

The background features a complex network of white circular nodes connected by thin purple lines. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming larger, more dense clusters. The background color transitions from a deep purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The title text is centered in the upper half of the image.

# The Most Fun We Ever Had

Written by Claire Lombardo

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# The Most Fun We Ever Had

By Claire Lombardo

## The Most Fun We Ever Had

A dazzling, multigenerational novel in which the four adult daughters of a Chicago couple--still madly in love after forty years--recklessly ignite old rivalries until a long-buried secret threatens to shatter the lives they've built.

## The Most Funniest Memes

When Marilyn Connolly and David Sorenson fall in love in the 1970s, they are blithely ignorant of all that's to come. By 2016, their four radically different daughters are each in a state of unrest: Wendy, widowed young, soothes herself with booze and younger men; Violet, a litigator-turned-stay-at-home-mom, battles anxiety and self-doubt when the darkest part of her past resurfaces; Liza, a neurotic and newly tenured professor, finds herself pregnant with a baby she's not sure she wants by a man she's not sure she loves; and Grace, the dawdling youngest daughter, begins living a lie that no one in her family even suspects. Above it all, the daughters share the lingering fear that they will never find a love quite like their parents'.

## The Most Funniest Videos

As the novel moves through the tumultuous year following the arrival of Jonah Bendt--given up by one of the daughters in a closed adoption fifteen years before--we are shown the rich and varied tapestry of the Sorensons' past: years marred by adolescence, infidelity, and resentment, but also the transcendent moments of joy that make everything else worthwhile.

## The Most Funniest Jokes

Spanning nearly half a century, and set against the quintessential American backdrop of Chicago and its prospering suburbs, Lombardo's debut explores the triumphs and burdens of love, the fraught tethers of parenthood and sisterhood, and the baffling mixture of affection, abhorrence, resistance, and submission we feel for those closest to us. In painting this luminous portrait of a family's becoming, Lombardo joins the ranks of writers such as Celeste Ng, Elizabeth Strout, and Jonathan Franzen as visionary chroniclers of our modern lives.

The author of this novel is an old soul. Lombardo deeply understands marriage, sisterhood and plain old ordinary family dysfunction which is present on every character driven page. From the outside, the parents' marriage seems flawless. Naturally, from the inside it is not without its peaks and valleys. However, it is based upon a deep and abiding love that seems to be unattainable to their four daughters within their own lives. Each of the sisters has their own crosses to bear. For Wendy it is a combination of fate and disposition. Violet has sisterly assistance in bringing about additional anxiety and messiness in her life. Liza is neurotic and indecisive while the youngest, Grace, is simply lost and living a lie of her own making. Other than an event which I found hard to fathom, this is a realistic and intimate look at an affluent Chicago family as they love, laugh, annoy, clash, and support each other over the course of forty-odd years. ...more

## The Most Fundamental Dimensions Of Personality Are Called

Lombardo's character-driven, eventful, tumultuous, witty, serious, gregarious, tragic, and infectious domestic dramady of a big Chicago family kept me fastened to the pages of this big, buoyant book. Yes, it is a tome, but once you are installed in the story, it pulls you naturally along. I cared and cringed and chuckled and cried with each of the four sisters and their parents (and then there's the third gen of kids). Each character was individualized and any one of them could have leaped off the pages. How they lived and loved became all-important to me as I folded myself into their days and years. They crept into my heart; it was like being a member of their family.

Marilyn Connelly and David Sorensen met in the mid-70s during their undergrad days in Chicago and knew instinctively that they were meant to be husband and wife. David became a family physician, and Marilyn left university when she got pregnant. The novel covers 40 years of their lives, as their family grew large with four daughters--Wendy, Violet, Liza, and the baby, Grace--fifteen years younger than Wendy. Violet and Wendy are a year apart--Irish twins, the sisters who were the closest and developed a love-hate relationship. Liza was considered the middle child, and Grace was born (on purpose, but everyone thought she was their Catholic accident) in 1993. The current year is 2016, but the novel moves back and forth in time, mounting little mysteries and hints and integrating interlocking narratives. Everyone has a storyline, independently and collectively. And that includes the loose cannon, Jonah, given up for adoption by Violet as an infant and, at age 15, has resurfaced, to Violet's dismay.

Wendy, the guarded, troubled, and most irreverent, sustains the lion's share of tragedies. She keeps the wine close at hand and others at arm's length, and is most combative with Violet. Violet has control issues, and has difficulty taking risks; she resists interference in her perfectly chiseled life with her husband and two young sons. Liza, now pregnant and a successful professor, has a severely depressed boyfriend who alternately sobs and sleeps. Gracie, after graduating from Reed, in Portland, subsists in a boring job and tells an ever-ripening fiction to her family. She's confined her options and widened her lies.

