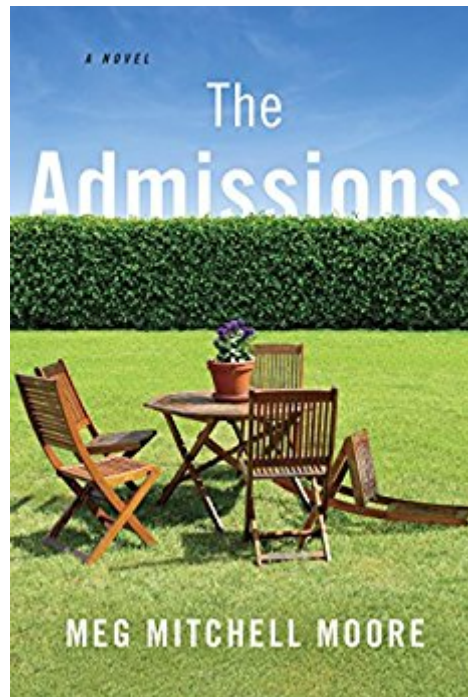


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The Admissions: A Novel



Synopsis

The Admissions brilliantly captures the frazzled pressure cooker of modern life as a seemingly perfect family comes undone by a few desperate measures, long-buried secret and college applications! The Hawthorne family has it all. Great jobs, a beautiful house in one of the most affluent areas of Northern California, and three charming kids whose sunny futures are all but assured. And then comes their eldest daughter's senior year of high school . . . Firstborn Angela Hawthorne is a straight-A student and star athlete, with extracurricular activities coming out of her ears and a college application that's not going to write itself. She's set her sights on Harvard, her father's alma mater, and like a dog with a chew toy, Angela won't let up until she's basking in crimson-colored glory. Except her class rank as valedictorian is under attack, she's suddenly losing her edge at cross-country, and she can't help but daydream about a cute baseball player. Of course Angela knows the time put into her schoolgirl crush would be better spent coming up with a subject for her English term paper which, along with her college essay, has a rapidly approaching deadline. Angela's mother, Nora, is similarly stretched to the limit, juggling parent-teacher meetings, carpool, and a real estate career where she caters to the mega-rich and super-picky buyers and sellers of the Bay Area. The youngest daughter, second-grader Maya, still can't read; the middle child, Cecily, is no longer the happy-go-lucky kid she once was; and their dad, Gabe, seems oblivious to the mounting pressures at home because a devastating secret of his own might be exposed. A few ill-advised moves put the Hawthorne family on a collision course that's equal parts achingly real and delightfully screwball and they learn that whatever it cost to get their lucky lives it may cost far more to keep them. Sharp, topical, and wildly entertaining, The Admissions shows that if you pull at a loose thread, even the sturdiest lives start to unravel at the seams of high achievement. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Novels about the arduous Ivy League college application process abound. Where most of these take a cheeky and somewhat sarcastic approach, Meg Mitchell Moore's *The Admissions* takes a cautionary one. This novel focuses on the Hawthorne family of Marin, California. Nora Hawthorne is a successful realtor, her husband Gabe works in a Bay Area tech firm, and their three daughters are all expected to be successful. Much of the novel centers around Nora's frazzled existence and the Harvard bound Angela, whose senior year has been filled with application deadlines, AP exams, and cross country meets. Angela is expected to follow in her father's footsteps to Harvard, and that has been the singular goal throughout her life. The family begins to struggle as their facade falters, and we learn that each family member has at least one compelling secret. One reviewer described the sensation of reading these struggles as "schadenfreude," but this implies that the reader gains some sort of pleasure out of reading the Hawthorne's pain. For me, there was a sense of dread in watching the impending moral and ethical collisions. Other reviewers describe the novel as "hilarious," but I didn't find that to be true either. Maybe it's because I'm a mom; and even though Nora's specific problems feel far removed from my own, I still empathized with her quest for perfection in career, family, and motherhood. But don't let any of this imply that I did not enjoy the novel- because I found it incredibly fascinating. I read it rather quickly because I wanted to find out what in the world would happen next. The strength of the novel comes at the end. All is resolved, but the plot takes some entertaining twists and turns in order to get there. Overall, this is a very satisfying summer read. **Unless you are helping your kid get into Harvard. ;-)

The Admissions is the kind of book that reminds you to slow down and enjoy your children while they're young. It also reminds parents not to put too much pressure on their children. I didn't really

need those reminders but I really enjoyed this book anyway...maybe because I didn't need those reminders. Gabe and Nora Hawthorne and their 3 daughters live in Marin, California, just north of San Francisco. Gabe is a business consultant and Nora is a realtor. They are both among the best at what they do but they both also have some secrets that could seriously damage their careers. Their oldest daughter Angela is a senior in high school and obsessed with getting into Harvard, just like her father. But the stress and strain of all that she has to do is causing her to make some questionable decisions and to wonder when she will be able to stop hustling and just relax. After meeting the new intern in her father's office, she's dismayed to find out that she may never be able to stop pushing to be the best. Cecily is ten and she is the happiest Hawthorne until she makes a mistake during her Irish dance competition. Dancing is what she loves but one simple fall will change it all. Maya is in second grade and still can't read. Nora is afraid that it's her fault because of something that happened when Maya was a baby. When all of the secrets and lies are revealed, everything falls apart. Luckily, after things fall apart, the family is able to make several changes that are better for everyone.

The Admissions By Meg Mitchell Moore My "in a nutshell" summary...The adventures as well as the misadventures of a seemingly normal San Francisco family as they live their lives but are also consumed by getting their oldest daughter into Harvard. The Cast Of Characters...Gabe and Nora...parents...will a tiny little flower and a lie bring them down? Angela...oldest daughter applying for Harvard in the fall...under enormous pressures? Cecily...the middle daughter...known for her Irish dancing. Maya...she can't read...is it because of Nora's little secret? My thoughts after reading this book...This book was so funny and sad, too. The secrets just kept piling up on top of each other. I love when the chapters are named by the characters they are about. Everyone's truths and everyone's secrets were gradually enticingly exposed. I continued to ask myself what would happen next. Everyone wanted to share their secrets...the secrets that were agonizing...and yet no one did. What I loved about this book...I loved this family...seriously...they were so normal at first and then as pressures mounted...they were the opposite of normal. What I did not love about this book...It was hard for me to live with their issues...issues that could have been avoided if these family members had only told the truth...seriously...tell the truth, people! Final thoughts...I found this to be an absorbing look about a normal family who just kept getting themselves into really weird situations. Readers who love books filled with dysfunctional characters...should love this book! I loved this book! It was every bit as wonderful as her first book...The Arrivals! My copy came from NetGalley and Edelweiss to read on my Kindle Paperwhite.

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