One Good Turn

by Kate Atkinson



About the Book

Two years after the events of Case Histories left him a retired millionaire, Jackson Brodie has followed Julia, his occasional girlfriend and former client, to Edinburgh for its famous summer arts festival. But when he witnesses a man being brutally attacked in a traffic jam-the apparent victim of an extreme case of road rage-a chain of events is set in motion that will pull the wife of an unscrupulous real estate tycoon, a timid but successful crime novelist, and a hardheaded female police detective into Jackson's orbit.

Suddenly out of retirement, Jackson is once again in the midst of several mysteries that intersect in one giant and sinister scheme.

Discussion Guide

1. Kate Atkinson has said that Gloria "is the moral center of the book." Did you find this to be true? Do you think that a novel with so many irreverent characters requires a moral center?

2. During Gloria's discussion with Tatiana she realizes, "It was strange how something you weren't expecting could, nonetheless, turn out to be no surprise at all" (page 78). To what extent are the characters in **One Good Turn** expecting the predicaments that befall them?

3. Atkinson writes, "Once, the eye of God watched people, now it was the camera lens" (page 28). How does technology figure into Jackson's investigation? How does the "camera" compete with religion as a deterrent from illegal behavior?

4. Early on, Martin Canning, an innocent bystander, successfully stops the road-rage assault only to become the assailant's next target. Do you agree with Martin's decision? Would you do the same if you were in his position?

5. At the beginning of **One Good Turn**, we meet a changed Jackson Brodie?instead of working as a private detective in England, as he did in **Case Histories**, he lives in France as a retired millionaire and is dating Julia. How does this sea change affect Jackson's outlook? What about him would you like to change in Kate Atkinson's next novel?

6. While Jackson and Julia first appeared in **Case Histories**, Atkinson introduces several new characters in **One Good Turn**. Which new character did you enjoy the most?

7. Discuss the novel's title. Do you think the adage from which it is derived influences the characters' behavior?

8. Jackson is described as a man who "had money and behaved as if he hadn't," while Julia "never had any money, yet she always behaved as if she had" (page 36). Do all the characters share this complicated relationship with money? How does greed affect their actions?

9. One Good Turn is set during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, one of the largest arts festivals in the world. How does this unique setting serve as a backdrop for the events that transpire?

10. Several unexpected friendships are forged during the novel?Jackson and Martin, Gloria and Tatiana. How important are these new friendships to the story? Are there two characters in **One Good Turn** who did not meet and whom you hoped would cross paths?

Author Bio

Kate Atkinson won the Whitbread (now Costa) Book of the Year prize with her first novel, BEHND THE SCENES AT THE MUSEUM. Her 2013 novel set around the Second World War, LIFE AFTER LIFE, was shortlisted for the Women?s Prize for Fiction and voted Book of the Year by independent booksellers? associations on both sides of the Atlantic. It also won the Costa Novel Award, as did her subsequent companion novel, A GOD IN RUINS (2015), and was adapted into a critically acclaimed television series in 2022. Her bestselling novels featuring former detective Jackson Brodie became the BBC television series ?Case Histories,? starring Jason Isaacs. She lives in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Critical Praise

"Atkinson's tart prose sparkles."

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