



Inside the O'Briens

Lisa Genova

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From award-winning, *New York Times* bestselling author and neuroscientist Lisa Genova comes a powerful new novel that does for Huntington's Disease what her debut *Still Alice* did for Alzheimer's.

Joe O'Brien is a forty-four-year-old police officer from the Irish Catholic neighborhood of Charlestown, Massachusetts. A devoted husband, proud father of four children in their twenties, and respected officer, Joe begins experiencing bouts of disorganized thinking, uncharacteristic temper outbursts, and strange, involuntary movements. He initially attributes these episodes to the stress of his job, but as these symptoms worsen, he agrees to see a neurologist and is handed a diagnosis that will change his and his family's lives forever: Huntington's Disease.

Huntington's is a lethal neurodegenerative disease with no treatment and no cure. Each of Joe's four children has a 50 percent chance of inheriting their father's disease, and a simple blood test can reveal their genetic fate. While watching her potential future in her father's escalating symptoms, twenty-one-year-old daughter Katie struggles with the questions this test imposes on her young adult life. Does she want to know? What if she's gene positive? Can she live with the constant anxiety of not knowing?

As Joe's symptoms worsen and he's eventually stripped of his badge and more, Joe struggles to maintain hope and a sense of purpose, while Katie and her siblings must find the courage to either live a life "at risk" or learn their fate.

Praised for writing that "explores the resilience of the human spirit" (*The San Francisco Chronicle*), Lisa Genova has once again delivered a novel as powerful and unforgettable as the human insights at its core.

Inside the O'Briens Details

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From Reader Review Inside the O'Briens for online ebook

Carol Brill says

Get out the tissues. "INSIDE" The O'Brien's is the perfect title for this wonderful book because Lisa Genova so skillfully puts us inside each character's world to experience their fear, pain, joy, and hope. She has an amazing talent for creating characters that are familiar, palpable and real without being cliché. From the minute I met Joe O'Brien I felt like I knew him and his wife Rosie. I had heard of Huntington's Disease but had no idea of the course of the disease or that it's hereditary. As the O'Brien family deal with a current diagnosis and the too real threat to the next generation, their fears and hopes, denial, and bargaining really resonated with me. Ms. Genova nails what it feels like to hear an unthinkable diagnosis and learn to live with it. A heartbreaking and hopeful story.

I have a quibble about the ending, one of those where I turned the page and gasped out loud, "Noooo! That can't be the end." Here's my review for New York Journal of Books

<http://www.nyjournalofbooks.com/book-...>

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

I only know of Lisa Genova through the film adaptation of Still Alice, and I would not have read another book by her unless it came to me through a book swap, which this one did. Still Alice gave my husband and I both the worst nightmares of our lives!

This author, who has a PhD in neuroscience, seems to prefer to write about diseases in novel form. This is no exception, and addresses Huntington's Disease. The book starts with Joe, a Boston cop who drops things for no reason and falls without tripping. His diagnosis sends the family into a tailspin, because HD is basically 50/50 for each offspring that they will also have the disease.

As a reader, you learn a lot about the disease, but you also come to care about the characters as they struggle through it. It also introduces some intricacies because the family is Catholic, and this introduces more issues in family planning, abortion, genetic choice, etc.

I sat and read the book in one evening, so it just doesn't let you go.

Debbie says

Man, what a good read! On the surface, this is simply the story of a close-knit working-class family that suddenly has to face the horrors of the fatal Huntington's Disease (HD) when Joe, a cop, learns he has the disease and he gradually becomes more and more incapacitated.

But put this simple story into the hands of a writer such as Genova, and you have a masterpiece. The way she describes this family without drowning in sentimentality is an art. Genova's pacing is spot on, her sentences pure, the story poignant. She knows how to grab you and keep you enmeshed with this family. You cry with the O'Briens, you sweat out their decisions, you worry with them, you feel their pain.

