



A Special Delivery

Clare Dowling

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Every family has its ups and downs ...

Aisling Brady is miserable. So is her husband Mossy. The three kids are too. Yet nobody dares say a thing. Instead the Bradys keep their heads down and grimly look forward to another miserable Christmas in Dublin.

What Aisling doesn't know is that this year, they will get the most unexpected gift of all. One that will bring joy and heartbreak, hope and a string of sleepless nights.

As their world is turned upside down, questions have to be asked. But are the Bradys ready to face the truth about themselves? And what each of them has done?

A Special Delivery Details

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From Reader Review A Special Delivery for online ebook

Kelly-Marie says

Such a great book really did enjoy it worth the 5 star rating! Clare Dowling is a brilliant author read a few of her books. Can't wait to read more by this author. Going to miss the characters they were my favourites. The language is perfect throughout the novel and it's easy to read. The storyline was perfect and everything fitted in great with the plot. Great book!

Elaine says

I have a real weakness for a well written family drama with well rounded, colourful characters who are believable. I am also partial to a bit of Irish fiction, so this book was right up my street and now I have finished it, I can honestly say I cannot think of anything I didn't like about this read. I loved Aisling and her family – they are normal, they act and speak like real people and are extremely entertaining to read about. At the start of the book, the whole family seems to be dreading Christmas. Something has already happened to cause a rift in the family, although the exact events are not revealed until later in the book. What they don't know is that they are about to be given a special Christmas gift, one that they never expected, but which will change their lives forever.

The book tackles the subject of an unwanted teenage pregnancy, and I really liked the fact that it was looking at it from the side of the teenage father and his family, and how it affected everyone. The initial shock, anger and recriminations, the logistics of a new baby in the family, the "politics" of dealing with the baby's mother and her family, the problems of organising childcare – all of it is here in this book which doesn't play down any of the problems that crop up, but is still extremely readable and enjoyable. In a turbulent year, Aisling is an absolute gem of a character, really pulling out all the stops to keep her family intact and to prevent it imploding. I really felt for her as she dealt not only with the change in her life that the baby brought, but also all the other problems that seem constantly to be thrown at her by the rest of her family.

The book is very well paced, really romps along with plenty of twists and turns that eventually end up with a real shocker that turns the whole book completely on its head. It is moving, heart warming and quite funny at times. Well worth a read. Many thanks to the publisher for the review copy.

Paula Hamling says

Made me laugh & cry - loved it

Steph says

A really great wee read full of addictive interesting characters and a really good plot with plenty of funny

anecdotes thrown in.

Just a normal hectic family who are suddenly landed with a baby who turns their world upside down.

Really surprising twist that had me shocked like wtf! Lol.

I really liked Anto though I liked the whole Brady family, there were some laugh out loud moments, hilarious Irish humour :-)

Iv read a few Claire Dowling n liked them so that's what drew me to this book as soon as I saw it and she certainly didn't disappoint.

Alannah Clarke says

Clare Dowling has done a great job with this novel in creating a 'warts and all' account of a normal Dublin family at Christmas time. To me the characters were so realistic and the themes they dealt with, I'm sure many readers would be able to relate, issues such as unplanned pregnancy or drug abuse in a non-judgmental way.

I really enjoyed reading this book, and I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys reading Christmassy books in the run up to the holidays.

Kat says

I'd like to thank net galley for providing me with this book in return for an honest review.

When I read Claire Dowling books I find them an easy read. They question your morals and what you would do in the same situation. I was torn in my thoughts about what the Brady family should do. Even now, I'm still unsure. That to me is work of art. My favorite character was Aisling, I found her refreshing as she stood by her morals and stood up for her family when it really mattered. I thought the secret was a bit dragged out, but I did like the twists and turns. They were unexpected. I look forward to reading more from Claire.

Jo says

Really enjoyed this story of a slightly dysfunctional Irish family - the author definately brought the characters to life. Funny in places, definately a little gritty and a bit sad - this book has it all. This is my first book by this author but it won't be my last. Reminded me a little of Roddy Doyles books.

