



The Flood Girls

Richard Fifiield

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February 2016 Indie Next List Pick

This snappy, sassy redemption story set in small-town Montana is “a wild and crazy debut novel by a talented young writer” (Jackie Collins), filled with an uproarious and unforgettable cast of characters you won’t want to leave behind.

“[*The Flood Girls*] includes barfights and AA meetings, a parade, a wedding, and a black bear, all of which Fifiield juggles beautifully...The Wild West earns its name all over again in this lovable chronicle of small-town insanity.” —*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred Review

Welcome to Quinn, Montana, population: 956. A town where nearly all of the volunteer firemen are named Jim, where The Dirty Shame—the only bar in town—refuses to serve mixed drinks (too much work), where the locals hate the newcomers (then again, they hate the locals, too), and where the town softball team has never even come close to having a winning season. Until now.

Rachel Flood has snuck back into town after leaving behind a trail of chaos nine years prior. She’s here to make amends, but nobody wants to hear it, especially her mother, Laverna. But with the help of a local boy named Jake and a little soul-searching, she just might make things right.

In the spirit of *Empire Falls* and *A League of Their Own*, with the caustic wit of *Where’d You Go, Bernadette* thrown in for good measure, Richard Fifiield’s hilarious and heartwarming debut will have you laughing through tears.

The Flood Girls Details

Date : Published February 2nd 2016 by Gallery Books

ISBN :

Author : Richard Fifiield

Format : Kindle Edition 336 pages

Genre : Fiction, Humor, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Flood Girls for online ebook

Judithbledsoe says

I love this book! It's my favorite book in years. Congratulations and thanks to the author, Richard Fifield. It's beautiful and perfect.

Olivia (The Candid Cover) says

The Flood Girls by Richard Fifield is one of those books that reminds you of your favourite mixed tape. The writing is absolutely intoxicating and definitely stirs up some raw emotions. In a nutshell, the story is a work of art that captivates the reader with its cast of powerful characters, provides a sense of nostalgia and is all tied together with its richly woven themes.

There are so many wonderful characters in this story that readers will love, hate and empathize with. Told through alternating perspectives, Fifield really paints quite a picture in one's mind about the events both past and present and how they have affected each of these characters as the story unfolds. There are so many different types of women and men in this small town tale that anyone who lives in or near a small town will undoubtedly feel right at home in this story. The women are most impressive in this book, as they must demonstrate so much strength and determination in order to survive in the small town of Quinn, Montana.

While reading this book, readers will take a trip down memory lane and be inserted right back into 1991. Honestly, a soundtrack that includes Madonna, David Bowie and Fleetwood Mac will be ringing in your ears as you read this story. Even the clothing descriptions of this era are on point and occasionally provide laugh out loud moments as the reader imagines the amazing outfits that these characters from the early '90s are sporting.

Also, there are so many important and compelling themes presented in Fifield's The Flood Girls. Namely, redemption is a strong feature in this story, as the main character, Rachel, is a recovering alcoholic and is determined to make amends with the people she hurt. As well, the theme of friendship is very prominent in this story and many of the characters go through transformations in search of it.

Fifield has created an amazing story through The Flood Girls. Readers are sure to fall in love with the characters, setting and themes of this fun and heart-breaking book. There are absolutely some kick-ass women in this one!

Myrna says

Have to admit, this book was a slow start. Once it picked up, it made for an entertaining read. Lots of vivid characters and softball with themes of family, guilt, and acceptance. This story was both heartbreaking and heartwarming. Could definitely see this being made into a movie.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

While I'm not sure I found this to be "uproarious" as the publisher summary claims (and I really hate a book being sold as funny when that isn't its strength), this debut novel is a unique look at addiction and isolation in small town Montana (where a trip to Missoula is life-changing with its mall and Chinese food.)

Rachel has returned home as part of her AA amends, back to the trailer park where she spent most of her teenage years wasted and having sex with all the volunteer firefighters, married or not. Her mother owns the bar in town where the lesbian miners and alcoholics go, and also serves as the center for the local softball league (which her mother also coaches.) The characters for the most part are rough around the edges, tough, feisty, and then there is a little gay boy who we all know is gay because of how he dresses. I probably could have done with a little less cliché and a little more heart. I actually believe the author wants to be diverse in his characters but somehow manages to do this by creating some pretty major stereotypes. Gay because fashion! Lesbian because flannel! I liked some of the minor characters quite a bit and felt the way the community came together despite its eccentricities felt pretty realistic. The little detail of all the rosaries being donated to the thrift store was particularly memorable.

