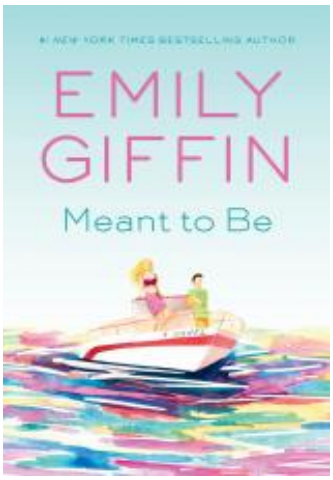
Meant to Be

by Emily Giffin



About the Book

A restless golden boy and a girl with a troubled past navigate a love story that may be doomed before it even begins, in this ?glorious, satisfying? (Adriana Trigiani) new novel from the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of ALL WE EVER WANTED and THE LIES THAT BIND.

The Kingsley family is American royalty, beloved for their military heroics, political service and unmatched elegance. In 1967, after Joseph S. Kingsley, Jr. is killed in a tragic accident, his charismatic son inherits the weight of that legacy. But Joe III is a free spirit --- and a little bit reckless. Despite his best intentions, he has trouble meeting the expectations of a nation, as well as those of his exacting mother, Dottie.

Meanwhile, no one ever expected anything of Cate Cooper. She, too, grew up fatherless --- and after her mother marries an abusive man, she is forced to fend for herself. After being discovered by a model scout at age 16, Cate decides that her looks may be her only ticket out of the cycle of disappointment that her mother has always inhabited. Before too long, Cate?s face is in magazines and on billboards. Yet she feels like a fraud, faking it in a world to which she?s never truly belonged.

When Joe and Cate unexpectedly cross paths one afternoon, their connection is instant and intense. But can their relationship survive the glare of the spotlight and the so-called Kingsley curse? In a beautifully written novel that captures a gilded moment in American history, Emily Giffin tells the story of two people searching for belonging and identity, as well as the answer to the question: Are certain love stories meant to be?

Discussion Guide

1. MEANT TO BE is told from two points of view, Cate?s and Joe?s. How did this technique affect your reading experience and connection to the characters?

2. Among the novel?s multiple themes --- grief and loss, love and attraction, secrecy and connection --- is there one that resonates most with you? Explain.

3. Discuss the title, ?Meant to Be.? How do you think it relates to the overall story? How does it apply to each of the characters?

4. In what ways does the past influence the present in MEANT TO BE? How do the characters try to repress or escape the pain of their histories? What does the novel tell us about the relationship between past and present? How does this affect the characters? interpersonal relationships and help them heal?

5. Cate?s unexpected romance with Joe quickly develops into a passionate love story, changing her life forever. Along the way, Cate learns how to open up again. Discuss a time when you had to be vulnerable to develop a new relationship.

6. How does this book convey the ways in which human beings are shaped and altered by their encounters and relationships with one another? You might choose to discuss, for example, how children are influenced by their parents or how certain characters are motivated to differentiate themselves from those of previous generations.

7. Both Cate and Joe have deep wounds from the past, which continue to fester. Cate realizes that there won?t be any resolution until they are healed. Discuss conflicts in your own life that originate/d from past wounds. How can/did you work past them?

8. Emily Giffin?s writing has a strong focus on causality, or how certain events and choices have life-altering effects on individuals. What examples of cause and effect can you pull from the novel, and how do you think things would have turned out differently had these instances not occurred?

9. What did you think about the ending? Were you satisfied or disappointed with it? How do you picture Cate and Joe?s lives after the story closes?

10. Did MEANT TO BE prompt you to question your understandings and definitions of love and marriage? In what ways does it convey that love, or the love one might have for a partner or family member, is not static, but fluid or malleable, taking different forms at different moments in time?

Author Bio

Emily Giffin is the bestselling author of 13 novels: SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING BLUE, BABY PROOF, LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH, HEART OF THE MATTER, WHERE WE BELONG, THE ONE & ONLY, FIRST COMES LOVE, ALL WE EVER WANTED, THE LIES THAT BIND, MEANT TO BE, THE SUMMER PACT and LOVE YOU MORE. She lives in Atlanta with her family and two dogs.

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Publication Date: April 4, 2023
Genres: Fiction, Women's Fiction
Paperback: 384 pages
Publisher: Ballantine Books
ISBN-10: 0425286665
ISBN-13: 9780425286661