Sylwia says

<http://sylviasbookshelf.com/a-special...>

I picked up this book when I was looking for a light Christmas read that would put me in the festive spirit. The cover caught my eye straight away! I read the blurb – it had the word Christmas in it, so I brought it home (after having paid for it of course!). After a few days it turned out that it wasn't really a Christmas story, but I'm not complaining because it was wonderful! First, let me tell you a little bit more about the plot:

Just before Christmas the Brady family discovered a baby in their front garden (in little Jesus's crib, to be precise – it had been empty since Mossy Brady, the creator of the nativity scene couldn't find a baby figure in the right size). They couldn't believe that someone had left a baby out in the cold outside a stranger's house. While trying to decide whether to call the police or not, they found a letter that was attached to the bag, explaining that the baby's name is Darren and his mother is now passing the responsibility on to the father. So who is the father? Naturally, all eyes turned toward Mossy, Aisling's husband... Fortunately, after a few 'silent days' between husband and wife Mossy managed to convince Aisling that Darren was not his son. And what happened next was a bit of a shock to all the Bradys... In 'A Special Delivery' Claire tells a story of a teenage pregnancy, post natal depression and drug abuse. Sounds a bit heavy? It isn't. The story is very upbeat, full of warmth and funny incidents. What made the book really enjoyable were the brilliantly crafted characters and funny dialogues. Clare has got an absolute talent in creating characters that are unique, yet believable and so easy to connect with. I'm pretty sure everyone can find a bit of themselves in some of the Bradys (me? definitely Shannon!).

Clare accurately portrays the trials and tribulations in the life of an ordinary (and very unique at the same time) Irish family. However, it wasn't just a regular family drama with simple plot and predictable ending; Clare has a surprise for you in a form of a very unpredictable twist! And don't even try to outsmart the author, because you won't guess :)

Kim says

A book that will stay with you for a while- I love Clare Dowling books

Aisling and her family are having a miserable lead up to the festive season. An event is about to happen that will change all of their lives forever. A baby is left- and their life is turned upside down. This book deals with teenage pregnancy and drug abuse through really well rounded characters that you can't help but warm to..

I really enjoyed this one.

With many thanks to the publisher and Net Galley for the chance to read this one.

Talie Delemere says

★★★.5

Disclaimer: I received this book in return for an honest review

Aisling Brady is miserable. So is her husband Mossy. The three kids are too. Yet nobody dares say a thing. Instead the Bradys keep their heads down and grimly look forward to another miserable Christmas in Dublin.

What Aisling doesn't know is that this year, they will get the most unexpected gift of all. One that will bring joy and heartbreak, hope and a string of sleepless nights.

As their world is turned upside down, questions have to be asked. But are the Bradys ready to face the truth about themselves? And what each of them has done?

The Good:

Dowling made me genuinely care for the Dowling family. I finished this book a few weeks ago but I still miss them. Their lives seemed to leap off the page, they aren't a perfect family they have their faults and that's why they're likeable even when they're doing things that aren't so likeable. The eldest daughter tries her hardest to be perfect, the son is struggling with school and the youngest daughter is the exact right mix of annoying and cute.

The best character is Darren, the baby that turns up on the Brady families nativity scene. Dowling writes him ridiculously cute, I wanted to reach into the pages and pull him out and cuddle him.

A revelation scene is great, so well written and well paced, it also broke my heart just a little bit so be prepared.

The Not so Good:

It took me a long time to get into, but that seems to be something happening a lot lately. The first half is a struggle and takes me days if not weeks to get into and then I speed read through the second half devouring it and *A Special Delivery* is no different.

Overview:

A book that will leave you with a lasting memory and may make you laugh, cry and break your heart just a little bit.

Aditi says

"Families are like fudge - mostly sweet with a few nuts."

----Author Unknown

Someone might have said a million dollar thing without taking any full credit. Clare Dowling, an Irish writer, charmed us with an incredible story that brilliantly features a disoriented family in the light of Christmas and New Year's eve, in her new book, *A Special Delivery*.