The character of Rachel is not pretty, from the depths of despair in her drunkenest days to the gradual unveiling throughout the novel of what led to her leaving Quinn in the first place. Her journey was interesting and not necessarily expected, but most of the struggle was off-stage. She charges through the novel heroically and I think maybe I would have liked to start farther back in the story. Overall a decent start from this author, and I'll look for his next book.

I received a copy of this novel from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Cathe Olson says

The author has talent writer and some of the scenes were engrossing, but overall this book just seemed to be trying too hard. There were way too many characters who were all over the top and really didn't come off as believable. Many of them (like Bert, Jakes stepdad) were stereotypical and one dimensional. I felt like I was supposed to care about the characters but I never really did. I had to force myself just to finish this book.

Emily says

According to the other reviews here, the fact that I absolutely hated this one puts me in the minority. But boy did I hate it. It took me about 100 pages to get into it, but even at that point I was on the fence about whether I liked most the characters or not. Every single one felt like a caricature. And then the ending happened, which I won't spoil, but it made me so incredibly mad, and made the whole book feel manipulative to me. This was my first 1 star review on GoodReads in a long time.

Kelly (and the Book Boar) says

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

Thomas Wolfe wrote you can't go home again. Fitting that I wound up listening a book about a woman returning to her hometown during my 12-hour round-trip solo drive back to the place where I was born and raised for the first time in a decade. In *The Flood Girls* Rachel returns to a town full of trailer parks and alcoholics because she felt she needed to re-work Step 8. In case you aren't familiar

I ended up in the local watering hole at some point during my brief stay, but I can't say I took the same path Rachel did when I got back to my ol' stomping grounds

However, I could relate to Rachel's slice of Americana and had a great time learning all about the various Flood Girls as they tried to make it to the regional baseball tourney for the first time ever

As well as The Chief and his merry band of volunteer firemen

Not to mention young Jake. Man

This was a winner for me. Many thanks to Melki for her 5 Star review. She's kind of greedy with the Starzzzzzz just like me so when she hands them out, I tend to pay attention. My library system also deserves a kudo for nearly always having whatever my heart desires, in whatever format my heart desires

And now I'm back at work. I was trying to plug in and listen to porn until 5:00 while I did whatever tasks came to me, but instead I was just informed me that my taking three days off (which I informed everyone about in advance and made sure to **not** be either a Monday or a Friday) to attend a funeral was an inconvenience

Someone pass me a silver bullet. The beer, I mean, not an *actual* silver bullet. I don't work with werewolves.

Mari says

Attention book clubs: Read THE FLOOD GIRLS!

Not only is Fifield's prose rich, inimitable and unflinching, the story offers countless angles for discussion on a variety of timely themes.

Set in a tiny town, where logging and the local tavern are the only businesses, *The Flood Girls* offers a fresh take on unlikely friendships, family dysfunction, the dark side of religion, and viciously ugly prejudice.

Fifield has hit a home run of a debut, and established himself as a voice to be reckoned with in contemporary American fiction.

Laura says

I am sincerely torn about this book. I wanted so much to say that I loved it and that I thought it was incredible but I think this is one of those stories that will appeal to some readers and would be lost in others. For me, I recognize the fantastic effort set forth by the author's debut work. However, I don't think I'm necessarily the target audience for this kind of story. The plot itself is commendable - an alcoholic (Rachel) going through the steps to recovery from Alcoholics Anonymous returns to her hometown (Quinn, Montana) to make amends with the people she affected with her careless behaviors some 9 years prior. But the story just doesn't go further than painting the picture of a bunch of caricatures that do engage in ridiculous antics and can only talk to each other in insults and threats.

