



The Deep End of the Ocean (Oprah's Book Club)

By Jacquelyn Mitchard

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"Masterful...A big story about human connection and emotional survival" - Los Angeles Times

The first book ever chosen by Oprah's Book Club

Few first novels receive the kind of attention and acclaim showered on this powerful story—a nationwide bestseller, a critical success, and the first title chosen for Oprah's Book Club. Both highly suspenseful and deeply moving, *The Deep End of the Ocean* imagines every mother's worst nightmare—the disappearance of a child—as it explores a family's struggle to endure, even against extraordinary odds. Filled with compassion, humor, and brilliant observations about the texture of real life, here is a story of rare power, one that will touch readers' hearts and make them celebrate the emotions that make us all one.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Oprah Book Club® Selection, September 1996: The horror of losing a child is somehow made worse when the case goes unsolved for nearly a decade, reports *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* columnist Jacquelyn Mitchard in this searing first novel. In it, 3-year-old Ben Cappadora is kidnapped from a hotel lobby where his mother is checking into her 15th high school reunion. His disappearance tears the family apart and invokes separate experiences of anguish, denial, and self-blame. Marital problems and delinquency in Ben's older brother (in charge of him the day of his kidnapping) ensue. Mitchard depicts the family's friction and torment--along with many gritty realities of family life--with the candor of a journalist and compassion of someone who has seemingly been there. International publishing and movie rights sold fast on this one: It's a blockbuster.

From Publishers Weekly

One of the most remarkable things about this rich, moving and altogether stunning first novel is Mitchard's assured command of narrative structure and stylistic resources. Her story about a child's kidnapping and its enduring effects upon his parents, siblings and extended family is a blockbuster read. When three-year-old Ben Cappadora is abducted from a crowded Chicago hotel lobby where his mother, Beth, has taken him and his two siblings for her 15th high-school reunion, Beth's slow-motion nightmare is just the beginning of nine years of anguish about his fate. Beth retreats into an emotionless, fugue-like state, in which she neglects her surviving two children-oldest child Vincent and a baby daughter, Kerry-and seals herself off from her husband, Pat, the manager of a family restaurant near their home in Madison, Wisc. Yet jolting surprises continue to rock the narrative, as clues to Ben's fate emerge and the tension in the Cappadoras' marriage accelerates. That tension is partly responsible for and partly reflects the now teenaged Vincent's increasingly aggressive behavior, his desperate effort to forget that he had been in charge of his younger brother when Ben disappeared. Meanwhile, the large, voluble Cappadora clan remains faithful to the hope of Ben's return, disapproving of Beth's cold, angry denial that she will ever see her boy again. When she does, after nine years have passed, a series of bitter ironies drives the family off balance once more. Mitchard imbues her suspenseful plot with disturbingly candid psychological truths about motherhood and family relationships. Displaying an infallible ear for family conversation and a keen eye for domestic detail, she writes dialogue that vibrates with natural and unforced humor and acerbic repartee. She charts the subtle and minute gradations of maternal love with candor and captures the essence of teenage experiences and lingo. The novel becomes a universal tale of traumatic loss and its effects on individuals and families, an astute inquiry into the wellsprings of identity and a parable of redemption through suffering and love. Readers who explore the uncharted reaches of "the deep end of the ocean" with the Cappadoras will find this compelling and heartbreaking story-sure to be compared to *The Good Mother*-impossible to put down. Mitchard, who previously wrote the nonfiction *Mother Less Child*, has a wise and compassionate heart and talent to spare. 100,000 first printing; \$100,000 ad/promo; movie rights to Peter Guber's Mandalay Entertainment, in conjunction with Michelle Pfeiffer's production company; rights sold in England, Italy, France, Germany and Holland; author tour.

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From Library Journal

By her own admission, Beth Cappadora is a rather haphazard mother and wife. Still, her family is reasonably happy and her career as a photographer relatively satisfying. In a few short minutes in a crowded hotel lobby, Beth's world changes forever. Her two-year-old son, Ben, left in the care of older brother Vincent,

disappears. Despite the efforts of police and friends, the search for Ben fails, and Beth retreats into grief. Emotionally abandoning her other children and her husband, she spends the next nine years in self-absorbed brooding, unmoved by either the increasing delinquency of Vincent or her husband's demands for change. Ben's miraculous return results more in shock than joy and initially drives the family further apart. First novelist Mitchard unstintingly explores the minutiae of grief, creating realistic characters and no easy solutions. With film rights already sold and an extensive advertising budget, libraries can expect demand. For all popular collections. ?Jan Blodgett, Davidson Coll., N.C.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Wayne Ross:

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James Drennan:

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