Synopsis:

Aisling Brady is miserable. So is her husband Mossy. The three kids are too. Yet nobody dares say a thing. Instead, the Bradys keep their heads down and grimly look forward to another miserable Christmas in Dublin. What Aisling doesn't know is that - this year - they will get the most unexpected gift of all. One that will bring joy and heartbreak, hope and a string of sleepless nights. As their world is turned upside down, questions have to be asked. But are the Bradys ready to face the truth about themselves? And what each of them has done?

Why did I read this book in the wake of a New Year? Well, sometimes reading heartbreaking stuff can touch us quite deeply thus leaving us happy and pleased and it's sometimes good to learn about family values once in a while and what better way than reading about an unhinged family life. Clare Dowling enthralled me with her perfect story about an imperfect family. Like every year, this Christmas also started distastefully for the Bradys but a sudden Christmas gift delivered on their doorstep changes the course of their miserable lives and the author kept us in dark about the reason for their miserable situation till the middle of the story.

Sounds like a regular family trying to stay afloat for another Christmas in their own home in Dublin, either stressing about lights on their porch or the usual petty stuffs. This family includes a mother, named, Aisling and her husband, Mossy and four children among which some face drug addiction and some are involved in teenage pregnancy drama. Yes, the issues sounds heavy and grim, but still the mother who happens to be the root of her family holds her family tightly through the storm, despite of her inner turmoils brought along with a shocking Christmas present from an unknown well-wisher.

The author portrayed these grim issues with ease and sensitively, thus also giving us a glimpse that how one holds onto each other or how one deals with these issues when living with their own family. Moreover, Aisling's depression was something that made me rooted for her till the very end. The author stripped Aisling's adrift yet perfect soul for us and that made me fall for Aisling's imperfect demeanor. We see the issues like teenage pregnancy from the affected girl's and her father's POV and that reminded me of the movie called, *Juno*. The Brady household has always been miserable, but we have no idea behind it's very reason, and the author makes no effort in the beginning of the story to shed any light on the mystery. Instead she keeps it tightly wrapped up with lots of confusions and sadness and eventually with the progress of the story, she peeled the layers of the mystery one-by-one.

Not only that the author layered her story with bits of humor here and there with her amusing and out-of-the-box character called Zofia, Brady's neighbor. Her absurd and whimsical demeanor completely leaves me amused. Moreover, the author wrote about Zofia with much passion and wit. Hence in a nutshell, I can declare that the characters were all flawed yet felt very poignant and realistic and I guess more or less their flaws made the story more interesting and alluring.

Family dramas can be very boring, but the way she represented the Bradys and their issues were brilliant and striking and all the while, I felt like I was standing right in the middle of Bradys in Dublin and watching them drifting apart yet trying to get a grip on each other. In fact the dialogues/ the narrative style of the author is free-flowing like a river and something that you can relate to. Every family has problems but every one deals their own drama in their own way and there's a lot to learn from the Bradys the way they handle their estrangement from each other. The prose with which the author told her story is eloquent and though-t-provoking, thus in every step, the Bradys forced me to think about their pathetic situation.

This author simply stole the show for me on the very first day of a year and I felt glad that I read this book on the wake of a new year, since the author made my heart filled up with contempt, joy and compassion and respect for my own family, with her intriguing novel.

Verdict: *A must read for every one if you want to feel the warmth of a family values.*

Courtesy: *Thanks to the author, Clare Dowling, for giving me the opportunity to read and review her novel.*

Margaret Madden says

Aisling Brady is a married Mother of four, who is dreading Christmas for the second year running. There is an empty chair at the table and her heart is broken. Tension in the house is building and to make matters worse, the gaudy outdoor illuminations have blown her fuse box so they have no electricity on Christmas Eve. What else can happen? A lot, as it turns out. Their make-shift nativity scene, on their front lawn, has a new addition. One that requires nappies and bottles. But why did someone choose to leave their child on Aisling's lawn on Christmas Eve?