The story takes place in Quinn, a very small rural town. The center of the town seems to be the bar (*The Dirty Shame*) owned and run by Laverna (Rachel's mother). Laverna turns out to be Rachel's biggest skeptic and definitely not her number one fan. Quickly we are introduced to a cast of characters as I have never read about before. For my taste, they were too over the top and somewhat outrageous in their outlandish and violent behaviors and gratuitous use of foul language and sexual references. They are primarily defined by their identifying features and their behaviors - the mining lesbians, Bucky (has buck teeth), Red Mabel and Black Mabel (natural enemies that happen to be named the same so they are distinguished by red and black) and so forth. There is also a softball team that is held together by the very angry and prickly Laverna. Although I understood how the softball team is what holds these characters together in spite of their differences, I found the chapters about the softball games unnecessary and a poorly executed attempt at humor. Again, it is very possible that the fact that I could not relate to these characters is probably why I did not find humor in the intended humorous sections. The character of Jake is the one character in the entire book that I felt a connection with. The story of the underdog whose differences in behavior make him the victim of bullying from kids and adults alike. He is a 12 year old who is mature beyond his years. I did think that his maturity was his way of coping with his differences and although you love him and want to see him do well and get out of this horrible town and away from these low-brow people that make up his town, the end of his story is predictably disappointing yet a surprisingly pessimistic and skeptical depiction of people in general. The reason I'm compelled to point that out is because it confused me as to whether the book was meant to be light-hearted or a cautionary tale of sorts. After a long drawn out series of "Hatfield vs the McCoys" type of situations, the book ends with such a tragic situation that seems to bring the book to a "...and that is that folks!" kind of ending. I can see this story appealing greatly to fans of the kinds of antics one sees in shows like "Duck Dynasty" or those of the Honey Boo Boo variety. However, I find very little humor or have any interest in observing these kinds of outlandish behaviors without getting some character development that provides some value to the reader. I don't doubt that Mr. Fifield is a writer with a great book in him, I just don't see as this one being the one. At least, not for me. I would love to see him focus on one character (perhaps like Jake or Bucky or even the unlikeable Laverna) and write a story that develops that character thoroughly so that the reader can truly get to know them and have justifiable reason to love or hate them or love and hate them.

Dorie says

I was given an ARC copy of this book through NetGalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Well, I had to compose myself for a couple of days before I wrote this review. The first few chapters were only o.k. for me. I thought, well another story about quirky people in a small town. Then I sat and read for 6 hours straight.

The Flood Girls is about a small town in Montana, Quinn, and there are very diverse characters for sure. The difference with this book is how incredibly well Mr. Fifield led me to understand these characters, there was sufficient back story not only on our main character, Rachel, but also the other people of this town.

Rachel has come back home to make amends for the chaos she caused during her teenage years, especially a betrayal to her mother, Laverna. She has gone through AA and has a sponsor back in the city but also one appointed to her in Quinn, who happens to be the police chief.

Some of the characters that you will be introduced to include Laverna, who owns the only bar in town, The Dirty Shame, aptly named for all of the things the townspeople get up to in that bar. Red Mabel is Laverna's best friend and confidant.

There are all of the volunteer firemen, three of whom are named Jim and Jim number 3 helps Rachel to restore a broken down trailer house left to her by her father and would very much like to have a closer relationship to Rachel.

Jake is the son of Rachel's high school friend who doesn't fit in anywhere. That is because he is gay, has a flair for fashion and has no interest in the usual "guy" things. There is a bit of a stereotype here but the character of Jake is so well developed that we look past that to see a really sincere, intelligent and good person who just wants to be who he is.

Bert is a nasty piece of work. Married to Rachel's high school friend, he is Jake's step father and none too happy to have a gay son, although no one speaks that word. He does everything he can to make life miserable for Jake. In the end Bert is probably one of the nastiest villains I've come across lately, but you'll have to read the book to see why.

I never lived in a small town but living in Wisconsin I have traveled through some that sound very much like the town of Quinn. What surprised me was how the people, despite their differences, do come through for each other in many ways. The Flood Girls softball team was usually a mockery but the season when Rachel comes back brings some new life and togetherness for the team. The celebration of the 4th of July is the main event in town, celebrated for much longer than one day, probably the entire week with many of the people on day long benders. There is something to be said about alcoholism in small towns with not much else to do. Quinn was a logging town on it's way down.

I always scoffed at reviewers that said that they "laughed uncontrollably" or "cried through chapters" of a book. This book really hit me, I did laugh out loud, something my husband is not used to hearing and I did feel very sad at the end of this book.