Oh, this disease is bad. Joe accidentally punches people, slurs his words, gets into rages. And it only gets

worse. The disease whispers, "Oh, you think this is bad, well wait till you see this," as some new and terrible symptom appears. The family is up against a monster, and ultimately the monster will win.

One of Joe's 20-something kids, Katie, shares the spotlight as she agonizes over whether to find out if she carries the HD gene. She has a 50 percent chance. If she does have the gene, she will definitely get the disease.

It left me wondering what I would do. Find out my fate and be miserable and scared, or not find out and be miserable and scared? What do you gain by knowing you are going to get HD? Say you find out you have the gene, do you get out the bucket list and make the most of your life? Or do you retreat? Do you think about suicide?

I just learned that there was Huntington's Disease among my great-great grandparents. It blows my mind to know that long ago, people in my family faced the same horrifying life as Joe. In the book, Joe's mother had had Huntington's and they locked her up in a mental hospital and labeled her a drunk. I wonder if my ancestors faced the same fate.

One big nit about the book: I didn't buy that Joe continued working as a cop when he was first diagnosed. Really? He has people's lives in his hands. He's putting his partner and others at risk. Can he run fast enough? Is his hand steady if he needs to use his gun? Can people trust a cop who slurs his words and walks funny, and who is subject to fits of rage? I think he should have quit the force immediately, found a job that didn't have such high stakes.

And a bigger nit: I didn't like the way the book ended. I appreciate Genova's intention, but it left me feeling ripped off. Will be interesting to see if the ending bothered others.

Other things that didn't make me happy: the detailed descriptions of yoga positions and a baseball game. Luckily, yoga and baseball were minor side trips, only hogging a few pages. Still, at those times it felt like Genova was writing a user's manual—I was very conscious of the author. I also wasn't crazy about the affirmations, but that's just me.

All of Genova's novels so far have featured a hero who is faced with some medical horror (her most famous being *Still Alice*, about a woman with Alzheimer's). It's to Genova's credit that she manages to educate us about disorders while telling a good story with complex characters we care about. She always does her research, but she never makes her novels preachy or pedantic. I'm impressed that she's such a crusader; after the story, she even has info on how to donate to the HD cause. It makes me like her not just as a writer but also as a person.

Another novel about Huntington's Disease is *Five Days Left*. It was way too sappy for me (I gave it only 2 stars), but it does give you another glimpse into the life of someone with HD.

Did I love *Inside the O'Briens*? Hell yes. I was riveted by this story; I was always hot to get back to it. I stayed up late reading it, and I raved about it to friends. And for the most part I didn't look at page numbers—all tell-tale signs that I had a 5-star book on my hands. But toward the end, the description of all Joe's symptoms seemed repetitive and tedious (I was peeking at page numbers all of the sudden), and I dropped my rating to 4 stars. It's a great book, though. Not as amazing as *Still Alice*, but really good.

Thank you, NetGalley.

Petra X says

To sum up in one word: Meh. In one sentence: stereotypical characters who have to face a single dilemma which can be solved in one of two ways and some choose one and some the other. The rest of this review is an elucidation of those two points.

First there was *Still Alice* which was a brilliant story of the devastation of early-onset Alzheimer's told by Alice herself. Then there was *Left Neglected*, about the disorder where the body does not recognise one half of the world, including itself. This could have been interesting but the protagonist was a self-obsessed, self-aggrandizing woman whose empathy extended only to the right side of her own world. Now, her latest book in the genre she invented, neurological fiction, 'neuro fiction', is this one, *Inside the O'Briens*.

All the characters without exception are stereotypical, the Irish cop who has a large family, the mother who might have died of the drink, the daughter who does yoga and is in touch with her inner self, the drifter boy who works in bars and may sleep around. They just weren't interesting. They have been written about so often you could predict the responses, at least I could.

So the book is about Huntingdon's. This is an always-fatal, devastating neurological disease with no treatment at all. If a parent has it, there is a 50% chance of the child having it. So the whole book rests on one premise only, would you get tested and know that at some point before middle-age you would show symptoms of the disease that will kill you or would you not get tested since there's nothing that can be done about it anyway?

