



One Year (An Oliver's Well Novel)

Mary McDonough

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“A warm, heartfelt novel about what it means to belong to a family. You won't want to put it down.” -- Mary Alice Monroe, *New York Times* bestselling author of *A Lowcountry Wedding*

In a heartfelt story set in a picturesque small town in Virginia, Mary McDonough portrays three generations of women in a modern Irish-American family as they navigate marriage, motherhood, and independence. . .

The Fitzgibbons--especially the women--have long been the backbone of Oliver's Well, Virginia. Matriarch Mary Bernadette is still striking and tireless at seventy-five, with a generous heart that belies her sometimes sharp tongue. Her husband, Paddy, owns the local landscaping business, daughter Grace is a nun, and son Pat and his wife Megan are successful lawyers. Her grandson, PJ, and his new wife, Alexis, live in a charming cottage behind the main house. Church, family, tradition, and the local historical society--everything Mary Bernadette cherishes is here. Yet below the surface, there are fractures.

Megan sees the strained relationship between her husband and Mary Bernadette, who has never quite recovered from the loss of her first-born son. Megan, too, is torn between gaining her mother-in-law's approval and living life on her own terms. Alexis loves PJ deeply yet chafes against his grandmother's influence in their marriage. But when a looming scandal brings unexpected tragedy, the Fitzgibbons are compelled to determine the depth of their loyalty, find their strength--and repair the bonds that have held a town, and a family, together for so long.

"A heartfelt, charming story." --*Library Journal*

One Year (An Oliver's Well Novel) Details

Date : Published April 28th 2015 by Kensington

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Author : Mary McDonough

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ChrisGA says

A book written by Erin Walton! How fun! The book is a family saga of three generations of an Irish Catholic family ruled by Mary Bernadette, the domineering matriarch. As her younger grandson says, “Grandma is the queen of the family. Everybody knows that. She likes it that way. Anyway, like my mom says, there’s no point in pretending that she’s not in charge or that she’s going to change. It’ll only make you unhappy.” It was painful to watch her exert her will over her older grandson and his wife, and the whole small town, while leaving her “victims” charmed in the process. Yet there is a love and loyalty in the family that will be needed as life’s unexpected crises arise to challenge them all. Very engaging and absorbing storyline with well-developed, very-human characters. I enjoyed my time with this family and their hometown. I received this book through Goodreads First Reads, but the opinion expressed is solely mine.

Karen says

The Fitzgibbon family is the foundation of the town Oliver's Well, primarily through the activities of the Oliver's Well Historical Association. The matriarch, Mary Bernadette Fitzgibbon is the leader of the Historical Association with various family members playing pivotal roles in the town. Mary Bernadette is a fiery 75 year old who knows no fools and spares no words when speaking to family or colleagues. However, there are fissures in the relationships within her family mainly with her son Pat and her daughter in laws Megan and Alexis. When a big city tycoon threatens a takeover of the Oliver's Well Historical Association family solidarity is faced with the ultimate challenge. This is a warm and delightful read with great characterizations and a good plot and an inspiring resolution. The author's wisdom and the complex subtleties of family life.

Recommended.

Kim says

I love books set in small town America. This one follows three generations of an Irish-American family. Mary Bernadette is the head of the family and her husband Paddy owns a landscaping business. Mary Bernadette is very involved the local historical society. She has 2 children, Pat who is a lawyer and Grace is a nun. But she has never fully got over losing her first baby.

The three women we follow are Mary Bernadette, her daughter in law Grace and granddaughter Alexis. We follow them over the year and see how events change the dynamics within the family. A big scandal tests them all.

I love descriptions of small town living and how that can affect everyone when there is a big event to get over.

I was interested to read that the author was Erin from the Waltons.

Many thanks to Kensington Books and NetGalley for the chance to read this one

Cindy Maday says

This is a wonderful family saga, filled with moments of emotional despair and happiness. I must say I almost put the book down because I hated the Matriarch Mary Bernadette and all the harm she caused to her family in the name of love. This book is truly filled with three-dimensional characters that will frustrate you as well as make you love them. I highly recommend you read this book.

Brenda says

Oliver's Well, VA, established in 1632, can count on Irish immigrant Mary Bernadette Fitzgibbon to look after the historical aspects of her adopted home, especially since she raised her family here and the family landscaping company has provided them a respectable living serving the families & businesses of Oliver's Well for 3 generations.

