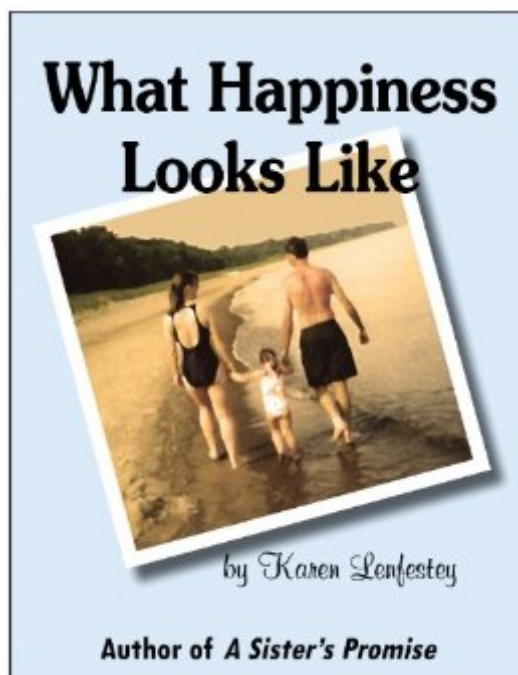


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What Happiness Looks Like (Sisters Series Book 2)



Synopsis

Joely Shupe had a vision of what her thirties would look like: she'd be the mother of two, finger painting with her kids during the day and cooking dinner for her loving husband at night. Instead she's a single mother struggling to provide for her only child. To make matters worse, her ex-fiancé, Jake, shows up--unemployed and reeling from a personal tragedy. He claims he's ready to parent the daughter he abandoned five years ago. Joely is more interested in Dalton, a devoted father to his own son, who offers to take care of her the way no man ever has. Should Joely risk her daughter bonding with someone new or with the man who broke her heart? Meanwhile, Joely's sister, Kate, has the husband and the home, but no baby. After several failed attempts at fertility treatments, Kate's husband is ready to give up. Kate believes his solution to their problems will tear them apart. For Joely and Kate, one thing is for sure: this is not the life they expected. Is it time to adjust their idea of what happiness looks like? **BONUS:** Book club discussion questions are included at the end.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I really liked Karen's first novel, but she has raised the bar with her sophomore effort. A second book is tough. Sometimes authors fall short with their second books due to expectations, not

understanding themselves as writers well enough yet, or for other reasons. This is certainly not the case with *What Happiness Looks Like*. This book is full of complex characters, is well-layered, and has a plot that will keep you turning pages. And the ending will grip you as it is a little heartbreaking yet completely satisfying. I am drawn to character-driven stories, but my favorite stories are both character-driven and well-plotted. And *Happiness* has both elements in abundance. All of the characters are fully realized, including secondary characters. You want to root for them all, and you want them all to "win" even though you know that's impossible. For me, that's the best kind of story. There are also strong, emotion-filled relationships between these characters that keep the tension high--whether that's the bond (and stretching of the bond) between sisters, the relationship between estranged lovers who've had a child together, a husband and wife who are having trouble conceiving, and more. I also like the way the book picks up where *A Sister's Promise* left off in dealing with complex questions of motherhood, who should be a mother, and who gets to decide the answer to that question. On an even larger scale, encompassing both genders, the central question of this book is, what does it take to be a good parent; how do you earn that right? And who gets to take that away from you if anyone does? And when do you cross the line from wanting to be a parent even if you're not the ideal choice to being selfish because there may be others who can do the job better than you can?

Kate and Joely became my bffs when I read Karen Lenfestey's, *"A Sister's Promise."* Karen more than delivers a great read with her second book, *"What Happiness Looks Like,"* (It's a solid stand-alone book, if you haven't read Karen's first book.) Picking up *"What Happiness Looks Like"* was like opening the door to a favorite girlfriend (two in this case). Kate and Joely are back and it's time to grab a cup of coffee, sit with them, and find out what's happening in their lives. While reading *"What Happiness Looks Like,"* wet laundry doesn't get put in the dryer and dirty dishes remain in the sink. Karen's well-defined, very likable characters face real life issues that strike at the heart of every woman. Her well-crafted fast-paced novel urges you to see the sisters through it all to the end, cheering them through struggles and difficult choices. What does happiness look like for Joely? The life she's living isn't what she planned for herself. She's made mistakes, wrong choices, and struggles with Lupus, but that's what makes her real. Who can't relate? Her affair with Jake, her old fiancé (a married man) resulted in Joely conceiving Anna. Now, she's a single mom, living with her sister. When Anna's father comes back into their lives, Joely must protect her daughter's heart in a way she's not been able to protect her own. Can she trust Jake after he abandoned them and left them broke? Will her past determine her future? She likes another man, who better fits her definition

of what happiness looks like. What does happiness look like for Kate? She's a career driven counselor, at age forty, battling infertility. Her firm stance on getting pregnant is driving a wedge between Kate and her husband, Mitch.

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