That's it. It was all downhill from *Still Alice*. When I used to read Jodi Picoult and Alexander McCall Smith I had to get their new books but each one was written to the same formula and they had less and less to say. Probably, like in the music business, they had contracts to write x number of books and so even though they weren't buzzing with new ideas, plots and characters, they sat down and wrote for two hours a day and the editor shaped the literary effort into a saleable product. I feel like this about Lisa Genova now.

Two stars because I can't say I enjoyed this book, and if it hadn't been so light and easy to read and skim without missing anything crucial, I'd never have finished it.

Carmen Blankenship says

First of all a huge thank you to Gallery, Threshold, Pocket Books and Netgalley for the ARC in exchange for an honest review.

There are certain times that I get frustrated at being limited to giving a book 5 stars. This is one of those times. Before I review this specific book, I just want to touch on Lisa Genova's body of work. After I read *Still Alice*, by chance, I immediately searched Amazon for her backlist. Much to my dismay and astonishment it was her debut. How can a book so flawless be her first?!? Then I read her bio ... A degree in Biopsychology AND a PHD from Harvard? Then, I decide to email Genova about how much *Still Alice* impacted me. Guess what? She emailed right back and actually had a 'conversation' with me over email. So not only is she a gifted author, a doctor, and educator, but she is also very NICE! I would say it wasn't fair that one person had so much talent, but I have a feeling that while there is no doubt she has talent, I am pretty sure she has worked her arse off. OK, now on to *Inside the O'Briens*.

Inside the O'Briens introduces us to Joe, a proud Boston Police officer, his wife Rosie, and their four Children. Their whole family is rocked when Joe is diagnosed with Huntingtons Disease. A disease that is

passed down genetically. Not only does the family have to struggle with the symptoms that Joe is presenting but the children (who are all adults) are agonizing over the decision to take the blood test that will tell them, with 100% accuracy, if they will suffer the same fate. While this is the premise of the book, it is so, so, so much more. I loved the O'Brien family. Their Irish pride and their closeness. I found myself thinking of the O'Briens as I was curling my hair in the morning, driving to work, and just couldn't wait to get back to them.

What Genova is a genius at is educating you on diseases and also how they affect families. I loved Joe and loved how much he adored his "bride" and his children. I hate Huntington's Disease. It is a vicious disease that can go on for generations. I hope a cure is found soon. I make a very modest living but I will donate what I can as Lisa has so gracefully asked.

Honestly, this review could be 3 pages long if I wanted to describe how absorbed I was in this story. My Kindle has yellow highlighted pages in every chapter.

You don't need to even read the next review. Just click "BUY NOW" or however you purchase your books. Just purchase it.

Angela M says

4.5 stars .

I felt as if I knew Joe O'Brien. At first I thought it was because I lived just outside Boston when this story takes place so I really felt like I was there and that I knew this family. More likely it's because Lisa Genova does such an amazing job of letting you know this could be any family , anywhere .

This is about a family not so perfect but real in their flaws and yet perfect in their love and support for each other as they face Joe's diagnosis of Huntington's disease . By reading this novel, I certainly gained a better understanding of Huntington's disease . At most I knew that this was a debilitating disease without a cure . Genova makes us aware of so much more - the terrible symptoms , the hereditary nature of the disease and the toll that it takes on the victim as well as the family . Certainly her credentials as a neuroscientist make her more than capable of doing so. But she also gives us a beautiful story of a suffering family and how they sustain themselves through love and hope .

It is heartbreaking to see what happens to Joe , a career Boston Police Officer both , physically as well as emotionally , beginning with denial through acceptance that he will die of it and worrying about whether his children will get it . It's heartbreaking what this diagnosis is doing to his loving wife Rosie as she watches what is happening to her husband and worries about whether her four adult children have the muted gene . It's heartbreaking to see what is going on in the minds of their children - to be tested or not , to know their fate or not .