"Nobody was who they appeared to be; everyone was struggling; money didn't make a difference! And, as Gracie believes, 'No one would ever regard her with the same enthusiastic awe as her mother; the same feverish pride as her father.' As the story evolves, it is clear that the author created a prism for everyone's fractured perceptions, revolving memories, missed opportunities, and mixed blessings. The shifting impressions and vacillating notions circle around and veer in sloping lines, caterwauling, twisting, tipping and turning.

## The Most Fun We Ever Had

Colleagues, outsiders, and even their children assume that David and Marilyn's love together is effortless perfection. Nobody would truly comprehend their nuanced history and complexity, the intimacy of joining together before they could ever be alone. But they agree--it's the most fun they ever had. And each child has a shared and personal history that we glimpse through a window or gaze through a curtain. Resounding, the spirit of the narrative stirs with fractious dialogue and unfiltered warmth. It was difficult to leave this family at the close of the story. ...more

Diving into a 550-page novel "as opposed to, say, a 300-page novel" is the difference between a dalliance and a full-blown commitment. You have to really like these characters to spend time in their lives and inside their heads for days at a time. It may not be the most fun you've ever had, but it has to be darn close.

So let's start here: I liked the Sorenson family. I liked its messiness, quirkiness, heartaches and triumphs. And I didn't regret one single hour that I was immersed in their world. Diving into a 550-page novel "as opposed to, say, a 300-page novel" is the difference between a dalliance and a full-blown commitment. You have to really like these characters to spend time in their lives and inside their heads for days at a time. It may not be the most fun you've ever had, but it has to be darn close.

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Marilyn and David are the fortunate couple who quickly intuit that they're right for each other and present a portrait of stability and passion throughout the years. Their four daughters must continually strive to replicate that kind of love in their own lives and each of them has her own challenges to overcome. The oldest, Wendy, leaps out from the pages with her oversized personality and wry comments. Her "Irish twin" Violet is far more traditional and yoked to pursuing perfection in all she does. Then there's Liza, a psychologist married to a depressed and tattoo-sleeved software developer, and the youngest, Grace, who finds herself being left out of the sisterhood due to her "last child" standing.

The relationship among the four sisters pulses with authenticity. Claire Lombardo writes, "The only portrait you could ever get really of one sister from another, tinged inevitably with jealousy and double standards and affection as deep and intractable as marrow." When Jonah, the love child of one of the sisters is suddenly thrust into their lives, some of the fault lines are widened. All the tumultuous elements that come part and parcel of being a family are here "the secrets, the illnesses, the childrearing, the unexpected happenings that knock down carefully planned lives.

I did have a few quibbles. The characters sometimes talk in staccato to a fault. (Example: "Hey honey, is Ryan\_Has he |" or "But they really "You'd be surprised how they grow on you.") It's authentic, yes, but also overdone. There were some parts that were a stretch (why would daughter Liza choose a chronically depressed partner who gave her little emotionally?) But these are,



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The Most Fun We Ever Had

indeed, quibbles. Claire Lombardo has the writing chops and her book is page-turning. 4.5 stars.

...more

## The Most Funniest Thing In The World

This is one of the best reads of 2019, bar none. I am calling it... this book will win all of the awards. Claire Lombardo is the next Kingsolver. Here it is in writing, in January of 2019, and I can't wait to look back on this and know how right I was.Â

Lombardo's debut novel is truly a work of art. It follows the Sorenson family, consisting of Marilyn and David (the parents), and their four daughters, Wendy, Violet, Liza, and Grace. Each character has their own personality, truly distinct and yet This is one of the best reads of 2019, bar none. I am calling it... this book will win all of the awards. Claire Lombardo is the next Kingsolver. Here it is in writing, in January of 2019, and I can't wait to look back on this and know how right I was.Â

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The story is told in flashbacks, as well as present day, chapters alternating. We witness the story unraveling, how the characters got to the point that they are now, almost as if a coming-of-age story for every single character individually and as a family unit. Marilyn and David have an unparalleled love story that engulfed me, and gave me hope that my fiance and I have found what those two have. And, it reminded me of my own parents, married now for 35 years and still as in love as they were the day that they met.

Despite the privilege in which these characters are bread into, they have their own struggles. No one is immune from mental illness, no one is immune from ill-fated hardships, and it felt as though reading this book was seeing a very realistic and relatable family through a very raw, magnifying lens.

I cannot tell you how much I enjoyed this book. I am heartbroken that I have finished it, and wish I could read it again with the same lack of awareness as the first time. I think a LOT of readers will resonate with one or more characters in the novel, and the thematic elements that emerge through Lombardo's writing. Lovers of Kingsolver'sÂ UnshelteredÂ will love this piece of writing. I know I did! ...more

Can a family love each other too much?