This is the story of a regular family, on a regular Dublin street, trying to come to terms with changes within their four walls. Aisling and her husband, Mossie, are drifting apart and as their children are growing up, they wonder if they can bear the thought of spending time together forever. A special delivery brings about change in the Brady household, but is it enough to forget the past and heal wounds that are gaping open?

Clare Dowling has written an account of family life that is real and has a warts and all feel about it. Issues such as depression, drug abuse and unplanned pregnancies are all dealt with in this novel, but in a non-judgemental way. It shows that every family has its issues and not everyone, within the family unit, will agree with how to address these issues.

A strong cast of family characters makes the story more believable and some guest appearances by Aisling's Polish neighbour, Zofia, adds some comedy to the tale. Her antics, and language faux pas, had me smiling a lot and wanting more. This is a book with a message or two. Forgiveness, understanding and adjustment being the ones that jumped out at me. I'm sure everyone can find something to take away from this story. Even if it's just the longing for a make-up artist, polish neighbour to brighten up your day!

This is Clare Dowling's tenth novel and it is perfect for fans of Sinead Moriarty and Sarah Webb. Recommended.

Agi says

Hello? Clare Dowling? Where were you before? Or, rather, where was I before? How come "A Special Delivery" is my first book by her that I read? It's unbelievable and I'm going to read all the other books as soon as I have some time. "A Special Delivery" had me hooked from start to finish, I loved everything in this book, I couldn't put it down, so engrossed was I in the lives of Brady family. I could, in fact, applause this book for hours and give it a standing ovation. I really can't understand what took me so long to read this book as I have received my copy long time ago - apologies for this Clare! - and I can't thank you enough for my signed copy!

I didn't know what to expect from this book, and what I got exceeded all my expectations. I love a good bit of a family drama with a lot of bittersweet humour, written in such brilliant way, with a great dose of irony and cynicism, and with a wonderfully sharp - eyed observations.

Aisling is married to Mossie, is a mother of four and their marriage is drifting apart a little. Something happened in the past, it hangs in the air, and with upcoming Christmas the spirit in the family is very poor. Nevertheless, this empty chair isn't going to stay empty for Christmas, as the Brady family is given a very special and unexpected Christmas gift, left in their garden, in the middle of the self - made nativity scene, in the crib. Why, of why, did somebody should leave a baby there? And who is its father?

So, what I liked about this book? Simple: everything. Starting with the characters, dialogues, plot, twist, turns and last but not least, language. The characters were larger than life, they were popping out of the pages, they were incredibly funny, witty, sharp as knives, clever and felt like real people. The family relationships were captured with a masterstroke and sharp - eyed observation, the way the characters were speaking had me glued to the pages because it felt as if real people were speaking, the dialogues were not forced, they felt so natural and real, it was the way we are speaking. The way our characters react to some of the situations was so, so, so realistic and so brutally honest that it just swept me off my feet.

The characters are one of the best that I ever came across in the books. They are more than believable, they just feel like real people, they pop out of the pages and they are written in such a vivid, colourful way that I had a feeling I'm seeing this all happening just in front of me. Not in a book, no, but in my living - room. And it's not only the Brady's family that I'm talking about, all the other characters, such as the Polish neighbours, Anto's friends, Aisling's work colleagues, no matter if they entered only one or two scenes, they were so important to the story and all of them were larger than life and made me smile and I only wanted more, more, more of them. Aisling is my absolutely favourite character, she's a real gem, the way she's coping with all the problems, she reminds me a little of my own mum, who also always wants the best for her family, for her family to be together, and loves us unconditionally. And so is Aisling. She's ready to do everything and more to keep her family intact. I loved her and her whole family, every single member of this crazy, so normal and typical family, with their problems just like ours and them trying to solve them as best as they could. They behaved and spoke like us, like normal people and although their situation was not the easiest one, they tried to cope as best as they could, which of course more than often ended in the wrong way.

