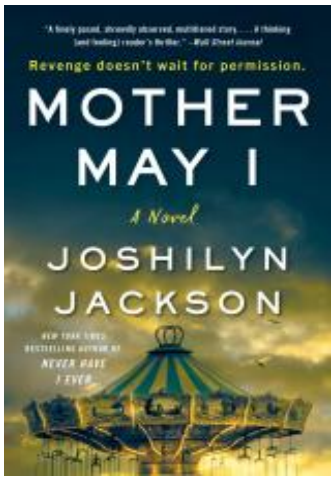
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Mother May I

by Joshilyn Jackson



About the Book

The *New York Times* bestselling author of the critically acclaimed NEVER HAVE I EVER builds on her success with this addictive novel of domestic suspense in which a mother must decide how far she is willing to go to protect her child and the life she loves --- a chilling and thoughtful tale of power, privilege, lies, revenge and the choices we make, ones that transform our lives in unforeseen ways.

Revenge doesn?t wait for permission.

Growing up poor in rural Georgia, Bree Cabbat?s single mother warned her that the world was a dark and scary place. Bree rejected her mother?s fearful outlook, and life has proved her right. Marrying into a family with wealth, power and connections, Bree has all a woman could ever dream: a loving lawyer husband, two talented young teenage daughters, a new baby boy, a gorgeous home, and every opportunity in the world.

Until the day Bree awakens and sees a witch peering into her bedroom window, an old gray-haired woman all dressed in black who vanishes as quickly as she appears. It must be a play of the early morning light or the remnant of a waking dream, Bree tells herself, shaking off the bad feeling that overcomes her.

Later that day, she spies the old woman again, in the parking lot of her daughters? private school... just minutes before Bree?s baby son, asleep on the seat beside her, vanishes. It happened so quickly --- Bree only looked away for a second. A note warns no police. No deviations. And she is being watched.

The mysterious woman makes contact, and Bree learns she, too, is a mother. Why would another mother do this? What does she want? And why has she targeted Bree? Of course Bree will pay anything, do anything. It?s her child.

To get her baby back, Bree must complete one small --- but critical --- task. It seems harmless enough, but her action comes with a devastating price, making her complicit in a tangled web of tragedy and shocking secrets that will destroy

everything she loves. It is the beginning of an odyssey that will lead Bree to dangerous places, explosive confrontations and chilling truths.

Bree will do whatever it takes to protect her family --- but what if the cost tears their world apart?

Discussion Guide

1. There are three mothers in MOTHER MAY I who go to extreme lengths to protect their children. Did you identify with one mother more than the others? Why?

2. In MOTHER MAY I, Bree talks about the close bond between a mother and her child, but we see this connection played out in different ways through each of the women?s personalities. What makes someone a ?good mother??

3. Bree?s decisions in this book are greatly influenced by her own mother and her best friend, Betsy. Why do you think women?s relationships are so formative?

4. Bree often thinks of herself as an actress playing a part. Do you consider her actions ?performances?? Have you ever felt like you were playing a role in life?

5. Bree reflects on how Anna-Claire?s upbringing may have tipped scales in her favor for the lead in the school play over Cara. Can you see other parallel situations in the book? In your lives? How is it dealt with in each?

6. Bree is able to connect with the ?other mother? because of their shared experiences and backgrounds. Why is this such a strong bond?

7. Trey and Bree met at an art gallery. He initially made assumptions about who she was and her family background. Do you think Trey would have fallen in love with Bree if they had met under different circumstances?

8. Once Lexie Pine drops out of school, her life falls apart. Do you think that there might have been a different outcome if she came from a more privileged family?

9. To what extent is a person responsible for the actions of their partner, past and present?

10. Each of the characters in the book has done things that they aren?t proud of, but they have reacted to them differently. Do you think we are all defined by our sins? Do we always carry our mistakes with us, or is it possible to move on from them?

11. MOTHER MAY I explores the many facets of shame through characters? past misdeeds, trauma, addiction and even recasting personal narratives. Why do you think shame is such a strong motivator? Is there one instance of shame in the novel that had the strongest repercussions?

12. Each character in MOTHER MAY I has a different truth. Do you think that more than one person?s truth can be a reality? What do you think happened that fateful college night?

13. Do you think Bree, Spence, Trey, Ansel and the others got what they deserved?

14. How has MOTHER MAY I affected your understanding of victimhood, agency and consent? Who do you consider the victim in this novel?

15. What is the difference between justice and revenge? Does anyone in MOTHER MAY I get justice? Revenge?

Author Bio

Joshilyn Jackson is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of numerous novels, including GODS IN ALABAMA and NEVER HAVE I EVER. Her books have been translated into more than a dozen languages. A former actor, Jackson is also an award-winning audiobook narrator. A recent expat from the American South, she and her family have settled in upstate New York.

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