Mary Bernadette's stalwart personality adds a dimension to her advice that makes everyone do what she suggests, even her grandson's new bride.

A year in the history of this family is a good story on how one tragedy and the resolve to carry on affects family relationships, future generations, and even the friends and community at large.

The reality of how easily rumors and greed can destroy 50 years of steadfast respectability. A family rallying to help each other while continuing to fight to do what is best for their community and a community rallying to support a family when illness strikes make this novel a powerful reading experience.

Jo Dervan says

The Fitzgibbon family has been a fixture in their Virginia town of Oliver's Well for 54 years- their entire married life. Paddy owns a landscaping business and His wife, Mary Bernadette is well known for her work with the local historical society. Paddy and Mary Bernadette raised 2 children, Pat, a successful lawyer and Grace, a nun. However she is still suffering from the death of her first son early in her marriage.

Now the Fitzgibbon family is under attack within their community and their family solidarity is called into question.

This book will appeal to those who enjoy stories about Irish families who have a strong attachment to their Catholic religion. Conversely, some of the cultural and religious references might be off-putting to those readers not familiar with them beforehand.

Tonya says

In a heartfelt story set in a picturesque small town in Virginia, Mary McDonough portrays three generations of women in a modern Irish-American family as they navigate marriage, motherhood, and independence. . .

The Fitzgibbons--especially the women--have long been the backbone of Oliver's Well, Virginia. Matriarch Mary Bernadette is still striking and tireless at seventy-five, with a generous heart that belies her sometimes sharp tongue. Her husband, Paddy, owns the local landscaping business, daughter Grace is a nun, and son Pat and his wife Megan are successful lawyers. Her grandson, PJ, and his new wife, Alexis, live in a charming cottage behind the main house. Church, family, tradition, and the local historical society--everything Mary Bernadette cherishes is in Oliver's Well. But below the surface, there are fractures.

Megan sees the strained relationship between her husband and Mary Bernadette, who has never quite recovered from the painful loss of her first-born son. Megan too is torn between gaining her mother-in-law's approval and living life on her own terms. Alexis loves PJ deeply yet chafes against his grandmother's influence in their marriage. Then a looming scandal brings unexpected tragedy, compelling the Fitzgibbons to determine the depth of their loyalty, find their strength--and repair the bonds that have held a town, and a family, together for so long.

With warmth and an abundance of insight, Mary McDonough artfully captures the shifting dynamics of family life--and the revelations they may bear just in time.

--My thoughts. Small towns and generational stories are my type of story. Lots of characters but there is a tree to help you out at the beginning to refer to. One of my favorite lines was if I am going to be a grandmother I should learn to knit. As if! This was just ordinary life, not a glamorous one, just everyday life. But it was an enjoyable read.

Gaele says

A bit of an aside, the author, Mary McDonough, played Erin from the Waltons – and that feeling of family carries through here with matriarch Mary Bernadette, her daughter-in-law Megan and granddaughter Alexis.

Each woman in this story comes from a point of view highly shaped by their own personal experiences, and the sorrows (shared and private) that have hindered or fueled their lives. There is a strong component of faith and family at the base of the story, although rather than being rooted in the church, that faith is in the next day, the footsteps and paths the family that came before brought and the reputation of the family in the small town.

There's plenty to love and see in the story that will resonate – the family bonds, the griefs, the struggle for (and unconditional) acceptance granted, as well as the moments that aren't so pleasant. A wonderful read that will keep you engaged and engrossed for hours, with plenty to think of after the last page.

I received an eArc copy of the title from the publisher via NetGalley for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

Sandy Haramut says

I remember Mary when she was on the Walton's and I read her book about them, but One Year was outstanding. The characters could be in your own family. It is a great read.

Leslie says

This was a smooth read... you didn't realize how long you were actually reading. It showed how you can go from perfectly happy to almost losing everything in a short span ... and that sometimes you have to work to bring your life back on track

Artemiz says

One Year by Mary McDouough was a good story about one family life over one year. This book focuses on women of Fitzgibbons family - Mary Bernadette - matriarch of the family, her daughter Grace - the nun, her sons wife Megan and her grandsons wife Alexis. Mary Bernadette has always been the one to tell everybody what they must do and what have they done wrong. Her daughter chose to serve her duty far away from home. Her son also prefers to stay away from her and his wife has grown a thick skin against Mary Bernadette's "wisdoms". But her grandson adores her and his wife is left alone to find her place in this world and in the family, unless she wants to become Mary Bernadette's copy.