Amidst the heartbreak there is strength in the face of this tragic circumstance . I highly recommend this book , especially if you loved Still Alice also by Lisa Genova.

Thanks to Gallery Books and NetGalley .

Ace says

Every family has their battles and this particular family is dealing with Huntington's. I had to take a bit of a break about half way through but it drew me back as I kept thinking about what would happen and how they would cope. Anyone from the Boston area may love this even more than I did?

Elyse says

"Huntington's disease is a lethal neurodegenerative disease with no treatment and no cure --commonly called a family disease.

The most important thing about Lisa Genova's new book, "Inside the O'Brians", is that she brings awareness to readers of Huntington's disease --and the many different ways it consumes a family.

As Lisa tells the story about The O'Brien family --the reader begins to understand this disease deeper -- physically--psychologically--mentally--financially--spirituality--.

There are pros and cons for siblings: A genetic test can tell them if they will get the disease. Siblings have a 50% chance of having a positive result, if one of their parents has it.

Lisa Genova does a beautiful job unpeeling the onion-skin layers of each family member's struggle to live a dignified life, as they are faced with serious choices to make. You'll meet Joe, Rosie, Katie, Meghan, JJ & Collen, and Patrick. While reading their story --the reader often wonders ---"what would I do"?

This is a heartbreaking disease -- heartbreaking shocking news for a family -- Its a must read for anyone who knows nothing about Huntington's disease.

Lisa Genova's medical-science knowledge mixed with her storytelling allows readers to 'feel' the sense of immediacy to find a cure for this progressive deathly disease.

Thank you Lisa -For making a difference in the world with the books you write! "ALL" of them are important.

I'll make a donation to the HD Human Biology Project -- www.LisaGenova.com

Thank You, Netgalley

Debbie "DJ" says

I really liked Genova's book "Inside the O'Brians." She has a way of pulling me into the heart, soul, and life of so many different diseases. This story is about Huntington's Disease, and was told through the life of the O'Brian family. I enjoyed the Irish Catholic setting, a culture where family is highly valued. Of course this made it all the tougher, as the father is diagnosed leaving all four of his children with a 50/50 chance of inheriting the disease themselves. This is where the story leads us, into the lives of these four young adults wrestling with the idea of being tested. Much of the story is told through the eyes of the youngest daughter Katie, the one who has struggled with decisions all her life. It is mostly through her eyes that I watched in horror how quickly her fathers disease progressed.

The book did a fantastic job showing what Huntington's Disease looks like. A person with Huntington's can often look drunk as muscle control is lost. The social stigma which follows is heartbreaking. There were some great lessons to be learned here, not only about the disease, but about how to live one's life. Do we live mostly in the past, present, or future in our minds, and why? A beautiful line Katie had written was "Every breath is a risk - Love is why we breath."

I fully enjoyed this novel, my only complaint, it being too long. It felt repetitious at times. Sometimes every change in disease progression, it's consequences, and how it is handled became too much. I was frustrated, as I felt a little trimming down would have had more of an impact.

Still, these were small problems. The ending had me in the ugly cry, and I am forever changed by the information presented here on a dreadful disease that is Huntington's.

Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says

Sometimes a book educates you on matters you were unaware of but should not have been - like Huntington's Disease and how it destroys a person in the most cruellest of ways. Reading this was like a slap in the face, how was I so in the dark about this disease? Then again I have a nephrostomy and 99% of people don't know what that is.

Lisa Genova did that with Inside the O'Briens, not only a brilliant novel but one that brings awareness to an illness that I would guess not many would know a whole lot about. It reminded me somewhat, not so much in writing style but topic in some of the books written by Jodi Picoult.

Joe O'Brien is a forty four year old police officer from the Irish Catholic neighborhood of Charlestown, Massachusetts. A devoted husband, proud father of four children in their twenties, and respected officer, Joe begins experiencing bouts of disorganized thinking, uncharacteristic temper outbursts, and strange, involuntary movements.

