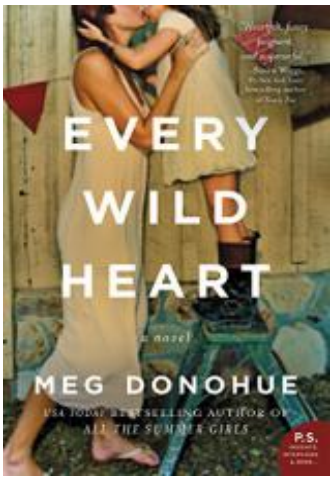
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Every Wild Heart

by Meg Donohue



About the Book

Passionate and funny, radio personality Gail Gideon is a true original. Nine years ago when Gail?s husband announced that he wanted a divorce, her ensuing on-air rant propelled her local radio show into the national spotlight. Now, ?The Gail Gideon Show? is beloved by millions of single women who tune in for her advice on the power of self-reinvention. But fame comes at a price. After all, what does a woman who has staked her career on being single do when she finds herself falling in love? And is the person who is harassing her in increasingly troubling ways a misguided fan or a true danger to Gail and her daughter, Nic?

Fourteen-year-old Nic has always felt that she pales in comparison to her vibrant, outgoing mother. Plagued by a fear of social situations, she is most comfortable at the stable where she spends her afternoons. But when a riding accident lands Nic in the hospital, she awakens from her coma changed. Suddenly, she has no fear at all and her disconcerting behavior lands her in one risky situation after another. And no one, least of all her mother, can guess what she will do next.

Discussion Guide

In lieu of a discussion guide, here is an interview between Meg Donohue and the book's main character, Gail Gideon.

Gail Gideon: Hi, Meg. Thanks for calling in. I know we?re on the radio, but I can tell you?re looking great today.

Meg: Thank you.

GG: Now let?s talk about me. Where did I come from?

Meg: As I mentioned in the acknowledgments of this book, I think the seed for your character was probably first planted when I was a kid living in Philadelphia and listening on occasion to "Delilah After Dark," a call-in radio show. Delilah had --- still has --- a very different shtick than you do, G.G.

GG: I?m one of a kind.

Meg: Yes. But I suppose the stories of her callers, and the way they really seemed to need to hear Delilah?s advice, stuck with me all these years.

GG: So you made me a famous radio personality, and then you started the story right at a crossroads in my career. Why?

Meg: When I set out to write this book, I was thinking about how difficult it can be to understand the many aspects of who we are, and who we aspire to become, as individuals. This seems like it should be easy, but it?s not. Becoming ourselves is a journey.

When I was creating your character, G.G., I was thinking about the particular bumps along this journey for public figures dealing with the expectations and desires of fans. There is, for example, the inevitable backlash that a movie star receives if she dares to have interests and ambitions outside of acting (I?m looking at you, Gwyneth Paltrow). We prefer our entertainers to stay in their lane, as though we can only consume one slice of their personalities at a time.

I was thinking about the subject on a personal level as well. After each book I?ve written, I?ve received lovely emails from readers asking if I?m planning to write a sequel. And the truth is that after I wrote one ?baking? book (HOW TO EAT A CUPCAKE), I wasn?t all that interested in writing another ?baking? book, sequel or not. Instead, I wrote a ?summer? book (ALL THE SUMMER GIRLS), and then I wasn?t interested in writing another ?summer? book. Instead, I wrote a ?dog? book (DOG CRAZY), and then I wasn?t really interested in writing another dog book. At each pivot, I wondered if I was making the right decision. I?m so grateful to my readers for their support, and I hate the thought of letting them down. We are in this novel-publishing business together, the readers and I, and with each new book, I felt that I was turning my back on a potentially growing audience for my work.

That said, the books I?ve written have a lot in common. They are all uplifting. They all have an element of humor.

GG: Do they, Meg? Are you sure about that?

Meg: Well, they might not be HA-HA funny, but...you know what, G.G., never mind. My point is that I like the stories I write to have a feel-good tone. But I like to think that if the day comes when I?m excited to explore another type of story, I will feel brave enough to try something new.

GG: And all of this relates to me because when the book opens I am in the midst of a very successful career, but I am ready for a change.

Meg: Yes. I was curious to see how these thoughts played out for someone with a really big level of fame and success. I wanted to make you hungry for adventure, but also truly devoted to your fans. And then of course I gave you a teenage daughter to think about, too.

GG: Let?s talk about Nic. She?s perfect, obviously.

Meg: I am also in the Nic Fan Club. I loved the idea of Nic as an unlikely hero. She?s a shy kid trapped in her own head. When she is suddenly able to shed her anxiety and share herself with the world, she wreaks havoc in the most bighearted way.

GG: Did you always envision her as a horseback rider?

Meg: Yes. I rode horses from elementary school through college, and taught riding lessons to kids for a time, so I was excited to pour some of my love for horses into a novel. I think my favorite scenes to write were the ones with Nic at the barn. I haven?t ridden in a long time, but that horse crazy girl is alive and kicking within me.

GG: What are some things that I, as your character, might not know about you, my creator?

Meg: I am a very forgiving driver and rarely experience road rage. The noises made by loud eaters torment me; I?ve learned that this sensitivity to certain sounds is called misophonia. I always set my alarm to an odd number, such as 6:31am. I believe that gratitude is the gateway to happiness. When that doesn?t work, I rely on dirty martinis. The earnestness of musicals makes me weep. I can?t stand it when...

GG (clearing throat loudly): Thanks, Meg. That?s...fascinating stuff. I?m really glad we could end this interview on such a high note.

Meg: You?re welcome.

Author Bio

Meg Donohue is the *USA Today* bestselling author of YOU, ME, AND THE SEA; EVERY WILD HEART; DOG CRAZY; ALL THE SUMMER GIRLS; HOW TO EAT A CUPCAKE; and THE MEMORY GARDENER. Her novels have been translated into Dutch, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish. Meg has an MFA from Columbia University and a BA from Dartmouth College. Born and raised in Philadelphia, she now lives in San Francisco with her husband, three daughters and dog. She is working on her next novel.

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