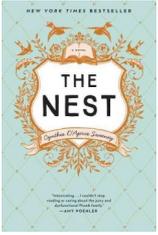


# The Nest



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Tolstoy's quote from *Anna Karenina* applies to this book: "All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

*The Nest* is about three generations of Plumbs: Francie, the matriarch, the middle generation that consists of Leo, Bea, Jack, and Melody, plus two of their spouses, and Melody's two girls, the twins, Nora and Louise.

At novel's opening we find Leo, the eldest, who long ago made a bundle on a trendy magazine, and has just been released from rehab, wandering through Central Park trying to score some drugs.

The twins, who are playing hooky from their senior year SAT prep class, watch as their uncle falls to the ground. They decide not to rescue him because he will most likely tell their mom, Melody, where he saw them, thus getting them into trouble.

At that very moment, Leo was supposed to be attending a family lunch. It's about the nest, which is the money their Dad set aside for them in trust that comes due at Melody's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. The elder Mr. Plumb wanted his kids to inherit something but not a grand inheritance, nothing that would create havoc in their lives or make them too dependent on his money.

However, the investments grew by leaps and bounds, and for years, some of the siblings have been counting on the money to help their failing finances: Jack's business and heavily-mortgaged second home, Melody's house payments and big college bills about to come due. Bea and Leo needed the funds less but have kept mum about any changes in their fortunes.

But a few months ago, Leo went and despoiled the nest. The rehab stint he just completed was court-ordered. When high on drugs he crashed his fancy car, causing a young woman passenger to lose her foot. To prevent lawsuits, he begged his mother to break the trust and bail him out--which as trustee only she could do.

Antiques dealer Jack has suspected all along that Leo has a stash of money hidden that could have covered his self-induced financial meltdown. But at the lunch, Leo says he has nothing and cannot repay the trust yet, but will try really hard to find the money within six months.

Bea, the writer, who also found fame as a young woman, has produced nothing that has been published since her twenties. She does not need the money because she inherited an apartment from a former lover. She too keeps her own counsel.

But though Leo has money, he has no access to it, so he begs an old girlfriend to let him stay a few days. Stephanie agrees after warning him, no sex, no drugs, no borrowing money. Does he follow her injunctions? Read and see.

What I liked best about this book is that gradually you get the back story on each of the characters. These histories show the interconnectedness of many of them; for example, Stephanie was Bea's literary agent long ago, and Bea wants to send her a new manuscript.

Leo and Bea were close as children. During freshman year in high school, their Mom promised her an after school birthday party but almost ruined it by being drunk. Leo came home and spun records like a DJ and taught the girls card games. He rescued the day.

Melody, on the other hand, worshipped Jack and the beautiful boys he brought home and whom she would serve lemonade to as they sunbathed on the patio.

Although the nest does pit the siblings against Leo, it also brings them together in many ways. They discuss things again, share meals, drop in on each other, and reveal some of their secrets. Family life is tricky for many people, and adult siblings have to constantly navigate the changes in each other's lives. This novel shows how each Plumb manages to keep the family ties vibrant while still following his or her own path.

Posted by Dory L. on May 12, 2016

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