



The Good Mother

Karen Osman

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How far would you go to protect your children?

A gripping psychological suspense, with a shocking twist that will leave you reeling...

Catherine is a good mother and a good wife. The family home is immaculate, her husband's supper is cooked on time, but when she starts writing to **Michael**, a prisoner convicted of murder, she finds herself obsessing about his crime and whether he can ever truly be forgiven...

Kate has no time for herself. Caught in the maelstrom of bringing up two young children with no money, and an out-of-work husband, she longs to escape the drudgery of being a wife and a mother. And she soon starts taking dangerous risks to feel alive...

Alison has flown the nest. But university life is not what she had hoped for, and she finds herself alone and unhappy. Until the day her professor takes a sudden interest in her. Then everything changes...

Three women – all with secrets. And as the days tick down to Michael's release, those secrets can no longer be ignored.

'*The Good Mother* is an addictive read that had me gripped from the first page to the shocking conclusion at the end, wow!' **Adele O'Neill.**

The Good Mother Details

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Author : Karen Osman

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From Reader Review *The Good Mother* for online ebook

sue says

I have no option but to give this the 5 stars I personally feel it deserves as it kept me from thinking of anything else, anyone else and focused completely on what was happening within these pages. I needed nothing else but to finish this and boy oh boy what a finish.

My jaw literally dropped to the floor, it was an unexpected ending that brought me out in a cold sweat, I really wasn't expecting that at all.

To think this all starts with a completely innocent 'pen letter' to a prisoner. The letter writing is controlled its all part of a project to help those in prison, and when Catherine agreed to volunteer for the programme it was something she hesitated to go full into the first time she wrote the prisoner she choose.

Michael, that is who she chooses to write to, a man who has been in prison for a decade.

Through the letter writing you can see that Michael doesn't seem to have an regrets, he even puts himself aloft of the other inmates.

Its quite clear he doesn't hold himself into any conflict over what he 'did'.

So does he deserve a secound chance?

Does he deserve forgiveness?

Catherine seems to give him an insight to the world outside, but is this an altogether good thing I questioned myself.

There are two ways of looking at this:

1. Does he DESERVE to know and have any insight into the outside world, afterall, he is in prison for a reason....right?

2. Or would Catherine sharing this make him think about what he is missing on the inside?

Catherine has a family, her husband she decides he doesn't need to know about her letter writing project to a man in prison. So when letters come through for her, she is on the watch, good or bad?

Then there is her daughter Alison is off to university, where she learns to be an adult, but this doesn't have altogether good aspects surrounding this at all.

I found this story full on, made me think as well, yes its fiction, but it brought up some thinking matter and I so enjoyed the story telling of this.

The writing is strong, concise, easy to follow, the characters are strong and oh so well to easily understand and read between the lines, but that ending, oh boy, that ending.

My huge thanks to Aria for my copy of this wonderful read.

Suze Lavender says

Kate is a mother of two children. Because her husband struggles with work they don't have much money. She tries to give her daughters everything she can, but by being a devoted wife and mother she risks losing herself. To do something that's just for her, Kate joins a writing class. It's the start of a more exciting life, but also one that forces her to take more risks. Is this really a good idea?

Catherine takes care of her family and she works as a volunteer. She tries to be the best mother and wife she can be. Her grownup daughter is living at home and Catherine makes sure their life is as perfect as possible. When she starts writing to an inmate, another volunteer project, she doesn't share this information with her family. Catherine is writing to a murderer, is that a good plan?

Alison used to be one of the smartest girls of her school, but at university she's struggling. She doesn't easily understand all of her subjects and has to work hard. She does have some sort of social life, but being at university overwhelms her and this makes her unhappy. When one of her professors shows an interest in Alison her mood changes, but is it a good decision to become involved with him?

The Good Mother is a gripping story about three women who are keeping major secrets from everyone around them. Kate is lonely and underappreciated, she needs a confidence boost and something to give her purpose. Catherine is a proud woman, someone who knows what she's doing. However, writing to someone who committed murder and might soon be free changes her life in a drastic way and makes her closed off from everyone around her. Alison is lost at university. She's insecure, doesn't know how to balance studying and being free and is feeling depressed a lot. She's a young vulnerable student and my heart ached for her. I was equally captivated by each of the three stories and couldn't wait to find out more about the women and where their story would lead. Karen Osman kept me on the edge of my seat from beginning to end.

