



## Bookends: A Novel

By Jane Green

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### Bookends: A Novel By Jane Green

**On the heels of her national bestsellers *Jemima J* and *Mr. Maybe*, British sensation Jane Green delivers a sparkling tale of old friends reunited and old jealousies rekindled.**

Catherine Warner and Simon Nelson are best friends: total opposites, always together, and both unlucky in love. Cath is scatterbrained, messy, and—since she had her heart broken a few years back—emotionally closed off. Si is impossibly tidy, bitchy, and desperate for a man of his own. They live in London’s West Hampstead along with their lifelong friends, Josh and Lucy, who are happily married with a devil-spawn child and a terrifying Swedish nanny, Ingrid.

All’s well (sort of) until the sudden arrival of a college friend—the stunningly beautiful Portia, who’s known for breaking hearts. Though they’ve grown up and grown apart from Portia, the four friends welcome her back into the fold. But does Portia have a hidden agenda or is she merely looking to reconnect with old friends? Her reappearance soon unleashes a rollicking series of events that tests the foursome’s friendships to the limit and leaves them wondering if a happy ending is in store.

Fortunately, Cath has plenty to take her mind off Portia’s schemes—like her gutsy decision to leave her job in advertising to fulfill her dream of opening a bookstore. And then there’s James, the sexy real-estate agent who keeps dropping by even after the bookstore deal is done. With his irresistible smile and boyish charm could he be the one to melt Cath’s heart?

Told with Jane Green’s captivating wit and flare, *Bookends* is above all a story about friendship—its twists, turns and complications—and how it weathers the challenges of love, ambition, marriage, and, most of all, growing up. Warmhearted, sophisticated, and full of delicious surprises, *Bookends* is Green’s most dazzling novel yet.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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## **Editorial Review**

### Amazon.com Review

*Bookends*, Jane Green's third comic novel of contemporary love and lust, proves beyond a doubt that when it comes to light reading, plot is everything. *Bookends* makes a great case study because it has little going for it besides plot. Dialogue? Stilted. Characters? Clichéd. Writing style? Sloppy. And yet the book is well-nigh impossible to put down. A few friends meet at university: Simon, the chirpy gay character; Portia, the glamour girl; Josh, the adorable, unpretentious catch; and Cath, the overweight, insecure narrator. Portia strays from their crowd, but the other three remain friends into their 30s. Now successful Londoners, each faces a personal crisis: singleton Cath leaves a secure job to start a bookstore; Simon looks for love; Josh's marriage goes through growing pains. And then Portia, as intimidating and elegant as ever, wanders back into their lives--with surprising results. Green is a past master of the ugly-duckling-turned-swan story. Cath's transformation--neatly echoed by the changes in the lives of her friends--is completely addictive. Plot does indeed rule. --*Claire Dederer*

### From Publishers Weekly

Popular British author Green (*Jemima J and Mr. Maybe*) follows up her two hits with a less sparkling effort that examines the intricacies of enduring friendships. In college 10 years ago, a small group of misfits—dowdy Catherine, gay Simon, cute naïf Josh and his object of affection, the regally beautiful Portia—were best friends. After a messy split from Portia, the others have continued their friendship without her. While promiscuous Si and celibate Cath have lousy luck with men, Josh is happily married to earthy Lucy. The members of the tightly knit quartet commiserate about extra body weight, job dissatisfaction and the search for love, but are basically content—until Portia reenters their lives and threatens their stability. Green touts her return as almost sinister, but the forecasted tornado ends up a mere zephyr. The novel opens with a promising bang, only to peter out before fulfilling its potential. Green has a knack for creating both atmosphere and characters that ring true, but the dialogue is sometimes strangely stilted and does little to propel the oft-meandering plot. There are some bright spots, like Cath's blossoming relationship with dreamboat James, but they are too few and far between to steady the pace.

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### From Library Journal

In her follow-up to *Jemima J and Mr. Maybe*, Green once again takes on the world from a youngish single woman's perspective, but this time with a slightly larger cast of characters. Though primarily Catherine's story, this novel also includes Josh, Cath's married friend; his wife and son; and Simon, Cath's (somewhat stereotypically) homosexual best friend. They all met at school, where the perfect, rich Portia was their idol. Though she eventually toppled off her pedestal, the others have maintained their broken circle. Fast-forward a few years, and Portia resurfaces. Thus, Cath must deal with the best friend whose loss she never really got over while also achieving her dream of opening a bookstore and finally availing herself of love. This novel is touted as Green's next, more mature step, but it's not that original or interesting. Cath is a frustrating character, and the dialog is uninspired and generic. The only inspired stroke is Portia; she's a much more intriguing character than any of the others. Recommended for libraries with large popular fiction collections.

Amanda Glasbrenner, New York

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### **From reader reviews:**

**Eileen Lopez:**

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**Michael Medellin:**

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