



Divine Moves

Ellyn Oaksmith

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A wild and witty look at modern marriage and the perilous potholes on the road to happily ever after. Meryl Howe thinks she's outrun her trailer trash past with a prosperous husband, private schools for her children and winning, after much kowtowing to the elite, the chairmanship of Seattle Children's Hospital Guild. But one horrible night her world and her marriage and her life implodes. Just when Meryl thinks things have hit rock bottom, her estranged mother blows in from Vegas with plans to save her daughter's marriage. After four years of sobriety, Faye's brought along Hot Jesus - a saintly apparition who rides shotgun in her life. Faye, a former stripper and veteran of multiple marriages, plans on talking her daughter into opening an exotic dance and fitness studio. But Meryl has other plans. She's falling for a Sheriff who is accusing her of crimes she didn't commit. Mostly. As Faye steamrolls ahead, Meryl must learn a few of her mother's sexy moves in order to shake the sad memories of her past.

Divine Moves Details

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From Reader Review Divine Moves for online ebook

Sarah says

Rooting for all of the characters to find happiness:

This is the first book that I have read by Ellyn Oaksmith and I really enjoyed it. I was a bit dubious when I read the blurb and don't think this gives the novel the justice it deserves. Exploring how a family can be rocked by a single event, 'Divine Moves' leaves you wanting every character to find happiness at the end of the story, even though you know it is not going to be possible.

At the start of each chapter, Oaksmith has included a quote from someone about love or marriage. I really enjoyed reading these and found these quite entertaining. Such pessimistic comments about love did make me laugh and provided a break from the story. Indeed, it became quite easy to make links with the characters and their experiences of love in relation to the quotes that the author used.

I really wanted all of the characters in this novel to find happiness at the end of the story, but knew this would ultimately come at the cost of another character's peace. Sam, the local sheriff, deserves to be happy at last after the death of his wife, but I knew this would ultimately sacrifice Meryl's fragile marriage and break up the family unit. Yes, it is clear that Meryl finds it difficult to forgive her husband but with the problems being faced by her children, Henry and Nathalie, it had to be Sam that made this sacrifice. I didn't think it would be possible that Meryl's mother, Faye, would be such a likeable character after how Meryl behaves towards her, but I enjoyed the force and drama she brought to Meryl's life. Although Faye has her own demons, she is a breath of fresh air to the troubled household and becomes the rock that her daughter and grandchildren need her to be.

The charity event does not make a proper appearance until the closing of the novel and I did find this surprising. I had assumed that this would be a central part to the story, but instead it focuses on love and family relationships. That being said, it came at a time when Faye and Meryl had a stronger mother-daughter relationship and it was warming to see them being successful together. Indeed, I think it is this release that both characters needed to find each other and whilst there are many references to God and Faye's Jesus, I did not find this ruining my enjoyment of the story.

This is a great story to read and one that explores cracks in a family unit that were just waiting to appear. It was comforting to see how the characters adapted and the ending gave hope that everything was going to be ok for most of them. I think it would have been good if Oaksmith had included a closing chapter just to summarise how the characters had moved on, but I guess that is just part of the novel's charm: you are left to imagine that everyone, including Sam, does find their happy ever after.

Hillary says

Well written - believable characters. Liked this book a lot. Spoiler - kind of wish we knew what happened with Sam/Ethan/Meryl. Ending was a little abrupt, though overall I liked the story and read it quickly (due to keeping my interest).

Ellyn Oaksmith says

Obviously I can't review my own book but I will tell you that this one has been quite long haul for me in terms of figuring out where the story should go. The character of Faye popped into my head, fully formed, talking to Hot Jesus, spouting her own particularly version of life and forever changed the book. No longer was it about the melt down of a marriage -- it became a mother daughter story too. It was only natural to dovetail the story of Nathalie, the daughter, into the story of Faye and Meryl.

So it became 3 generations of women struggling to redefine who they are in light of wanting desperately to belong on their own terms. Faye wants to be a grandmother, Meryl wants to fit in, Nathalie wants to be loved. And when the book opens, they each have their own mission. Because for each of them, their current life isn't working. This is made abundantly clear in different ways.

The easiest thing about writing this for me was finding the humor in the pathos. I think that if you are going to show someone cheating, it should be in the flagrant and most horrible way possible. This is a prime example of finding comedy in the most absurd moments. Sure, part of it makes you cringe but life is full of moments where we think, "Is this really happening?" And it's funny.

