

THE BODECIA BOOK CLUB REVIEW

When will there be good news? by Kate Atkinson

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In rural Devon, six-year-old Joanna Mason witnesses an appalling crime. Thirty years later the man convicted of the crime is released from prison.

In Edinburgh, sixteen-year-old Reggie works as a nanny for a G.P. But Dr Hunter has gone missing and Reggie seems to be the only person who is worried.

Across town, Detective Chief Inspector Louise Monroe is also looking for a missing person, unaware that hurtling towards her is an old friend -- Jackson Brodie -- himself on a journey that becomes fatally interrupted.

When will there be good news? opens with an act of shocking violence which shocked most of our book club readers. Six year old Joanna is out walking with sister Jessica, baby brother Joseph and mother Gabrielle when they're suddenly attacked by Andrew Decker, a complete stranger. Joanna hides in the long grass and is saved, but her brother, sister and mother are brutally killed.

Thirty years later, Joanna is now Dr Joanna Hunter, a successful GP living in Edinburgh with a young baby and a local businessman as a husband. The killer is out on parole, and Joanna is haunted that the media, and the assailant himself might find her and destroy the new life she's built for herself.

There are many characters in the book, the main ones are Joanna's nanny - a 16 year old called Reggie, whose mother has recently drowned on holiday and who is taking private tutoring for her Greek and Latin a-levels from terminally ill born-again Christian Ms McDonald. And Jackson Brodie, who features in Kate Atkinson's previous book, who is a private detective. We are first introduced to him stealing hair from a two-year old boy. At first we think he is investigating a kidnapping, but it turns out that the boy may be Jackson's own son. There are a lot of characters with similar backgrounds to keep track of and they all keep running into each other in increasingly unlikely ways. We felt the book looked deeper into how intertwined we are, as family, as lovers, as humans? And how much we are governed by circumstance beyond our control? It is impossible, Atkinson argues, to take any action in a vacuum, to live your own life not completely bound up in the lives of others. "A coincidence," Brodie says more than once, "is just an explanation waiting to happen."

In the book the characters are all connected through a train crash, which brings all the main characters together. You find yourself going at a fast pace through the book finding unexpected twists and you have to wait until the end for the author to bring it all together. However some members thought the plot was a little slow with characters quoting texts and mulling over everything under the sun.

All in all the group liked the book it is a good mystery that stretches your imagination and portrays four main characters that are all connected and united by proximity and loss and allows you to delve into the mysteries surrounding each of them.

We gave When will there be good news? **7.6/ 10**, which currently stands joint third on our books reading list.

The book we are now reading is **Breaking Dawn by Stephanie Meyer (the continuation of the Twilight saga)**.

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Don't forget the first rule of Book Club!