

Review from Bibliotica:

When I was offered a copy of *Saving Gracie* to review, I jumped at the chance because the description seemed like something I'd really enjoy. I was not wrong. In fact, I'm incredibly glad to have been introduced to Ms. Teitelman's writing, because if she writes anything else in this wonderful voice, I HAVE to read it.

Saving Gracie is at once a sort of late-bloomer's coming-of-age story and a romance. The first part is the internal development of the novel's protagonist (and first-person narrator) Ruth Kooperman. At the beginning of the story, Ruth is fiercely independent, child-free (and approaching an age at which childbirth is unwise if not impossible) and single, prone to bad choices in men. Through the course of the novel we watch her grow into motherhood, into stable relationships, and finally, into a relatively sane, relatively stable woman.

But that's just part of the story. It's also a romance. Or really, three romances. It's a romance between Ruth and the two men who occupy her heart during the course of the novel, Jake, with whom she has a child, but not a marriage, and Marty, whom she marries. It's a romance between Ruth and her son Joey. And finally, most importantly, it's a romance of sisterhood between Ruth and Gracie – one of the sane mothers she meets while checking out a school for Joey.

Like Ruth, Gracie has a wicked sense of humor. But she's also got a twenty-plus-year-old marriage (to Max, who seems like a great person, and who I wish I had as a neighbor), and, in many ways, represents what Ruth would have been if she'd ever found the nice (rich) Jewish boy her parents wished she would.

The friendship between Ruth and Gracie doesn't even begin until a third of the book is over, but its impact is still strong, and really, we need that much setup – and that much growth from Ruth – before either we (or Ruth) are ready for Gracie's arrival. We need Ruth to be open for a new kind of friendship.

Despite a poignant ending, I thoroughly enjoyed *Saving Gracie*. I thought the characters were all very real, and, having grown up on the east coast (though I'm Italian and not Jewish), I could hear the cadences of their speech in my head, even though there's no dialect written into the dialogue.

Saving Gracie is the kind of novel that you live inside while you're reading it. When I would pull myself away to do something mundane like eat or let the dogs out, I found myself wishing I was in Boston in winter, instead of Texas where it's 80 degrees in December.

Put plainly: this book is amazing, and everyone should go read it, now.

Goes well with bagels, cream cheese, and a cup of mushroom soup.