This is a very special book and I look forward to Mr. Fifields next work. A must read for 2016.

Sandy says

Magnificent! Bravo! I just finished reading this novel and my eyes have now cleared and I can see my computer again. What an outstanding conclusion, one that spoke volumes for the people of Quinn. The town of Quinn, if you happened to drive into town, you'd be meet with some of the most outspoken, outlandish and unique individuals you have ever meet. It's a small town where gossip is cheap, liquor brings the people together and your past haunts you.

Opening the novel, I found myself with Frank as he calls to the cats around his trailer park using his harmonic, same time and same place, every day. This town likes consistency and order. Twelve-year old Jake would watch from his roof next door, stretched out in a lawn chair watching the scene unfold. Frank and Jake had a special bond, these two were watchers and everyday they were in their own world, yet they were together. I really fell for these two, they had something special and sometimes no words had to be spoken. When Rachel returns to her hometown, most of the citizens are not happy to see her including her mother. Returning to a town where alcohol is part of the entertainment, Rachel is now in AA and she is trying to make amends for her previous actions. I can see immediately where Rachel's loose behavior and outspoken voice have sprouted from, as her mother Laverna is quite a bold individual. This assertive woman is not afraid to speak her mind with her rude, over-bearing remarks. There were times I was embarrassed to read what was coming from her mouth and other times, she had me in stitches, you just never knew what was going to come out of her mouth. Owning one of the two pubs in town and coaching the woman's softball league, The Flood Girls, Laverna left her mark throughout the town.

The novel is about more than The Flood Girls as Rachel tries to make amends for her past. As I finally got comfortable with the writings of the author, I began to follow Rachel in her journey to rediscover the town of Quinn and make restitution. People don't change much over time and their opinions don't necessarily change especially if you have injured a part of them. Rachel left with a reputation and the town still sees that girl. Moving into her father's old trailer, she becomes friends with Jake. Jake with his suits, his ties, and his fancy shoes where other teens are wearing shorts and t-shirts, she sees Jake for what he is. Jake filled my heart with his style, with his way of looking at the world and with his way of just watching. The day of Jake's thirteenth birthday had to be one of the most special parts of this book for me.

I would pay to go see a game played by The Flood Girls; the entertainment value would be priceless. The author's descriptions had me grinning and laughing as she describes the team. Their uniforms or lack of uniforms, their attempts at the game, the girl's demeanor and their coach's attitude, and let's not forget about the fans. All of this was part of this entertainment value and made them, the famous Flood Girls. I really enjoyed this novel, the glimpse inside the town of Quinn. I will miss the sticky floors of The Dirty Shame, the Sinclairs, I wonder what will happen to Rachel but most of all, I will miss Jake and his thrift shop treasures.

I received an ecopy of this novel from NetGalley and Gallery, Threshold, Pocket Books in exchange for an honest review. I also received a physical copy of this novel in a Goodreads giveaway- thanks Gallery books!

(I won a copy of this novel on Goodreads. Thanks Gallery books! Waiting now to receive my copy.)

Karyn Niedert says

I grew up in a small farming town in the Midwest, where people are rated more by their surname than their actions and being on the outside looking in is the standard for people who aren't "from there". Richard Fifiield captured the very essence of the good and bad of existing in a small town, where the 4th of July parade is the epitome of excitement and women's softball is taken as seriously as the Super Bowl.

Fifiield's novel is centered on Rachel, the black sheep who is returning to Quinn, Montana after nine years of exile. During her time away, she has gotten sober and worked the AA steps as if they were her new addiction. Wanting to atone for her past sins, she returns to her hometown seeking forgiveness from her friends, her mother, and the wives of many a fireman. She crashed and burned nine years ago, in an epic feat of betrayal several layers deep. Can she earn the mercy of her mother and the many townsfolk who are gunning for her?

Laverna is the strong-willed, hard charging mother of Rachel. She owns the Dirty Shame, the main bar in town for hooligans, ruffians, and all the misfits who like to drink it up in Quinn. Rachel's defection only made Laverna harder and bitterer, and she wasn't soft around the edges to begin with. After the devastating blows her daughter dealt her nine years ago, can Laverna forgive and move on?

