

## Good Karma: A Novel

Harper Paperbacks

By Christina Kelly

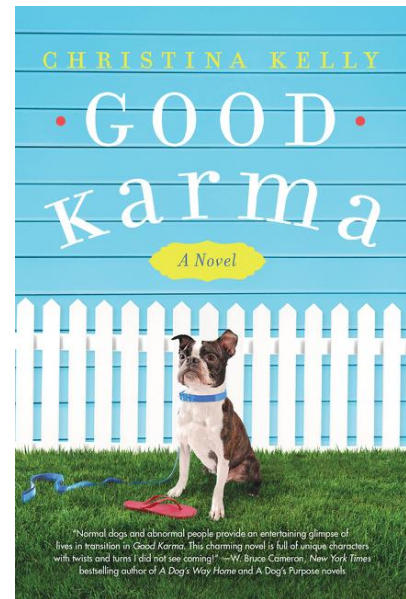
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### Introduction

A charming, heartfelt tale of love lost and regained in a gated community in Savannah, Georgia.

After almost forty years in New Jersey, Catherine, Ralph, and their beloved Boston Terrier Karma are hitting the road, relocating to a gorgeous, serene island off the coast of Savannah, Georgia, where Catherine can work on her backhand and Ralph can hit the links. But upon their arrival in the Seven Oaks gated community, it becomes apparent that Catherine and Ralph's visions of retirement couldn't be more different. While Catherine is intrigued by their quirky neighbors, Ralph's golf-and-poker routine seems to be interrupted only by his flirtations with their zealous real estate agent.

As the pair drift further apart, Catherine cannot help but sense her marriage is at risk. Then, she meets recent widower Fred at the dog park. United by their dogs, they embark upon a friendship that could be something more—until she discovers that he's not quite what he seems. As she sorts out fact from fiction and discovers what sorts of secrets might be hiding behind Seven Oaks' pristine picket fences, she'll have to make a decision affecting her future happiness and her chance at newfound love.



### Questions for Discussion

1. What are your first impressions of Catherine and Ralph, and what do their reactions to each other reveal about their marriage? What do you think each of them wants or fears?
2. Security is paramount to Catherine: in her sense of self, in her marriage, and in her home. Do you think she's overly focused on it? Is she more secure or less so by the novel's end?

3. What do you think of gated communities like Seven Oaks? Is Christina Kelly's depiction of such a community accurate or is it satirical? When you retire, would you consider moving to such a place? If you have a partner, have you discussed your expectations of retirement?
4. Throughout the novel, Fred hears the voice of his late wife in his head. Do you read Lissa's voice as literal or something Fred imagines? Have you ever felt that you could hear the voice of a deceased loved one? If not, would you want to?
5. How does Fred and Danielle's relationship change after Lissa's death? What are the sources of Danielle's anger or impatience? Are they justified?
6. Like Amity, do we all have an impulse to "lead other people's lives"? If so, have you ever acted on this feeling? Does Amity's rationale for creeping and taking advantage of others' lapses in security reveal something about her character?
7. Why does Ida Blue pretend to be a pet psychic? Is what she does wrong? Does it matter if her heart is in the right place?
8. The point of view alternates between several characters throughout the novel. Did you relate to one point of view or voice more than the others?
9. The author juxtaposes humor and pathos. Did you find them balanced? Are some individuals more prone to see one or the other in the same situation?
10. Several characters in the novel are "stuck" (as Fred tells his therapist), both needing to take action but being unable to. What events compel each character to act? Are most people you know contented in their marriages, careers, and lives? For those who aren't, what holds them back from taking steps toward change?
11. Dogs play a big role in Good Karma. How do Sequoia and Karma act as vehicles for character development? How do Karma, Sequoia, Leona, and Lulu mirror their owners' personalities? If other characters were to get dogs, what breeds would they choose?
12. What is your definition of "karma"? In what ways do the characters experience good karma? When have you encountered good karma in your own life?