He initially attributes these episodes to the stress of his job, but as these symptoms worsen, he agrees to see a neurologist and is handed a diagnosis that will change his and his family's lives forever: Huntington's Disease.

As HD is a genetic neurological disorder his diagnosis sends the whole family into a state of terrified limbo, it's a 50/50 chance a child of someone with the positive HD gene will have the positive gene too. Life expectancy is not great and quality of life and dignity are out the window by that point.

This is a book that really tackles some tough issues, including how the family cope to support each other whilst each dealing with their own fears and decisions to make. It's like someone dropped an atomic bomb in the lounge room and nobody is safe from it, nobody. It changes everything.

The strength in this book for me is in the characters, well developed, believable and complex. I was right there with them, in their home, feeling what they were feeling. The sheer helplessness, the anger, the grief, everything. You really do need to get emotionally invested in this book as you read, I got the best out of it that way.

Obviously not a light-hearted read, but it's written so well and Lisa Genova has done a top job of bringing to the reader's attention something that really should have a lot more support and publicity. As of now, there is no cure in sight for Huntington's Disease. There was however great strength and amazing family

commitment exemplified via this book.

The book hooked me from the first chapter, I fell in love with Joe and his battle to see what was happening to him, how it impacted his career in the police force, his dignity, his family, nothing was left untouched. He is a character that you just bond to and love. In fact I liked all the characters in this novel.

The children have to make the decision to get tested now or not to find out if they have the gene or remain in the dark and just wait and see. Can you imagine? Lisa painted their journey with that battle of whether to face the truth or not and the different way they each felt about it was brilliant. Not an easy read this one, it pulls on the heart strings and it's easy to get caught up in the emotions that are an undercurrent that makes this book so strong.

I finished the book at 3:00am, after devouring the last 50% of the book with matchsticks keeping my eyes open, I was so absorbed. It's now 4:32am here in the UK and I had to write my review before I lost what I was feeling. A book that made me think, made me feel. No real tears, but plenty of empathy. Glad to also be educated more on this awful disorder.

This should have been 5 stars but I give it 4.5 simply because I did not like the ending. It was the only bit of the book that let me down personally. It's the author's choice how to end a book but I felt empty with the need to know. Darn it. Can Lisa message me in secret to tell me?

So, a powerful, painful and highly addictive read that would appeal to many types of readers. I really enjoyed it and would recommend it to anyone. It's urged me to learn more about Huntington's Disease too.

It's been a hard review to write as I don't feel I can get across clearly enough how powerful the impact of it is, it's left me kind of drained, I need to recover and ponder the book over the coming week.

This review, plus book chat, giveaways and more can be found on my page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BookloverCat...>

[image error]

Many thanks to the publisher for my copy of this book via NetGalley in exchange for a fair review.

Sharon says

Inside the O'Briens had a great strong start, but I had trouble staying interested.

The first chapter showed us that Joe, the main character, was beginning to have symptoms of Huntington's Disease, though of course he doesn't realize it at the time. Then, the story jumps forward 7 years, only to keep taking us through several situations where he is having symptoms he doesn't understand or recognize. The author takes this time to introduce us to the family and get to know the characters, but it seemed like this is the point where the story should have picked up, but it never did.

When Joe finally receives a diagnosis, it is first by way of the doctor telling him what she "thinks" (prior to any testing), and the situation was so far from what would happen in real life it felt jarring. His wife began googling HD on their drive home, and at the following appointment - two months later - he is told that

indeed, he does have HD. So he then asks, what is Huntington's Disease? As though he hadn't had two months to stew over it, worry, and research it, because the doctor had already told him that's what she thought he had.

The book is just too poorly paced and unrealistic to enjoy the story as the author attempted.

ARC received from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Christine says

I wish to thank Net Galley, Simon and Schuster publishing, and Dr. Lisa Genova for an ARC of this novel in exchange for an unbiased review.

