
Kennebecasis Public Library – Book Club Program

Librarian: Madaline Boutilier

Email: Madaline.boutilier@gnb.ca **Phone:** (506) 849-5314 and ask for her.

Please let Kirstin know which book(s) are selected so she can contact Madaline to reserve the book(s) the club wants to read next.

Date of next meeting: **Thursday, November 28, at 1:30PM**

The Good Daughters, by Joyce Maynard

About the Author: A native of New Hampshire, Joyce Maynard began publishing her stories in magazines when she was thirteen years old. She first came to national attention with the publication of her New York Times cover story, “An Eighteen Year Old Looks Back on Life”, in 1972, when she was a freshman at Yale. Since then, she has been a reporter and columnist for The New York Times, a syndicated newspaper columnist whose “Domestic Affairs” column appeared in over fifty papers nationwide, a regular contributor to NPR and national magazines including Vogue, The New York Times Magazine, and many more. She is a longtime performer with The Moth. Joyce Maynard is the author of eighteen books, including the New York Times bestselling novel, Labor Day and To Die For (both adapted for film), Under the Influence and the memoirs, At Home in the World and The Best of Us.

A) Here are discussion questions to help kick-off discussion. Members can take turns reading the question aloud.

1. The novel opens with a terrible storm. How does this beginning portend the events of the ensuing story?
2. Discuss the "birthday sisters" Dana and Ruth. What is each like? What kind of households are they raised in? Each represents an opposing side of nature: one is scientific and practical, the other an artist and dreamer. How do their opposite personalities affect who they are and how they make their way in the world?
3. What are your impressions of Edwin Plank, Connie Plank, and Valerie Dickerson? If this story were set today, would the outcome be the same? Why?

4. Both girls share a special relationship with Edwin Plank. In what ways are they similar in the eyes of this kind man one girl calls father and the other calls friend? What life lessons did they learn from him?
 5. Think about Valerie Dickerson and Connie Plank. How did their personalities affect their views on family and childrearing? Analyze their relationships with their daughters. What did each girl share with these very different women?
 6. Why didn't the adults correct the mistake that changed everyone's lives? Why didn't they tell the girls? How might events have been different if the girls had known what had happened? How did the girls' unawareness of the truth affect how they saw each other through childhood and beyond? Were the girls cheated in any way?
 7. What made Dana's brother, Ray, so attractive to Ruth? Was not telling Ruth the truth sooner cruel?
 8. What role did the Planks' farm play in the story? How are Dana and Ruth tied to the land when they are children? Does this change once they become adults?
 9. When Ruth is living in Boston, Edwin comes to visit, and they talk about her art and the nude models she draws. He says, "Back in my day, they made such a big deal about all of that, it made you a little crazy. If people could have talked about it and not acted like the whole thing was so sinful, maybe we wouldn't have gotten into so much trouble." What is Edwin referring to? Do you think he's correct?
 10. After her breakup with Ray, Ruth forgave her father but not her mother. Why? What made her eventually forgive Connie?
 11. Why didn't Ruth call Dana immediately when she discovered the truth about the past? Why didn't Dana tell Ruth after she'd figured it out? How did the truth set them free to be themselves?
 12. What is the significance of the title *The Good Daughters*? How does this gardening term perfectly capture the story and its characters?
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B) Book questions and discussion from Book Club Members.

C) Discussion and choosing of the next book to read (by popular vote).