The Good Mother is a fantastic story filled with surprising twists and turns and a spectacular ending. Karen Osman kept me guessing until the last pages, which is exactly what I think a good thriller should do. She writes about complex relationships, abuse, heartbreak and internal struggles in a raw and honest way. The Good Mother is a compelling emotional story. I read this amazing book in one sitting because I couldn't put it down and highly recommend it.

Amber Myott says

Loved this readA fresh take on the thriller genre , which already is an over crowded market ... haven't given 5 stars since TheMagpies but I became so engrossed in The Good Mother that I was trying to squeeze in another chapter whilst cooking dinner, doing the washing ,hanging out the washing I guess I made my point .

DubaiReader says

I cheated!

I never cheat!

But I couldn't understand why the three stories didn't seem to be intersecting. By 75% it got to me and I skipped to the end. That satisfied me that it was worth persevering...so if you're feeling tempted to do the

same, just stick with it, it's worth it.

I guess it also shows how fixed my expectations are and Karen has broken the mold with this book.

I was originally prompted to read the book because the author was coming to our up-coming Lit Fest, and as she lives locally she kindly agreed to join our discussion. She was one of the winners of the Montegrappa Writing Prize, awarded annually in conjunction with the literature festival. Some pretty big names have started off as a result of this award.

Three women, Catherine, Kate and Alison, are the main characters throughout the book. Each of them has secrets that they keep to themselves. That is about as much as I can say without giving too much away so you'll just have to read it and find out more.

So I'll add a couple of quotes instead:

"As humans we are all capable of killing - all it takes is provocation and the loss of control for just one second and your life is never the same again." (loc 2468)

"She let the apology settle like a snowflake, before it evaporated into the night, lost in the void between them." (loc 2893)

This was enjoyed by our book group and they can be a pretty harsh bunch of readers at times.

Kristy K says

I figured out the big "revelation" at the end about 25% into the book, but still found it enjoyable. Catherine (50s), Allison (18) and Kate (30s) all dealt with some life changes and choices according to this age and each of those revolved around a man in their lives.

Maggie says

WOW! Did this one really make me sit up & gasp! This is another book that joins the list of books I can't quite get out of my head.

From the start we know something dreadful has happened. We don't know who and that is something to reflect on as the book progresses.

This book is told from three points of view. There is Catherine; middle aged woman with a grown up family. She spends her days volunteering for various good causes. She becomes involved with a charity that writes to prisoners and she starts to write to Michael; a convicted killer, who having served nearly ten years of his sentence for murder is coming up for parole. His letters begin to take over her life.

Kate is a rather harassed young mother. She has two small daughters and an overworked husband who has stopped noticing her. When there is a local night class for creative writing she goes along and soon discovers she has a talent for writing as well as for attracting the attention of the young tutor.

Alison was always a high achiever so she did not expect her first term at Uni to be so tough. As she struggles

to understand her course and make some progress with her course she attracts the attention of the rather charismatic 'professor. However he is not all he seems.

As the story switches from one character to another, the reader is left to form their own opinions of them. I found Catherine a rather self satisfied snob. She was not a character I would want to spend time with. I felt sorry for Alison. It was easy to see from the outside that this relationship was toxic but also easy to see how she had drifted into it because of her self doubts and insecurities. Kate was the character I liked most.

I did not see the ending coming. I had worked out one bit of the puzzle early on but wouldn't have guessed the finale! Well done Karen Osman for a brilliant read; thanks also go to Netgalley & the publisher.

Carrie says

Catherine fills her hours with volunteer work so when the opportunity to take part in a pen pal program with prison inmates she finds herself signing up. Catherine's chosen inmate has been in prison for just over a decade for murder so she's a bit hesitant on what to say to him but feels it's her duty to try to help him reform. She decides this little project is not one to discuss with her husband and keeps the letters to herself as they come.

Kate is a young mother with two beautiful little girls that simply married and started her family too young and now feels she does for everyone but herself. She and her husband have had their share of disagreements over finances, the children and lack of time with one another just like other young couples so when Kate sees an opportunity to get out and take a writing class she jumps on the chance to just have a bit of free time for herself.

