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Baby Proof

- *Emily Giffin*

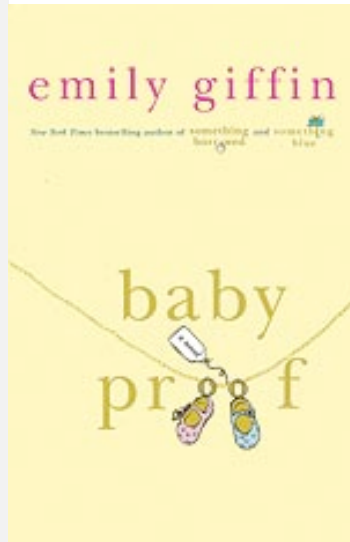


photo by Jerry Bauer

Emily Giffin doesn't mind if you dislike her heroines at first. In her debut, *Something Borrowed*, she introduced a protagonist who slept with her best friend's fiancé at the beginning of the book. Her next, *Something Blue*, reversed that scenario and presented a beautiful but somewhat shallow woman who learns about karma the hard way when her fiancé leaves her for her plain-looking best friend. It's immensely refreshing that the author doesn't fall into the boring clichés of lightweight, likable everywoman characters who endure and eventually triumph over a series of not-too-troubling obstacles.

"I really enjoy writing chick-lit books where the readers have a feeling when they start the book that they're not going to like the heroine," Giffin says.

"In *Something Borrowed*, what woman is going to like that heroine? You have the sense that you're going to hate her, and then I like getting the reader to root for her. With *Baby Proof*, I wanted women to think, 'I'm not going to like her. What's wrong with a woman who doesn't want kids?' Hopefully, people come away feeling empathy for her."



The heroine of *Baby Proof* (St. Martin's Press), Claudia, is indeed very likable. And honest. She's not out to steal anyone's man or betray her best friend. She's just happy being child-free (she's very clear that she doesn't wish to be known as "childless").

Claudia's relationship with her husband, Ben, who initially feels the same way about children, evolves throughout *Baby Proof*. As Ben gradually begins to change his mind, the story roams into challenging, thought-provoking territory. Nothing is as simple as it seems, and really, who is right—the one who refuses to change her mind or the one who made an agreement and now wants to forget it?

"I thought it was much more interesting to do this from the woman's point of view," says Giffin, the proud mother of twin two-year-old boys. "The views of women who don't want kids are marginalized. But there's a growing number of women who are saying, 'This isn't me.' It was satisfying to give a voice to her."

Giffin already ranked as one of the top three bestselling women's fiction authors of last year (along with Jennifer Weiner and Sophie Kinsella), and she doesn't mind if you call her books chick-lit. When the stories are good, what does it matter?

"At the end of the day, it is chick-lit," Giffin says, "but chick-lit is a pretty broad base of women's fiction for stories told in the first person about women and things that are important to women: their professions, their relationships, their lives and what they want and don't want. Those are the stories I tell."

 -John Hogan

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