Supporting characters throughout the story kept this book hopping. Jake, Rachel's trailer park neighbor and her old best friend's son, kept things smooth and stylish while providing unwavering support to both Rachel and Laverna. His impact on all of the characters is one of the main themes, and added tremendously to the story arc between Rachel and her mother.

I have read a lot of "small town girl returns to her hometown" blah blah books in the past, and this is the first one that didn't hit me as trite or condescending. Fifiield captured the townsfolk of small town America realistically, honestly, and QUITE entertainingly. I hope that this manages to be a break out book club hit, because this novel absolutely earns a broader look from our reading community!

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at [Carole's Random Life](#).

I am still not sure how I feel about this book. I loved parts of it but thought other parts were a little too much. And that ending. I can't even. I was really hoping that everything would pull together for a feel good kind of ending. It wasn't a feel good ending. It was shocking and it broke my heart. I really have struggled with how to rate this book. I was really somewhere between a 3 and a 4 for most of the book. When I take the ending into consideration, I really have to go with 3 stars for this one.

This book has one of the most colorful cast of characters that I can remember reading. Some of these characters were rude and abrasive most of the time. I did feel that the characters were a bit over the top at times. I didn't dislike most of the characters but I didn't feel any kind of connection to the majority of them either. There were a few stand outs in the cast that did get to me by the end of the story. Laverna took a long

time to warm up to but once I understood her, I grew to like her. Bucky was awesome, Jake was perfect and I fell in love with him almost instantly. Rachel was really pretty easy to like as well.

The majority of the book was told from Rachel's point of view. Rachel left her hometown of Quinn in disgrace. She is coming back after being gone for years because she wants to make amends as part of her recovery. Rachel has changed and is really a better person but she did a lot of terrible things while she was growing up in Quinn. She has a lot of patience and slowly works to change her life. She even plays for The Flood Girls even though she isn't a very good softball player. Watching Rachel make new connections and become a part of the small community again was interesting to watch.

I did enjoy the narration in this audiobook. Kathleen Early did a fantastic job with a large cast of characters. Each character had a distinctive voice and was able to deliver some rather colorful dialog quite convincingly. I thought that she did a great job in capturing the emotions of the characters. Rachel had a lot of really high points and some rock bottom moments in this book and I really felt her joy and her pain. I will definitely look for more audiobooks narrated by Kathleen Early.

I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a story set in a small town with quirky characters. There is a lot more to the story than that but the characters are really the basis of this story. I did enjoy Richard Fifield's debut novel and plan to check out his work in the future.

I received an advance reader edition of this book from Blackstone Audio via Audiobook Jukebox.

Initial Thoughts

I don't even know what I think of this one. Definitely not a feel good ending but one that will probably stay with me for a while. It was abrasive and rude at times with characters so extreme they almost felt cartoonish. The story did have a certain appeal in the end. I really liked the narration and will be looking for more of her work.

I am going to need to think about this one and process my feelings about the end of the story before I can write any kind of real review.

Melki says

Laverna had no doubts about her hometown, knew that it created devils and angels, queens and boy princesses, gritty souls that could survive anything.

Rachel's back in town, Quinn, Montana, to be precise; a small town filled with souls who have not forgotten that Rachel once had a certain . . . reputation. But, she's in an AA twelve-step program, and needs to make amends to those she's wronged, so here she is, settling into her late father's trailer home, ready to take on the town gossips, and, gulp, her mother, Laverna, owner of the local watering hole, the Dirty Shame, and coach of the women's softball team.

I LOVED this book!

There's a real *Northern Exposure* vibe to the novel, peopled as it is with an eccentric and unforgettable cast of characters. Fifield has a gift for great dialogue, and tosses off hilarious one-liners left and right. I lost track of how many times I laughed aloud.

I cannot recommend this one highly enough!

Melissa says

Have you ever seen the movie *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar* ? That's what reading *The Flood Girls* made me think of in some ways. It also reminds me of *A League of their Own*. It definitely carries the camp, flair, and female camaraderie of "To Wong Foo," however.