The men in the story are fighting for equilibrium too. Ethan is trying to feel like a success again. Sam is really looking for love in all the wrong places. But I feel like in the end it works for him. And Henry is just trying, in a very misguided way, to get his family back. I find them all equally moving but Ethan has a special place in my heart because he's so flawed. It will be interesting to see people's reactions to him and also to Faye. She is another character that really got under my skin.

I hope you enjoy the book. I had a great time writing it. At the end is a Book Group list of questions that I think are fun to do on your own or with other people.

Thanks for reading!

Elisabeth says

Divine Moves by Ellyn Oaksmith is such a well written book that makes you laugh and cry and it get's you hooked from the first chapter. I simply enjoyed the whole story.

This is the second book from author Ellyn Oaksmith that I have read and I'm enjoying reading her books. The story is about a woman who finds herself in a bit of a jam with a cheating husband and financial problems. And she need to figure everything out and on top of that she has a mother who lives in Las Vegas and it just turns out to be one big great story.

So if you like a great everyday story with some humor in it this is a good one. I enjoyed reading it.

Pam says

Meryl's world has fallen apart. Her husband cheated with the next door neighbor, they are broke, her mother who she hasn't spoke to in years has shown up at her door and she is getting to know a local cop a little to well. Not knowing what to do she takes the money her mother offers to stay above ground. She is dealing with her kids acting up and trying to decide if she wants to make things work with her husband. She starts dating the sheriff and likes him but doesn't know where it will lead. On top of all that her mom wants to open

up a dance studio and not a normal one. It will be a fitness studio and an exotic dance studio. Her book club gets involved helping her with the studio. Just when Meryl thinks nothing can get worse she has to face her demons from her past.

I have to say I wouldn't want to be in Meryl's shoes for anything. She has so much thrown at her that at times she does crack a little bit and I really don't see how she doesn't snap even more. She tries to hold everything in but it is hard for her to do. Ethan her husband I can't stand. He cheated on her and acts like at times it is no big deal. He has a screwed up family and it shows in how he does things. I was tickled with Meryl's reaction to when she found them together. She done what most of us would do. Her mom Faye is nothing short of a wild child. She may be in her sixties but she doesn't let it slow her down a bit. She has straightened her life up and wants to get involved in her daughters lives. She may mess up but she truly does mean well. Sam I couldn't help but love. I know it was bad timing but he is a great guy and I kept rooting for him. He is there when Meryl needs him and he is great with his own family. There is so much drama that goes on in this book you really never know what will happen next. I had to keep reading thinking ok things would get better but I was wrong. You also get plenty of laughs as so much happens and how Meryl reacts to different things. I would recommend this to anyone really as it was a joy to read about Meryl so much that happens to her happens in everyday life. You can see just how strong she can be.

Maraina Brown says

I absolutely adored this book. From the moment I opened the book, I couldn't put it down. It is a great story about how life can go from perfect to in out-of control mess in a blink of an eye. I highly recommend this book and am looking forward to reading more from Ellyn Oaksmith.

Lisa Filipe says

OK....So....I really, really enjoyed DIVINE MOVES. Ellyn writes a funny, yet heartbreaking tale about a family overcoming some major issues, involving the relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, mother's and daughters...with some hysterical antics that if you picture in your head, you will be cracking up laughing.

BUT.....and this is a HUGE pet peeve when it comes to reading for me, so fair warning to those readers who feel the same as me, HEAD HOPPING!! I don't want to let this take away from the fact that I really liked the book, but the change of POV from sentence to sentence or paragraph to paragraph...it is just the one thing that really drives me crazy, so if you are like me, beware that this is the case. Some readers don't care, but it is just something that I needed to point out.

Now that I am over that, DIVINE MOVES really was a fun women's fiction about "Healing", and how we overcome who we essentially are destined to become, and how a parent's life can effect the children (younger and older).

I recommend DIVINE MOVES to my readers who are fans of funny, laugh-out-loud, women's fiction, that will touch the heart and leave you thinking about your own life!

Kobby Gyampoh says

Meryl Howe hits rock bottom when she catches her husband cheating with a sleazy neighbour who borrows Meryl's coat as she's being thrown out. Luckily, though it was a hard impact, she still has her legs. So she's seeking to move on. Though it wouldn't be easy with Christmas around the corner. When she's been cut emotionally deep, how can she hang in there in a season when it's all about love? Especially when she has no love, how can she get through Christmas this year. Besides, the stress of always being a good wife is weighing down on her when the bills come and her children home from school with their own dilemma to add to hers?