It is a matter of astonishment to me how a writer springs fully formed into a debut novelist of such accomplishment. The Most Fun We Ever Had is a portrait of an Illinois familyâ€™s dynamics from a unique perspective: one where the parents of four daughters love them â€™ but most particularly love each other â€™ perhaps a little \*too\* much. Sounds simple? Yes, but as past events are deftly â€™ indeed, seamlessly â€™ interwoven with current time, Claire Lombardo achiev Can a family love each other too much?

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Unlike many family stories where the discord between parents leads to problems for their children, Marilyn and David continually express their adoration of each other in physical ways, touching, fondling, canoodling in the kitchen. Their daughters accept this - it's always been their parents' way - but as the girls grapple with growing up and adulthood and life throws them difficult challenges, as life tends to do, the impact of their parents' affection for each other grows increasingly apparent.

The author's ability to convey the complexity of her characters and the way she shapes their story results in an exceptionally well-rounded narrative. We're not in Elizabeth Strout or Anne Tyler country here, nor any of the contemporary American nuclear family life novelists that I can think of. I very much get the feeling that Claire Lombardo might have carved herself a whole new niche.

My grateful thanks to Orion for the review copy courtesy of NetGalley.

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## The Most Fun Jobs

There is a certain type of book I love. The Most Fun We Ever Had is that kind of book. Characters so real you know them. Wallace Stegner wrote this kind of book, so does Wally Lamb, Donna Tarrh, et al. It amazes me this is Claire Lombardo's debut novel. The writing never misses a beat and the story moves seamlessly. 5 Stars, ARC.

Terrific debut novel about family dynamics, particularly relationships among sisters. This book is to be published in June 2019. Thank you to the publisher Doubleday. I feel sure this will be a top read for me in 2019.

## The Most Funniest Pictures

I devoured Claire Lombardo's book in bursts of unplanned and total immersion: I intended to sit down to read for a just a few minutes before leaving for work, then woops! I finished my cup of coffee and left late. I meant to just finish the chapter before bed, but stayed up for another hour to dig into the next part. I was so engaged by the novel's structure that I couldn't help myself. Lombardo is a master of the last sentence: Each chapter ends so compellingly that I was often left smiling, or I devoured Claire Lombardo's book in bursts of unplanned and total immersion: I intended to sit down to read for a just a few minutes before leaving for work, then woops! I finished my cup of coffee and left late. I meant to just finish the chapter before bed, but stayed up for another hour to dig into the next part. I was so engaged by the novel's structure that I couldn't help myself. Lombardo is a master of the last sentence: Each chapter ends so compellingly that I was often left smiling, or teary, or curious about what would be revealed next. Her characters are so lovingly rendered that I found myself missing them when I'd finished the novel--a personal barometer of an excellent story. The relationship between Marilyn and David, in particular, is such a wise, thoughtful portrayal of the complexities of love and marriage that it made me consider my own relationship in a new light. I could continue to gush, but I'll stop here: THE MOST FUN WE EVER HAD is just wonderful. Read it! ...more

We're still too far from pub date to leave a real review, but I am fairly confident this will be one of the best books I read this year.

## The Most Functional Backpack For Commuters

This is going to end up in my top ten of the year!

This is the story of the Sorenson family. David and Marilyn met in the 1970s, they got married, David went to medical school, and they had four daughters: Wendy, Violet, Liza, and Grace. The bulk of the story takes place in the present-day after Wendy orchestrates a meeting between Violet and the now-16-yr-old son she gave up for adoption (Jonah). As the novel moves through the year following this meeting—interspersed with flashbacks in which we

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It's being called a literary version of *Parenthood* or *This Is Us*, and that is 100% accurate. Messy, funny, loving, dysfunctional, and emotional. David and Marilyn captured my heart; I've never read a more realistic and beautiful account of a long marriage. All the sisters are pretty flawed in the present-day—at times downright unlikeable—but the flashbacks slowly explain how they got there. Jonah, on the other hand, was an absolute gem of a character. As a mom of four myself and someone who married young and is still deeply in love with my husband, I strongly related to David and Marilyn's journey from young lovers to new parents to empty nesters to grandparents. I want to be David and Marilyn! It's also set in and around the Chicago area, and the setting is captured perfectly. Lombardo's writing voice is both confident and accessible, and although she has some writing tics (lots of italics! strangely disjointed dialogue) I found it such a delight to read. I predict this is going to be a huge hit this summer. Definitely put it on your TBR.

Releases June 25. Thanks to @netgalley and @doubledaybooks for an electronic copy in exchange for an honest review. ...more

Thank you Penguin Random House First to Read for ARC of this 5â• multi-generational family story set mostly in Chicagoland with chapters alternating in present day and merging with timeline starting in the 70s. I think David and Marilyn may be my most favorite married couple ever. What a creative premise for an outstanding debut filled with dry wit and affection — the impact of a parent's seemingly perfect marriage on four daughters as they grow up, as well as their current young adult and adult

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