isn't, strangely, depressing. The women in the book come together to confront their abuser and, while not all of their issues are immediately resolved, they each experience an important catharsis that you know will lead them on their journeys towards healing. Having lived through a debilitating romance with a verbal abuser--who most likely would have turned violent if I hadn't ended things when I did--myself I believe Keyes' novel will touch and empower countless women across the world

who will recognize themselves in her brave heroines and therefore seek to end their seemingly hopeless situations.

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## **Faye says**

I am so disappointed in this book! I believe I have read everything Marian Keyes has published, and I had such high hopes.... Many other reviewers have given a synopsis of this book, so I'll not repeat their words. The following are among the reasons I am so distressed.

The first 75 pages of this book (and periodically throughout the rest) are written in the voice of Lola, one of four female main characters. The writing style is the most maddening Bridget-Jones-text-message mess you can imagine! Twice I nearly gave up on this book. I can't imagine why Keyes chose to OPEN her book this way. It really soured me on the whole book.

But tough it out I did, and things do get much better. However, the characters of Alicia and Paddy are never fully developed. You'd think in more than 500 pages we could have learned a bit more about what makes them tick.

After all the intense emotion, shredded lives, and decades-old scars that are revealed through the hundreds of pages of this book, I find the happily-ever-after ending a final disappointment. It's all just a little too tidy in the last pages.

As others have noted, this is not a happy little chick-lit story. The book deals with domestic violence (physical, emotional, sexual) and with alcoholism. The alcoholism story-line is both the most compelling and the most depressing.

If you're on my friends list and you want to borrow this book, I'm glad to lend it to you -- I'd hate to see you go out and spend your money on it! On balance, I think it's still worth reading....just be aware of what you're getting into. I can only hope that Marian Keyes soon gets beyond whatever in her life caused her to write this book. I for one would love for her to finish off the Walsh Sisters' stories!!

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## **Becca says**

**WARNING!!** If you have been, or are, a victim of domestic violence, please be aware that this book depicts the violence and the situations very graphically. Ensure that you are ready to confront this imagery.

I give this book 5 stars if you are not reading it as a beach read, typical chick lit book, or even a typical Marian Keyes book. This is a powerful story that can be very disturbing (even if you have not been a victim of domestic violence). The "voice" of Lola is written in very annoying fragments versus full sentences, but her story is worth hearing.

I would have given this book 4 stars if I were rating it as a beach read, typical chick lit book, or even a typical Marian Keyes book because the humor and warmth is just not there. However, one must remember it is primarily about domestic violence, secondarily about alcoholism, and thirdly about political corruption. It is not that Marian Keyes has not tackled tough topics before, but she has always injected a lot of humor and warmth in those previous books. I think that this subject (and she used stories based on the lives of real women) just touched her too much to let her write in her usual fashion.

This was a really good book that I hope helps someone.

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