In any case, I loved this book and can't stop recommending it. Even after finishing, I still want everyone to read it so we can discuss! I especially adored Jake Bailey and wish someone like him had been around when I was a teen in the early 90s. And all Richard Fifield had to do was mention V.C. Andrews and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* at various times in the book and I was sold. (I was even moved to send him my blog posts about both topics.)

Richard also wins the "best villain writing" award. Move over Jafar, Gaston, and Mother Gothel...here comes Bert! I only wish Richard would write a sequel so we can see Bert receive his karma for being such a horrible person.

I enjoyed reading about all the characters who inhabit Quinn, Montana. Sometimes it felt a little hard to keep track of everyone and their backstory, but Richard did a decent job of sticking in reminders here and there. I would have loved to read chapters from Red Mabel and Krystal's point of views. Maybe even Bucky's, as well.

I know this novel is going to stick with me for a while to come. It was so honest and heartfelt. Add it to your must-read list for 2016! (And have some tissues handy....)

Here are some of my casting ideas, as this would make a great movie (however, I could not cast Jake for the life of me, but he would probably need to be a newcomer).

Laverna: Wendi McLendon-Covey (<http://imdb.to/1mltDei>)

Rachel: Evan Rachel Wood (<http://imdb.to/1mJpNvW>)

Red Mabel: Lea DeLaria (<http://imdb.to/1Ou6CTe>)

Krystal: Olivia Wilde (<http://imdb.to/1mdthHe>)

Betty B says

Damn you, Richard Fifield.

I took a copy of *The Flood Girls* on a family vacation this Summer, and I couldn't put it down! Rather than having ravaging sex with my husband under the midnight sun of Iceland, I feigned sleepiness so I could climb into bed and read more about the town of Quinn and it's lively inhabitants. I snuck quick chapters in the bathroom as my family impatiently waited for me to be ready to walk into town for dinner. Friends ask me to regale them with stories of our adventure, and my mind mies up the waterfalls and the beautiful blonde people of Iceland with the softball games and bar brawls of small town Montana.

Jk, Jk. For reals, thank you Richard Fifield, for writing a beautiful and spot-on book. For capturing characters that we all are familiar with but could never use words to describe them in such a witty and magical way as you have. Thank you for giving a voice to small-town women whose lives always seemed desperate and sad to me, but after reading *The Flood Girls*, I see in a new light. A somewhat envious one.

I can't wait to give this book to every person I know and blow their minds.

Julie Tompkins says

As a 60-year-old woman I find the publishing world wants to sell me on surviving grief and senior sex when all I want are strong, realistic characters who make me feel something other than looming decrepitude. I don't know who Richard Fifiield thinks he is, but to me he's a master of the female voice. His book is filled with so many women I recognize from my own growing up in a small town that I became nostalgic for those sensible, bighearted bitches... Something I didn't think possible.

The town of Quinn, Montana could be anywhere there are imperfect mothers and wayward daughters, boys who don't succumb to proto-male conditioning, and townfolk who bond and break over shared experience, whether a sordid affair or softball tournament. There have been many writers who try to portray the environment that exists in a place where everyone knows everyone else's business, but they usually come off as cloying or trite. Fifiield does neither. In fact, I turned over a page corner each time I found a particularly lovely turn of phrase - by the time I finished, the book was full of them.

This is a special gift to be passed from friend to friend, from snow leopard to cougar. It's honest and brutal and hilarious. I can think of few better experiences than my time with *The Flood Girls*.

Megan Johnson says

I grew up in a very small town where everyone seemingly knew everyone - the good and the bad. This is probably why I find myself so drawn to stories of small towns, and Richard Fifiield's *The Flood Girls* is no exception - in fact, it's one of the best small-town novels I think I've ever read.

The Flood Girls gives readers a glimpse into the small little town of Quinn, Montana...where things are not as peachy and nice as you might think they would be. Every new volunteer firefighter is seemingly named Jim leading them to address them by a number rather than a name, the softball team is supported by the town and yet can't seem to win a game if it's not called due to rain, and the local "bad girl", Rachel Flood, has arrived to a less than calm welcome. Yes, it's the perfect setting for some good, down-home drama which is exactly what makes this book so spectacular.

There's also Jake, the kid next door who warms up to Rachel nearly immediately and accompanies her on her journey toward making amends in this small town. But when Rachel is told she's expected to play on her estranged mother's softball team, things seem like they can't get much worse. Will she join the team and prove to everyone that she truly is sorry, or will she screw things up again and be forced to leave town?