Inside the O'Briens is an outstanding novel, possibly my favorite of all 20 books I have read so far this year. It is written by Dr. Lisa Genova, author of *Still Alice*. Joe O'Brien is a 44 year-old Irish Catholic police officer living in Charlestown, MA, the oldest neighborhood in Boston. Joe is diagnosed with Huntington's disease (HD), a rare, untreatable, neurodegenerative illness. The disease is inherited. A person with HD has a 50% chance of passing the gene on to each child. Everyone with the gene will develop HD; everyone with HD will die. Joe has 4 young adult children--JJ, Patrick, Meghan and Katie. Joe and Katie are the protagonists, and the story is told by both their points of view (3rd person narrative).

What I like best about this novel is how Dr. Genova really focuses onto the many facets of this illness. Being a physician, I am aware of this disease, though I have never seen a patient with HD. I dare say most of the population not in the medical field has never heard of it. The author gives us a very clear picture of what Huntington's disease is all about. She explains in easy to understand terms what the genetics of HD are, what is involved in finding out if you are carrying the gene, and what it is like for not only the patient to live with HD, but what the ramifications are on the patient's family, friends and coworkers.

It is not an easy disease to live with. How will you spend the rest of your days and what will be your attitude? How will you relate to your family? It is very difficult for offspring to decide whether or not to undergo genetic testing. Do you want to know that you will die early of this grotesque disease? Or do you decline testing in order to hold out hope even knowing that a negative test would set you free. But will you truly be free even with a negative test? If you test positive or if you decline testing, will you want to marry? Would that be fair? Would you want to have children? Will every stumble, loss of balance or dropped glass be a sign that the disease is beginning? The questions are endless. By opening a window to the O'Brien's lives, these and other questions are examined in depth through the lives of Joe, his wife Rosie and his children, especially Katie.

It is evident that a tremendous amount of research went into the writing of this fictional account. Dr. Genova has earned a PhD in neuroscience from Harvard University so she certainly has the background to write about Huntington's disease. But it is the way she humanized this disease that moved me. The characters are so compelling, so realistic, and just so...human. To see their struggles in handling the entire situation and how they each came to terms with it was simply spellbinding. I thought about these people when I went to bed and when I woke up. I am still thinking about them after finishing the book. I will miss them.

In summary, Inside the O'Briens is both captivating and highly enlightening. I highly recommend it to all readers. This is my first Lisa Genova book. It will not be the last. 5 stars.

Carol says

Lisa Genova *really* knows how to set the scene of a story and draw you in.....44 year old Boston Police Officer Joe O'Brien has been diagnosed with Huntington's Disease shocking him and his close-nit family who soon discover they may also carry the fatal inherited gene. With no treatment to slow the progression or hope of cure in sight, Joe's children struggle with the decision of being tested to uncover their fate.

Informative and heart-rending read depicting a devastating, debilitating and deadly disease.

Kelli says

Pass the tissues...this one is a tearjerker (pronounced here as teeya jahkah). Both tragic and triumphant, this moving story was very difficult for me to put down. I was invested and engaged from the first page. Once again the incomparable Lisa Genova gives a face to a rare but devastating disease and places us in the home, heart, and mind of a family left to live with a diagnosis that has leveled them at the knees and will change all of their lives forever. This is a diagnosis that makes one seriously question whether uncertainty is the kinder fate and we stumble along with this family as they navigate this treacherous, unforgiving terrain.

I love a story that takes place at home and no doubt the references to the ballpark, the landmarks and all things Boston make it especially appealing to me. There is an authenticity to this book that truly defies explanation. This is exactly what Boston neighborhoods are. This is so accurate that I actually believe I can get in my car, drive to Charlestown, spend a half hour looking for parking, climb the stairs of any triple decker there and meet the O'Briens. They are there and that level of authenticity is what allows this fictional family to break my heart. They will break yours, too.