Alison is off to university and learning how to live on her own and balance her studies and college life. She's struggling a bit keeping up with the demands and finding it completely different than what she imagined university life would be. When Alison finds one of her professors taking a special interest in her she finds herself jumping at the chance to spend time with him no matter how wrong it may be and that they need to hide seeing one another.

The Good Mother by Karen Osman is a book that is told by switching the point of view between the three characters, Catherine, Kate and Alison with each chapter. Each story being told is completely different from one another and beginning the book it's hard to see what any of them will ever have in common other than all three seem to have some sort of secret in their lives.

I have to say while I enjoyed the author's writing and thought the ending was great with how everything ends up tied together this was one that was such a slow build that sometimes it was in danger of losing my attention. There are very small clues that lead to the explosive ending that one could pick up but other than that it lacked any huge twists or turns and just brought the reader to the explanation at the end. So while this one had good writing and a good ending I myself would have preferred something a bit more in the middle to really grab me and keep me on the edge of my seat leaving me to rate this one at 3.5 stars.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress...>

Bandit says

I'm the first person to actually review this one using words (aside from publisher's cheap ploy tactics/shameless promotions), so I'll try to be lenient. In the seemingly infinite realm of the ever popular for us by us female authored female driven suspense thrillers this one isn't going to make many waves, maybe a ripple or two. It's a debut and so some allowances must be made, it's perfectly decent. It creates a narrative via a three way split that comes together nicely in the end for that twist thrillers fans have come to expect from the genre. One third is an epistolary kind, involving communication with a convicted murderer about to be up for parole. One third is a chronicle of a two year abusive relationship between a university student and her professor. One third is a story of a young wife and mother who ends up having an affair with her writing class mentor. These I've just listed in a reverse chronology, but even without knowing the years, it's fairly obvious who ends up murdered, so the twist is more about how the other two plot lines are related. The pacing is nice, the writing has an amateurish vibe to it, it's serviceable, but simplistic, entirely too similar/identical really from one timeline to the next and quite estrogen heavy as these things tend to go. Decent fun and a relatively quick read, nothing special really, but passes the time in a relatively entertaining fashion. Thanks Netgalley.

Nele says

I received an ARC through Netgalley, which didn't influence my opinion on the book. Many thanks anyway to be able to review this book.

"A mother's love for her child is stronger than everything"

I enjoyed reading this book very much. My final rating would be 4.5 stars.

The book starts off with a 3 person-perspective, which I found a bit confusing at first. Note: when you start reading this book, you need to read at least 15% and get into it, or you'll be way too confused.

The 3 person-perspective is really interesting and just built up the suspense towards the end. You just keep on questioning: what do all these persons have in common with each other? For the last 20% of the book, I was just bummed that I had to go to work and finish during my lunch break. That's how captivating the story is.

The style reminded me of Liane Moriarty, but with less descriptions. This made it easier to read.

Plus, I did find the cover very appealing. I would have picked up this book in a bookstore, just because of the cover. Might buy it for a friend who's fond of thrillers;

PS: this was an uncorrected advance reader copy, but I found little flaw with it. This made it easy to read and review.

Lynsey Spedding says

A gripping psychological thriller, written from the viewpoint of 3 women, Kate, Allison and Catherine.

The story is a brilliant, well told thriller that had me addicted until the very end and wow, what an ending! My mind was completely blown! Thoroughly recommend this book, a well deserved 5 stars!! Thank you to Netgalley and the publishers for my advance copy in return for an honest review.

Alison says

The Good Mother is a chillingly refreshing psychological suspense. Written in such a way that it grips you from the onset but is so easy to sink into. The characters are all relatable and scarily realistic.

Three main women all have a man as a common link but getting to the reveal of that link takes many twists and turns. The plot-line is intriguing, Catherine, Alison and Kat all have secrets but on the surface seem 'normal' women going about their average daily lives.

I thought it may get pulled down into the drudgery of housework, kids, money problems etc but Karen manages to keep the tension at just the right level and I didn't really guess the connection or the ending so this was a satisfying read.

I think the parts I enjoyed most were the pen-pal letters to a prisoner .. this appealed to the 'taking a risk' side of my personality!

I look forward to reading what comes next. Thanks to the author, publisher and Netgalley for my copy which I read and reviewed voluntarily.

