

[The Only True Genius in the Family](#)

I read this last month while I was on vacation in Portland. And I enjoyed it so much I ran back to Powell's (like I needed an excuse) hoping they had *The Last Beach Bungalow*. Which they did. But that book will be the subject of another post. Let's talk TOTGITF.

Claire is human, and that makes her a really likeable and relatable character. She has lived in her father's shadow, always believing herself to be less than talented. Now that her daughter is on the brink of being a successful painter, Claire is again feeling left behind and left out. While dealing with her father's death and estate, Claire has a crisis of faith, so to speak. She loses faith in her abilities and is unable to finish her photography shoots.

However, what sets Claire apart from her famous father and her about-to-be famous daughter is her caring and loving nature. Claire feels deeply, and is hurt by her father's repeated rejections and his love for and mentoring of Bailey, who as a child shows artistic talent. When Claire oversteps into boundaries and (with good intentions, I believe) interferes with Bailey's art, Bailey's cutting rejection is equally painful.

I would argue that Claire is the true genius in her family. While she has a loving and supportive husband, he still seems a bit clueless as to depths of Claire's hurt. Her father and Bailey are both self-centered. Because she cares, it is Claire who seeks to understand both herself and those around her, and I think that makes her the true genius.