Mandy says

I very much enjoyed Genova's earlier novel *Still Alice* about Alzheimer's and felt that she dealt sensitively and convincingly with the effects it has on all those involved when a diagnosis hits a family. Unfortunately she has not been so successful in her attempts to write the same book again, this time focussing on Huntington's. I can't help feeling she (or her publishers) decided it would be a good idea to cash in on her earlier success by choosing another devastating disease and finding a story to fit the facts.

Joe O'Brien is your typical Boston-Irish cop leading a conventional Boston-Irish life with his Boston-Irish wife and four children. Then one day their life is upended by Joe's diagnosis of Huntington's disease, a cruel affliction for which there is no cure. Joe's four children are all very different from each other and this handily gives Genova the opportunity to demonstrate a range of possible reactions. Visits to the doctor give an opportunity for some medical lectures and a mini-course on genetics. Joe's normal blustering is shown to be no help to him as he gradually loses control of his body and mind but a clue is given in the opening pages about how he will ultimately deal with his dreadful situation. So all in all the book is formulaic and clichéd with the characters types rather than fully-rounded personalities, and I wasn't convinced by any of them. Certainly it gives a moving and compelling account of Huntington's and for that the reader must be grateful, but as a convincing work of literature it failed for me and I was disappointed. I hope Genova doesn't feel tempted to choose yet another disease and explore it in the same lifeless way.

Shaily says

NetGalley ARC

Because I enjoyed Still Alice so much, I had high hopes going into this book. Unfortunately, I didn't love reading *Inside the O'Briens*. Half the time, I felt like I was reading a textbook on Huntington's Disease with some examples of how a family is affected thrown in for good measure.

Although it was good to get more than just Joe's perspective, Katie was an annoying character. Her chapters were the same wishy-washy words of should I, should I not, yoga, I don't know HD HD HD. I started to skim her chapters because there was no new information offered. It doesn't bother me that (view spoiler), but I don't like that she (view spoiler).

I appreciate the awareness this book will bring to Huntington's Disease and think it's great that Genova is able to bring medical knowledge to a fictional novel. This one just needs a little more polishing.

Will M. says

I would like to thank Netgalley for providing me with an arc, in exchange for an honest review.

Huntington's Disease is a cruel disease. Once you're gene positive, there's no way out of it. The symptoms are terrible and will worsen over time. I can only feel sympathy toward people who have this merciless disease. As a future doctor, it only pains me to see how hopeless this disease is right now, but I have faith that one day there will be cure for this. It's only a matter of time.

While there are hundreds of books regarding romance with health resulting to death incorporated, I believe that this novel aims to inform. It's not supposed to make you feel light hearted, but rather to inform you how serious this condition is. There's a chapter in the end that provides a link wherein you can donate to help develop a cure. I honestly don't think that was meant to be a gimmick, because the author seems to exude genuine concern toward this matter. It can also be seen in the acknowledgments.

So enough with the disease awareness, I'm now going to talk about the novel itself. The perfect way for me to describe it would be that it was completely immersing. The plot was very interesting, and the characters are genuine and life-like. This novel is about a family with a father who has HD and a 50-50 chance of his children inheriting it. It was interesting to read about the family's way of coping with the disease. If the author was true to her word that she really did research on this (interviewing actual victims) then this novel is fantastic. I don't want to spoil anything but all I can say is that I hated and loved the ending. I want more of this book. It should've been longer. I didn't want to part ways with the characters. It feels like I still need time to read about their journey with HD. I'll surely remember them for a very long time. This is the only novel that truly made me feel like shit after reading. Anything medicine related is a plus point for me, in terms of enjoyment.

(view spoiler)

5/5 stars. I don't see anything wrong with the novel, other than it was shorter than it should've been. Completely indulging. One of my highest recommendations yet, but read this only if you can stomach a heart wrenching novel.