Mandy White says

Wow.. what an ending that book had.. I did not see that coming!! the story of 3 women and their interactions with one man. thank you to Aria via Netgalley for a copy of this book to read and review in return for an honest review

Heather says

My thank you goes out to Netgalley for allowing me to read this book ahead of the publication date, which is October 1. Three days after I finished this novel, my head is still spinning from the ending. I did not see that coming. I loved the unique plot and the way the author drew you in to the story. Three women tell their stories of how they connected with men they shouldn't have.

Catherine is happily married, but lured into a volunteer job where she starts writing to a prisoner. Kate, who is married and has two daughters, never has any time for herself, so she begs her husband to let her take a writing class. And Allison is having a tough time in law school and turns to a relationship with one of her professors.

Each chapter takes you deeper into each woman's story and how the "other" man becomes an obsession.

Loved this author's fresh voice and plotting genius. Glad to read she has a three book contract. Osman is

definitely an author to watch.

Lolly K Dandeneau says

via my blog: <https://bookstalkerblog.wordpress.com/>

“When I was asked to correspond with you as part of the charity’s efforts to help prisoners, I was initially apprehensive. However, I reminded myself that we have a duty to help those less fortunate than ourselves, and I hope that through these letters I can give you a little insight into the outside world.”

When Catherine, perfect wife and mother, begins writing a prisoner named Michael- the reader is curious to know just what he is guilty of. Her correspondences with the prisoner are tender and uplifting. Does he deserve to become a better person? To start fresh, have another chance to make better choices in life? Surely forgiveness should be easy to give if one is repentant! Right? And Michael certainly seems intelligent and good, not like the usual scourge of society. His mind seems to be in the right place, in fact it’s hard to remember he is a criminal, he seems nothing like the others.

Alison is off to university and finding it hard to assimilate with the other fresh students. The only thing holding her focus is ‘The Professor.’ He is older, intelligent, and before long she discovers that the feeling is mutual. Struggling with the law class, when he tells her his door is always open to her she imagines he is just being helpful. When he takes her to a pub instead of out for the purposed coffee, he confides he sees passion in her, and so begins the seduction. The relationship may be too much for Alison to handle, but he is an addiction she can’t kick. It will be a tumultuous time, and not because of her classes.

Kate is carrying her family, with her jobless husband and the intimacy between them dead she finds her days of raising her children and resenting her jobless husband too much to bear. The days of easy affection are long gone, his pride has left her sick with resentment, having risked so much of their security and his inability to accept the help they needed. Looking for an easy escape she finds something for herself, Kate wants to play, to feel like a woman and not simply a mother and put upon wife. How could she possibly have known that stealing a few moments for herself would cost her so much?

The women are all struggling with their emotional state, trying to tame danger or control fate. Michael is on the verge of release and as that day creeps closer, each woman’s choices are going to culminate but will anyone survive the destruction they’ve brought into their own lives? Just how ‘good’ or ‘bad’ are these women? What exactly has Michael done in the past?

It begins with an innocent correspondence between a woman and a prisoner, a young girl taking her first step into the adult world of university, and a mother/wife disappointed by her withering marriage and slowly spirals into darkness. A good read.

Publication Date: October 1, 2017

Atria

Rachel Hall says

The Good Mother is a solidly impressive piece of women's fiction and whilst the suspense element at the start of this story is not always palpable, it certainly builds momentum making it a gripping page-turner that really caught me off guard! As a seasoned reader of psychological suspense I thought I had this story all sewn up only for an arresting denouement to blindside me completely! In a debut which was never anything but engaging and wonderfully insightful, Karen Osman weaves in an array of themes from the dilemmas of motherhood through to abusive relationships, the effectiveness of the prison system and whether forgiveness for committing a crime can ever be expected.

The novel is comprised of the three narratives of women each with secrets and the threat of exposure, living very different lives across a variety of timelines, all with one thing in common - a powerful and magnetic man. Savvy readers will intuit from the premise that these three narratives will coalesce and the man in question is one and the same, despite the surprising array of roles he is cast in over the years. Whilst the preface hints at a threat to the life of one of the protagonists, just whom it is and how it arises hangs in the balance until the final moments. By turns a professor, graduate student teaching creative writing and a prisoner, exploring the powerful man who has irrevocably altered the course of these women's lives and his culpability is central to the story. All three females are such well-drawn and ordinary creations that it is impossible not to be drawn into their stories and vying for them is only natural, for behind each woman lies a family and the potential for far more hurt.