Fortunately, Faye, mother of Meryl comes into the picture, as the super-heroine. As though she's got the solutions to solve all the problems. How can one hopeless alcoholic (whose been sober for four years) handle her grandchildren when she screwed the whole shebang as a mother.

The questions are: would Meryl get through Christmas with her mother in the picture claiming she has the business idea that would save her butt? Would both her children keep out of trouble now that she has less time to supervise thanks to a shitty job at Macy's? would her husband ever stop pestering her about forgiveness even though he's sharing a house next door with the other trashy woman? Is she safe leaving her children in the care of her mother who's busy filling out loan forms for her "business" idea? And most importantly, would Meryl find love this Christmas?

This book is so Desperate Housewives with a unique storyline. So it means I got anyone if they who interrupted my reading stoned. (But, hey, my mum was an exception.) My Desperate Housewives sweeties. Let me take you back down lane. When Lynette had cancer and her mum walked in to help.

I loved Bree! Forget Purple is the New Black, Meryl is the new Bree. I digged how Meryl was emotionally detached always striving to be the good wife. Her perfectionism was insane. I couldn't relate to her more than I'm sure you women would. The silly thing about a gender barrier. But I loved her nonetheless like I loved Bree. Her struggle, her complexity, everything about her was so three-dimensional.

I loved that this was a multiple character read. It was a nice change from most of the first-person narrative you see in women's fiction genre. And besides our lead girl the characters were amazing. From Jackie the sister whose relationships don't get past moving in stage because she'd be honest she hasn't gotten into terms with allowing a pet in despite her being single. Sam, the cop who kept more of his eyes on Meryl and less of on the bad guys—loved the romance this character contributed to the story. Faye, the mother who can work a pole probably less than she can a sandwich—like any true mother. The Women at the book club whose personalities made me crack up, my personal fav Sandy Chen who would never ever get any chance to slap someone in life.—★★★ Ooh, almost forgot Nathalie, the wild child with a sharp tongue glued with loads of funny, snippy, snide remarks.

You would fall hopelessly for this book because of the humor in it.

I might be trying to hide it all with a funny review. But I wouldn't do justice to this book if I don't tell you I did shed a few tears. Thanks to Ellyn Oaksmith, I took the right stance. The perfect marriage, with all the happily ever laters all happen because of one secret. The secret of reconciliation. —★★★★ This book

teaches so many issues that we all people as men and women going through marriage, addiction, a shitty present thanks to a shitty past can learn.

I just love this book because it just wasn't your typical Santa holiday read. It actually brings in the thought that while you might have your Christmas revolving all about Santa, some just got home from Charity Galas to find their husbands caught in the act and going through one hell of a Christmas so just be thankful!

—★★★★★

Hope you love this one. Totally recommending it to anyone who has tried thinking of learning exotic dancing without the greasy fingers shoving down dollar bills in your panties. Anyone who just wants the best imagery of their lives seeing the most unusual characters doing the most unusually interesting things.

Elizabeth Bryson says

"This book is funny, sad, witty, interesting, a comment on today's families and our need to belong. A terrific read and I love the quotes that precede each chapter."

Elizabeth Bryson

Valerie Scott says

Book with some flaws

Good story overall, what happened to the neighbor? It seemed Sam was unnecessary as a lover, no point in that relationship being included. Meryl was pretty brainless and ignored the kids. So the topic was good but not carried out well. The ending was bad because everything had to be assumed as happening

Lisa says

Divine Moves by Ellyn Oaksmith is a standalone book that will have you emotionally invested in the characters from the very first chapter.

Sad and funny, heart-warming and heart-breaking, this novel will have you questioning fate's sick sense of humor. So much drama just keeps getting dumped on Meryl's lap you begin to wonder just how she's going to survive it. The cheating husband, the stripper mother, Mother's attempt to open an exotic dance studio in Meryl's small hometown...The list goes on.

This book is an enjoyable but exhausting read so make sure you have your big girl panties on when you dive in to Divine Moves.

Kate Curran says

A beautiful story, that is about faith, healing and forgiveness. Reading it made me want to be a better person.

Kristene Skaggs says

I absolutely loved this book!!

Jean Oram says

This was a really fun book that would appeal to book clubs for sure.

It's a book about marriage, betrayals, being a mom, sister, wife, neighbour, meeting someone new, dealing with a mother who you want to hide from...and so much more.

Life spins out of control for the heroine of this book and you will find yourself laughing, gasping, cheering, and groaning as things go from bad to worse to funny.