?Karen says

Imagine you've seemed jittery and moody lately, your speech is slurring occasionally, and man, those involuntary twitches in your face and leg are driving you and those around you batsh%! crazy. These are just some of the symptoms of Huntington's Disease, a hereditary affliction that lies dormant in you until you are approaching middle age and then gives you 10 years more after that. Ten torturous years, because you will be fully aware of your slide into hell. So by the time you find out you have HD, you have already had your own children, all of whom have a 50/50 chance of having it themselves, and a 50/50 chance of passing it on to their kids, and so on and so on and so on.

Such is the story of Joe O'Brien and his doomed family. As in *Still Alice*, the author gives us another tragic disease and asks the question, would you want to know if you are carrying the gene, or not?

Such a story could be a downer, so the author balances it perfectly with scenes of this amazing family. Joe and his saint of a wife Rosie, adult children Patrick, JJ, Meghan, and Katie. Mostly we have Joe's perspective alternated with Katie's. Told with humor and tenderness, this is a story that will resonate with you and bring some tears to your eyes.

Thank you NetGalley and Gallery Books for allowing me to preview and review this wonderful book.

Patrice Hoffman says

Where do I start with Lisa Genova's *Inside the O'Briens*? I'm often faced with that decision when starting a review for a novel I believe brings so much to the table in terms of its insight, relatability, and the discussion it leaves in its wake. In an effort to not spoil anything I will be brief and only highlight the things that I still think about after reading this novel.

Joe O'Brien is an officer for the Boston Police Department, husband to Rosie, and father to four offspring when he finds out the most devastating news of his life. He's gene positive for Huntington's Disease. After a few too many mishaps, sporadic movements, and out of character rampages, he is convinced by his wife to seek help. She thinks he's gone crazy. After getting news of his true diagnosis, crazy seems like a lesser evil.

The novel progresses by telling the Joe's story by cleverly placing intricate details of the neurodegenerative disease and what it means for his future, and his family's future. He will become someone who is unable to control his movements, thinking, and behavior. His cognitive and motor skills will continue to decline until his untimely death. What's worse is that there is a 50% chance of passing this along to his children.

Inside the O'Briens explore how one Irish Catholic family tries to hold it all together while things seemingly fall apart. Joe can't help but feel the guilt of passing this along to his children while a few of his children battle wanting to know or not. This is where I was most intrigued.

We are given the most in depth story of Katie, who struggles between knowing and not knowing. Moving forward with life or allowing Huntington dictate how she would spend her life. Relating to her story is

easiest and it constantly made me wonder: Would I want to know? Would I have the courage to find out what my future holds?

Overall, *Inside the O'Briens* is an interesting, sometimes heartbreaking look into the life of a family who deals with the cards they're dealt. I recommend this book to anyone who shows even a little interest in the subject and wants to get lost in a novel that will make you think, 'would I want to know'?

Copy provided by Simon and Schuster via Netgalley

Diane S ? says

3.5 Once again, Genova takes a regular family, a family that could be yours or mine, and touchingly portrays this family confronted with extraordinary events. In this case the family is Irish Catholic, living in Boston, Joe is a police officer, he and his wife have four grown children. They have the usual problems, not enough time, a grown son still trying to find his way, testing their patience, one son married, and two daughters both somewhat settled in their careers. Life is good but hectic until Joe starts exhibiting some strange symptoms.

Huntington is a horrible disease, and one that children have a 50/50 chance of inheriting. This novel worked for me because this family was so likable, so easy in which to relate. Having a disease, that is life taking does become your whole life, becomes an obsession. There is guilt about passing this on to your children, crisis in faith, all the other emotions, really I can just imagine how devastating this would be.

Yet, life does go on, there are decisions to make, the present to live and this is what these characters, each in their own way must do. Find their way forward, look to a future, uncertain or not. That Geneva can educate while telling a story is to her credit. My only small criticism is that at times I felt she was a little heavy handed with the repetition of Huntington symptoms, but this is something she feels passionate about, and in no way lessened my involvement in the story. I also liked the way the novel ends, not exactly happy but hopeful.

ARC from NetGalley.