For thoroughly middle-class and happily married Catherine now in her 50s and living in the Lake District in 2010 with her husband, Richard, and adult daughter, her blissfully contented life is filled with volunteering for charities and good causes. Her latest effort is by way of corresponding with a convicted murderer who is coming up for parole and supporting his preparation for a life on the outside. Knowing her family would be horrified by her decision she omits to tell them however she finds herself becoming increasingly distracted by her letters to Michael, who has already served over a decade at HMP Durham. As Catherine attempts to read between the lines of his missives to see if he is truly remorseful for his actions she begins to obsess over whether he can ever expect or deserve forgiveness.

For sensible local student, Alison Owen, heading to Durham University and a law degree due to graduate in the millennial year 2000 all her dreams seem to have come true as her supportive and very proud parent witness her fly the nest for the full-on university experience. The sudden sinking feeling that she is out of her depth and struggling to keep her head above water with the intensive course soon drags her down and with just one friend and a lack of confidence she begins to slide into a lonely and unhappy existence. Desperately insecure and unsure where to turn for help, the attentions of "The Professor", a charismatic and confident lecturer twenty years her senior offer the only ray of light in her student life.

For harassed twenty-three-year-old new mother, Kate, living in a council flat in Durham with her husband and two younger daughters in the late 1970s, she feels constantly depleted by the physical demands and emotional energy of early motherhood and marriage, with any illusion of romance a distant memory. Having waved goodbye to her freedom and the prospect of university life, just five years into her relationship with her husband, their relationship is fraught with unspoken animosity and resentment and she longs to escape the drudgery of domestic life. Driven to the brink of frustration and determined to seize the initiative she enrolls on a creative writing evening class and soon begins to blossom. As she rediscovers something of her old personality and comes alive, the praise of her younger tutor, Mr Barnes, brings with it a temptation impossible to resist.

All three narratives are distinct and the characters behind them well-realised with accessible problems and secrets that the reader can identify with, which grounds the unfolding story in the realms of believability. Osman takes time to explore her characters and along with the even pace she asks so many thought-provoking questions of her three relatable lead protagonists that the reader is locked into their plight throughout, whether through judgement or empathy. Contributing cleverly to the escalating tension are some well-placed and subtle clues throughout.

As Catherine considers whether eleven years can ever really be adequate punishment for taking a life and whether her 'pen pal' is truly remorseful or is simply going through the motions and paying lip service in order to secure release, Karen Osman leaves the reader to decide by casting him in shades of grey and neither starkly black or white. The dynamics of each of the women's relationship, be it through correspondence or in person serve to draw out the true nature of the man and the more the reader learns, the more unsettling everything becomes. Jealous, fond of playing mind games and quick to anger, do any of the three women really know the true nature of this powerful man? Admittedly the pace abates early into the second half of the book, but with the link between two of the narratives seeming self-apparent, a lingering doubt remains and it is this which drives the reader on along with the knowledge that as the months until his release tick down, one of these women across three era's is drawn into a dangerous confrontation from which there can be no escape and as a bombshell revelation awaits with their secret pasts about to come back and haunt them all.

Whilst the constituent parts might be nothing startlingly original it is hard to fault when a story is as well-crafted, emotionally charged and wide in scope as *The Good Mother*. Packed with soul-searching questions and grounded on solid emotional underpinnings, the novel is not one of pulse-pounding action but a steadily burgeoning tension. Will Alison get the closure and fresh start she deserves? Will Kate find the peace of mind she so desperately craves? And will Catherine go one step too far to convince herself that Michael poses no further threat to society and in doing so unwittingly fall prey to a murderer?

An emotional, insightful and well-written novel on the multifaceted role of motherhood, the demands and responsibilities that it brings and the journey from doubt and insecurities to self-fulfilment. Unflinchingly raw and honest narration that airs a litany of questions faced by three ordinary women stepping out of their comfort zones and preordained paths in life. The story also takes time to shine a light on the path towards release for a long-term prisoner and some of the realities of a life behind bars. Excellent stuff.
