

The Only True Genius in the Family

by Jennie Nash Published by Berkley Publishing Group (February 2009)

Reviewed by Beth Cummings

Jennie Nash has created a novel peopled with strong, interesting characters. The book centers around Claire, the daughter of a famous landscape photographer who has recently died, and the mother of a budding artist who is about to present her MFA show.

Claire is also a photographer, but she doesn't see herself as an artist – she takes food pictures for magazines and cookbooks. Her daughter, Bailey, seems to be the one who received her grandfather's genius, and Claire struggles with feelings of jealousy and pride, loyalty and confusion over her role as mother. The emotional attachment between family members and their ability to cope with them is a strong element within the story.

This book is very enjoyable. Even the secondary characters are well developed, with a real quality to them. Claire's husband, Harrison, and various other friends and neighbors are used in ways that add depth to the novel.

Another important element in the book is Nash's exquisite descriptions of the light and color in the Grand Tetons mountains and the ocean along the California coast. Because the story involves artists – both photographers and painters, this attention to the detail of shape, light and color demonstrates with words the very artistic qualities that an artist seeks with images. Even the descriptions of Claire's food photography are mouthwatering.

I would recommend this novel particularly to women's book groups. There are several areas that could lead to good discussion topics – including what really makes a "true genius."

Armchair Interviews says: A 5-star most enjoyable read.

Author's Web site: <http://www.JennieNash.com>

From our armchair to yours...