If you enjoy family drama, exciting and faced paced dialogue that will leave you both cringing and laughing, or small towns are appealing to you, then I can't recommend this one enough. It's the perfect read for that cold and rainy day, but would also be perfect laying on a beach somewhere warm. So what I'm trying to say is that wherever you are in your life, I have a feeling this one would speak to you.

Last year one of my favorite books was *Where'd You Go, Bernadette*, and this one reads much like that one. It's witty, entertaining, but packed with moments that make you feel like you're right there on the journey with them. There's nothing better than some good ole ball game camaraderie, especially when half the team is drunk and the other half is well on their way to getting there. I laughed, I was appalled, I shared funny moments with friends - I can honestly say, this is one of the most fun books I've read in a while.

My Rating: 5 Stars

Would I recommend this book?: I personally stayed up all night finishing this one, which is a good sign to me that this one is well worth recommending to you.

Suzanne McIntosh says

I got an advanced copy of this novel. I did not have high hopes and as I started to read through the first chapter, I was hooked. I want to stay up all night to finish it. And at the same time I don't want it to end. One of my favorite books of the year. A little gritty. A little dirty. And a damn fine read

K.L. Romo says

How does one love brazen, foul-mouthed women who throw their weight around, beer-guzzling-in-the-outfield female softball players, and their burly female audience who love to throw punches? I don't know, but I do – I love this book and all its quirky, faulty characters.

Welcome to Quinn, Montana: Population 956. A town owned by the headstrong, sassy women that have been there forever. Laverna Flood owns the only bar in town, *The Dirty Shame*, which serves beer and shots – never mixed drinks because they're too much trouble – to their regulars – the local silver-mining lesbians, the alcoholic widow of the local judge, and a dogcatcher who sucks at catching dogs.

Within the oppression of this small, poor town lives Jake Bailey, who at twelve already loves Jackie Collins novels, lives for fashion more than anything else, and savors finding his only privacy on the roof of his family's beat-up trailer. Jake is the butt of jokes for most of the males in town, including his violent and cruel stepfather Bert.

When Jake's only male friend, Frank from next door, kills himself, Frank and Laverna's daughter, Rachel Flood, inherits Franks' trailer and moves in. Because of her past drunken teenage escapades of sleeping with every man in town, including her mother's boyfriend, no one is happy to see her. But Rachel has been attending Alcoholics Anonymous and decides she must make amends to the town she hurt so badly all those years ago, befriending Jake in the process.

Fifield's residents of Quinn are one-of-a-kind characters who have weathered hardship, and poverty, and the cold Montana terrain, but maintain a fierce loyalty to each other as they struggle to survive. Most of the women of Quinn are irreverent in their drinking, working, and socializing, but have a soft spot for two things: The Quinn ladies' rag-tag softball team, and the team's effeminate scorekeeper, Jake Bailey.

I felt especially drawn to the theme running through *The Flood Girls* – the battle against alcoholism through AA meetings, and the strong bond which develops between those whose lives have been ravaged by the

bottle. Within Quinn's only AA group, Rachel finds the most loyal friends she's ever had.

Reminiscent of a John Irving novel, Fifield has given his characters an abundance of flaws, but with those, an abundance of feeling and heart as well. Irreverence and surly behavior, accentuated by beer guzzling, is the façade which masks the inner turmoil of the people who have lived together their entire lives, intertwined within each other's loves, and loss, and attempts to survive another day.

I've read a number of reviews that fault Fifield's depiction of Quinn, Montana, as a town full of disrespectful, drunken trailer-trash who have no regard for anyone other than themselves; the reviewers resent the opinion they feel the author has made about rural, small town life and people. But readers must remember - this is fiction! Fifield is no more making a statement about all American small towns than Stephen King did about all winter resorts in *The Shining*. Whether part is based on fact, or the majority was created in his brain, Fifield has given readers a glimpse of a community who share more than just the drinks served at The Dirty Shame, or the ball thrown over the frozen, pothole-filled softball field.

The Flood Girls is definitely a must read!

Thank you Simon & Schuster for providing me with an Advance Reader's Copy for review!
