SHORT VERSION BOOK REVIEW (See below for a longer version)

Book: The Builders

Reviewer: Rukmini Rajagopalan

Level of Difficulty: Easy

My thoughts about the book and its suitability for my group:

This book is less than 100 pages. The language is quite easy to read.

Nan Ryan lives by herself at 14 Chestnut Road. When builders arrive to fix a deserted house next door, everyone expects the worst. But when a handsome workman looks to Nan to help unravel the mystery of the previous residents' disappearance, a strange relationship develops. With family dynamics and crooked developers in the wings, things are about to get very messy...

Students’ reactions to the book:

The book is a fast page-turner and you won’t want to put it down until you finish it.

Tips for other tutors who may want to use this book:

LONG VERSION BOOK REVIEW

Book: The Builders

Reviewed By: Rukmini Rajagopalan

Level of Difficulty: Easy

Short synopsis:

This book is less than 100 pages and the language is quite easy to read. It is fiction by a beloved best-selling author, Maeve Binchy, on her best topic-relationships. It is a charming novella from a masterful writer on the power of family secrets.

Nan Ryan lives by herself at 14 Chestnut Road. When builders arrive to fix a deserted house next door, everyone expects the worst. But when the handsome workman looks to Nan to help unravel the mystery of the previous residents' disappearance, a strange relationship develops. With family dynamics and crooked developers in the wings, things are about to get very messy...

Comments: MILD SPOILER ALERT: This is a story which reflects the routine life of a typical family in a typical neighborhood. The family is running under the leadership of a single mother with a full time job, while raising two daughters and a son so that they can have a respectable and comfortable future.
The main character, Nancy Ryan is a devoted single mother who goes to great lengths to raise her children such that her expectations of seeing them well-situated in their future come true. She also does anything and everything in her power to fulfill their little temptations, as well as their whims and fancies so that they do not feel the lack of their father not being around. Nan does not hesitate doing any chores such as getting her son Bobby’s clothes washed and ironed promptly, or entertaining her daughter Pat’s request to have a lunch ready whenever she wants to come home and lunch with her mother. She also is a great relationship-advisor to her daughter Jo, who came to her mother with a complaint of her husband Jerry’s infidelity.

Nancy is a great role model for the women of the modern world to follow. Her strong inclination to strictly discharge her commitments to her family, and her brave and courageous performance are exemplary.

The main male in the story, Derek, is a friendly character and a man of measured words. He seeks out Nan’s advice to learn a lot about the neighborhood around 14 Chestnut Road. However, he does not volunteer any information from his side unless it is absolutely necessary.

When Derek, the handsome workman who comes to fix the house next door, steps into Nan’s house he grabs permanent residency in Nan’s heart. She starts looking forward to his visits daily, and she takes a special interest in fixing a bite to eat or something to munch on for Derek as her regular commitment. It is worth mentioning Nan’s patient outlook, which makes her remain silent until and unless she has all necessary information before commenting. For example, she does not get all worked up and speak her mind even though she becomes disheartened when she hears Derek mention something about his wife. She misunderstands that Derek is living with his wife. However, she realizes that she did the right thing keeping quiet earlier when she hears him mention later on that he has been living single since his wife left him 14 years ago.

The book is a fast page-turner and you won’t feel like keeping it down until you finish it.