I had a feeling I'm watching this brilliantly written family drama as if it were taking place next to me, as if I were a part of it, so well written was it.

Almost from the beginning there were hints that the family is hiding something, that there is a secret but then they immediately switched to the next drama happening and it was forgotten. Then, a few pages further, there were again mentions of something that happened one and half year earlier, and it continued so through almost the whole book. Normally I feel desperate to get to know such secrets and more than often, unfortunately, I am disappointed with the lack of uniqueness of them when finally revealed. But not this time. Firstly, often when you wait for the secret to be revealed, you're so tired with the waiting that the secret is not so interesting anymore, but it was not the case here. While waiting for it to be explained, there happened so much in the book that I didn't have time to obsess about it. And secondly, it really happens that the big secrets are so flat that it spoils the whole book. And again, here it was not the case!

This is a wonderful, light book with a message or two! Yes! It also deals with some really important issues, for example the teenage pregnancy, and it was such a new, refreshing way to read it also from the baby's father's family point of view, not only the mother's. Clare deals with ALL the problems that new baby brings to the family, literally ALL, no beating around the bush and showing that it's not a piece of cake. There is also the problem of the post natal depression and I loved the way the author dealt with this as well. I mean, I assume that we are on Anto's side and the mother of the baby is not our favourite person of all times, especially as the last big surprise is being dropped on our poor, unexpected heads, but the depression really affected her and we only wanted that she'll get better soon. Yes, I think this is the biggest strength of this book, that although we like or dislike the characters, Clare isn't judging them at all, she just writes about their lives, and as we know, life can be a bitch.

The story is wonderfully paced, there is not a single dull moment, there is a lot of action and it's really full of twists and turns. It shows a normal family that has problems and issues and the way how the different family members try to deal with the problems - some can cope better, some worse and some not at all, and this all written in a realistic, brilliant way, with sharp, realistic dialogues. It also has some real shockers that I personally haven't seen coming, shockers that turns the whole book upside down! It was an absolute joy to read this book, even with the sad and important things it has me very entertained and the next thing I'm going to do is to order Clare Dowling's previous books immediately!

Copy received from the author in exchange for a review.

Dinda Fauzani says

Just wow. It is quite hard for me to find the right words.. wonderfully written, with so many perspectives, and well-kept secrets that unraveled at the end. I guess what I like most about this book is the flawed characters, there are traits I love and I hate in every person, that it is almost human. I can say that I was torn reading the Bradys and find myself questioning, what would I do given that kind of situation? I think A Special Delivery will always be in my thoughts...

Alba says

Originally posted on: <http://www.albainbookland.com/2015/03...>

First of all I would like to thank Clare Dowling because after I won a giveaway she sent me a signed copy of this gorgeous book (which is now on my very special shelf) and a box of delicious chocolates.

A Special Delivery certainly is a roller coaster of a story, as it says in the blurb every family has its ups and downs but I think the Bradys have more in a year than any other family. The story starts on Christmas Eve when the atmosphere at their place is not really joyous, quite the opposite, because one of their sons is no longer with them and nobody is ready to talk about it, but then they find a baby in their garden with a note. It's time for him to be with his father but who is his father?

As the story unfolds, we discover bit by bit what happened to this family that broke them apart and how the baby ended in their doorstep. But also how they are coping now with this new member of their family, he certainly is a ray of sunshine. I think we all fell in love with this little buddy.

In this book there is a lot of drama, and when you think nothing else can happen, it does. It certainly surprised me more than once. But Clare tells a beautiful story with a message about forgiveness, understanding and learning to accept that sometimes, you can try all you want to change someone, but they are not going to change if they don't want to.

Clare also deals with some serious topics during this story, like addiction, an unplanned pregnancy or depression but adds some humorous sparks with some comic situations or the Polish neighbour who was always ready to help with make up brush on hand. All in all, A Special Delivery is a beautifully written family tale that won't even let you breathe while you are reading it, turning page after page, wanting to know more.
