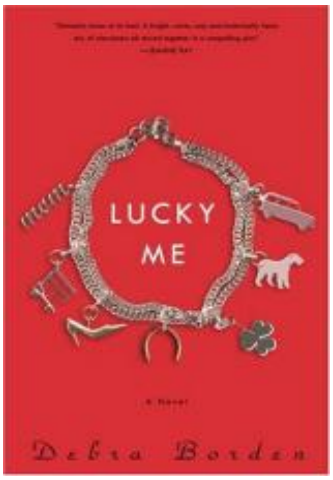
Lucky Me: A Novel

by Debra Borden



About the Book

Lucky Me is that rare book that captures --- in the vein of Elinor Lipman and Elizabeth Berg --- what it really means to be a modern woman.

Julie Berman seems to have it all: a beautiful home in suburban New Jersey, a loving husband, a budding career as a freelance journalist, and two great kids. To the outside world, her life is perfect --- little do they know that behind the façade, Julie is beginning to feel like her world is falling apart.

Among her worries is a nagging fear that she's turning into her mother --- just as neurotic, just as crazy, and just as consumed by appearances. Then there's the handsome, charming, and quite single editor at the local newspaper who has definitely taken a liking to her . . . which wouldn't be a problem if he wasn't so tempting. Add to that her moody, monosyllabic teenage son, who may or may not be having sex with a new girlfriend (whom Julie's not sure she approves of, sex or not). But the final blow to her sanity comes in the form of a phone call from her daughter, who informs Julie of her plans to run off with her boyfriend . . . who's also her college professor.

Lucky Me is a journey into the year when everything seems to come to a head in Julie's life --- and when she realizes that there are some things you can't control, especially the people you love. Wise, irreverent, tender, and funny, **Lucky Me** is for every woman who has ever felt --- despite her most valiant efforts --- less than perfect.

Discussion Guide

1. Dr. Bob tells Julie that it's okay to keep secrets in therapy?a concept that surprises and relieves her. What thoughts is she happy to keep hidden from the doctor? What secrets does Julie keep in her life outside of therapy? What role do secrets have in the book?

2. What inspires Julie to write? How do you make sense of her writer's block as she tries and fails to complete a compelling Essay #4? What lets her eventually break through it?

3. For moral support and help hashing out her family problems, Julie calls on friends, her husband, Eric, and her therapist. Discuss how each of these resources helps her handle stress. Do you think one outlet is more effective than the others? What other coping mechanisms does Julie have for handling stress?

4. Discuss Amy's and Estelle's taste in literature. What does their love for romance novels say about them? Do you think there is more to Julie's dislike of cheap romance than elevated literary taste?

5. One of Julie's fears is that Eric will see beyond her calm, domestic facade to reveal the less-moral coed with low self-esteem. How do you think Eric would react if more of Julie's history were revealed to him? Do you think he already knows or forgives more than she suggests?

6. What does Estelle's insistence that her illness remain quiet and private say about her as a character? Do you think it would have been easier on Julie if she had agreed to treatment?

7. Julie's parenting style is in many ways a reaction to what she sees as failings in her own parents, but she does come to understand and respect some aspects of Estelle and Sol's relationship. Discuss what Julie admires about her parents' marriage. Does their peaceful coexistence and loving, if quirky, behavior influence any of the decisions she makes during the course of the story? How?

8. Why does Julie go with Ted to the writers' conference? What does she expect will happen? Do you think she's surprised by Ted's kiss?

9. At Passover dinner, Julie is secretly grateful for the chaos that ensues?but how much of it is she responsible for?

10. What do you think of Julie's priorities? Are there times you are surprised by her focusing on one area of her life instead of another?

11. What do you expect Julie and Ted's working relationship will be like? Do you trust his assurance that his romantic feelings for her and his interest in her for the job are completely separate? Given her feelings about her family at the end of the book, how do you think she would respond if Ted were to renew his amorous attentions?

12. Discuss why "passing Roscoe" sometimes succeeds as a funny family joke and sometimes falls flat. Does Julie misunderstand its meaning?

13. Dr. Bob encourages Julie to "conceptualize" her goals?a serious request that she deflects with a joke about needing to renovate her home. What are her therapy goals? Does she meet them?

Author Bio

Author of the novel **Lucky Me**, Debra Borden grew up in Great Neck, New York. Though she now writes full time, she is a licensed clinical social worker in New Jersey, where she lives with her family.

Critical Praise

"Debra Borden's first novel, Lucky Me, is domestic chaos at its best. It is a bright, warm, sad, and hysterically funny mix of characters all stirred together in a compelling plot. Ms. Borden has created a believable, loving family no one will be able to resist."

Lucky Me: A Novel
by Debra Borden

Publication Date: July 12, 2005
Hardcover: 288 pages
Publisher: Shaye Areheart Books
ISBN-10: 1400082218
ISBN-13: 9781400082216