At the beginning the story is slow to start, with all the introductions and story building, but once it get going ...

It's a typical family with strong mother at lead, who cares more what the community thinks about her and about her family than what her nearest and dearest think. Since she has suffered big loss in her youth, she has hard time to really love her children, but for the community sake her family is perfect. So when her grandson with he's young wife moves to live in his grandparents cottage, Mary Bernadette starts to direct their life as well and her grandson lets her. Everything must be perfect. But perfect world does not exist.

So this is a year of changes and big changes. At the beginning of the year everything goes as always but then things start to change, people open their eyes, other people do their best to brake the Fitzgibbons family. By July bigger part of Fitzgibbons have got new view for their life and bonds that threatened to be severed for god, grow stronger than ever. After all the bad turns and critical falls and hanging by a thread, all ends well.

Some situations where to familiar to me from my own life, from my own family, but the difference is that my story will not have happy ending as the book did.

It was an interesting read.

Judie Dooley says

I won this book through good reads. Thank you for choosing me. The story of 3 generations of an Irish American family and how they weathered the trials-good and bad of one year in their lives. At first I was getting kind of bored with the description of all the characters in the book. Later I realized that this was necessary to the story. It had lively characters, Lovely setting of Oliver's Well in VA. The story pulled me into their lives and had me cheering them on for reconciliation Very good story and I'd recommend it to anyone who likes family dynamics.

Sandy says

One Year handles parental expectations masterfully. Another interest story line is familial dynamics between those who marry in to close families. The short chapters got in the way of my complete enjoyment of this novel, though.

Once Upon a Romance Reviews says

4.5 stars

Sexual Content Rating: Subtle

Language (Profanity/Slang) Content Rating: Mild

Violent Content Rating: Negligible/Minimal

Three generations of women in a small town in Virginia, a seemingly idyllic setting for a perfect family story. But as always, not all is golden under the sun and the idyllic atmosphere is only on the surface, where cracks are beginning to show. Mary Bernadette is married to Patty, who owns a thriving business and they have two children. One daughter, Grace, is a nun, while their son Pat and his wife Megan are lawyers. Their son P.J. is married to Alexis, who is new in town and needs to adjust not just to the family and the influence of both Mary Bernadette and Megan on her marriage. But Alexis also needs to adjust to life in small town Virginia and she really transforms into a different person as the story progresses. You can sense her changing as you read through the book.

This book does not have the major drama that other books have; it is written from a small town perspective where everyday life goes on. But this book is not boring; it is a realistic description of living in a small town with multiple generations of one family and the little dramatic episodes that make up life in such a town. Life is quiet away from the hustle and bustle of the big city, but there are problems and there is happiness. The author does a good job of showing life as it is for most of us. Not the big drama, but sometimes the little things that worry us and take time to solve as a problem. Maybe they do not attract the national headlines, but for the people going through these issues, they are important nonetheless, take time to deal with and for at least a period in our lives, the problems play an important part next to family, work and church, until they get resolved and our lives hit another bump in the road.

Mary McDonough may be known to many from starring the TV series "The Waltons" and reminiscent of "The Waltons" are some of the scenes in this book. While this family is much smaller, similar to The Waltons" as a series, this book describes the everyday issues that people deal with in their lives.

-- EVA

Sharon Chance says

First of all ... Cover Love! The cover drew me in, the story made me stay!

I love stories with family relationships at the heart of the tale, and Author Mary McDonough weaves this tale of an loving, if not complicated Irish family that is rich and entertaining.

McDonough's characters are three-dimensional and fully realistic - you can feel the love, the emotions, and yes, the frustrations that the family goes through during a year in their life that changes so much. I love the setting of Oliver's Well - it's quaintness a fitting backdrop for the comings and goings of the Fitzgibbon family.

But it's McDonough's writing style that is the star of this debut novel from the beloved actress of "The Waltons." I have no doubt that this will be just the first of many well-anticipated books from Ms. McDonough and I happily await them.

I Highly recommend "One Year" for those who enjoy a rollicking good family story.
