



## **Fly Away Home**

*Jennifer Weiner*

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## **Fly Away Home** Jennifer Weiner

Sometimes all you can do is fly away home . . .

When Sylvie Serfer met Richard Woodruff in law school, she had wild curls, wide hips, and lots of opinions. Decades later, Sylvie has remade herself as the ideal politician's wife—her hair dyed and straightened, her hippie-chick wardrobe replaced by tailored knit suits. At fifty-seven, she ruefully acknowledges that her job is staying twenty pounds thinner than she was in her twenties and tending to her husband, the senator.

Lizzie, the Woodruffs' younger daughter, is at twenty-four a recovering addict, whose mantra HALT (Hungry? Angry? Lonely? Tired?) helps her keep her life under control. Still, trouble always seems to find her. Her older sister, Diana, an emergency room physician, has everything Lizzie failed to achieve—a husband, a young son, the perfect home—and yet she's trapped in a loveless marriage. With temptation waiting in one of the ER's exam rooms, she finds herself craving more.

After Richard's extramarital affair makes headlines, the three women are drawn into the painful glare of the national spotlight. Once the press conference is over, each is forced to reconsider her life, who she is and who she is meant to be.

Written with an irresistible blend of heartbreak and hilarity, *Fly Away Home* is an unforgettable story of a mother and two daughters who after a lifetime of distance finally learn to find refuge in one another.

## **Fly Away Home Details**

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## From Reader Review Fly Away Home for online ebook

### Callie says

not going to lie... disappointing, lame and a huge let down after her first books. this is just my opinion though! i feel like she just took an us weekly story of a cheating politician or actor and tried to make it a good fiction book. it was honestly nothing better than boring. sorry jennifer weiner, i used to wait for your books with baited breath -- after the last 2 not sure ill even care.

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### Shelly Ellis says

So Jennifer Weiner is one of those authors that even when its "meh", its still good. She's just a talented storyteller who knows the formula of good women's fiction backward and forward and can deliver on a good tale. But that's the main problem with this story. It's formulaic. I've read other Weiner's works and I can spot the character prototypes and kinda predict what's going to happen. There is going to be a chubby Jewish woman who's witty and wholesome but snarky and finding her way. There's going to be a type-A overachiever who will gradually end up humbled and relaxed by the end of the book. There's the beautiful misunderstood one. That's not to say the characters aren't believable and she doesn't do great character development... you just know they're going to be there.

I'd still recommend her to anyone who likes good women's fic.

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### Emily says

There are some books I find hard to rate...I enjoyed reading them & finish them quickly, but at the end, I don't feel moved by the book, have a feeling of satisfaction at the end of the story or feel that it was special in any way. 2 stars seems kind of harsh, but 3 stars, to me, is a book that I finish and think, "wow, that was a good book".

Fly Away Home is one of those books. I read it quickly & it was enjoyable, but I didn't close have that satisfied feeling I get when I finish a good book. Maybe it was because I just finished reading American Wife, but I didn't really feel like there was anything \*specail\* about this book that set it apart from all the other books about women who get cheated on midlife books.

Fly Away Home is about the Woodruff family. Sylvie is married to Richard (a Senator) and they have 2 grown daughters. One daughter, Diana, is "perfect" (married, kid, ER doctor) the other, Lizzie, is the messed up one (recovery addict). Richard has an affair with an aide & everything comes crashing down for Sylvie. She has spent her whole marriage catering to her husband. Now, she has to decide whether to stay with him & how to redefine herself. The girls are also a mess, Diana in a loveless marriage (well, at least on her end)& having an affair and Lizzie still not pulling herself together. The story is divided into 3 parts and each part has several chapters told from Sylvie, Diane and Lizzie's point of view.

The book was enjoyable & a fast read, but nothing new or especially moving. As a side note, I hate how much Weiner's characters always think about their weight...lots "big" girls who are "forced" to be slim and then are happy when they can be curvy again or lots of weight related comments/descriptions/thoughts.

## Justina says

Well, my grandmother sent me this book for beach reading. While it was a lot better than most "beach reads"/chick lit, which I detest, it still just wasn't that great.

The book follows the story of three women. The mother, whose husband is a politician, finds out that he husband had an affair. The eldest daughter, Diana, is having an affair and is repulsed by her husband. And the youngest, Lizzy, has just gotten out of rehab.

The mother is the most likable character by far. She goes through a lot of change throughout the course of the book, though it does all seem rather ABRUPT, to be honest. Also she has a weird obsession with cooking/food, which reminded me of the other book by Weiner that I've read, Good In Bed. That book also had an inexplicable focus on food. SO after describing them eating roast duck and baked goods and creamy sauces, the author throws in a "...but no one gained any weight because they walked around on the beach a lot..." ummmmm okay. whatever you say.

Diana was not a likable character to me. She seemed immature and cold, and never really seems to transform.

Lizzy had the potential to be very likable. Her story is interesting- the recovering addict daughter of two affluent parents- and her character seems the most honest and pure. But. Then she starts dating this guy and she withholds some information with him that it just seems POINTLESS to hide, and in fact, WRONG to hide. I just got mad at her for being so self-centered.

That was basically the problem with this book. Most of the characters were TOO self-centered, while the mother, as you'll see in the end, isn't self-centered enough. I wouldn't really recommend this book unless you really desire some light reading about women/family.

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## Lori W says

This one was okay, but it was by far, my least favorite Jennifer Weiner book. I found the main character (wronged wife Sylvie) to be pretty boring, and Weiner didn't really cover any territory of political wifedom that hasn't been written about many times in the news, on the tv show, "The Good Wife," or in Curtis Sittenfeld's "American Wife." It didn't feel very original, at all, which surprised and disappointed me, because usually, Weiner's characters are very lively.

I found her two daughters and their dynamic (responsible, uptight Diana and irresponsible, free child Lizzie) much more interesting. I wish that the pages dedicated to Sylvie, her waffling about her husband, and her newfound independence were dedicated to Diana and Lizzie, instead.

I also found the current political and pop culture references very distracting. Instead of being immersed in the story, I had to stop, figure out who she was talking about (which didn't take all that long but was a complete screeching halt to the plot), and then wonder if this book would stand up to time, after people forget about Larry Craig's wide stance.

The book was okay, but definitely not up to snuff for a Weiner. Ah well, better luck next time.

## Ashley says

Jennifer Weiner's *Fly Away Home* is my selection for the September Chick Lit Plus Reading Challenge.

I listened to, rather than read, this book. *Fly Away Home* tells the story of Sylvie Woodruff and her daughters, Diana and Lizzie. Married for more than thirty years, Sylvie learns that her husband, Senator Richard Woodruff has had an affair. Sylvie retreats to her family's beach home in Connecticut to figure out what she wants to do with her marriage, and is ultimately joined by her daughters.

Affairs by politicians and celebrities are nothing new. But Jennifer Weiner explores what happens to the spouses. The betrayed women who stand, at least for a time, beside their contrite husbands. It is certainly chick-lit, but that doesn't mean it is dumb. Sylvie, Diana, and Lizzie are all complex characters. They all are dealing with their own baggage, struggling to just get it right every day.

I typically listen to audiobooks only during my commute, but with this one, I found myself looking for chances to listen. I was pulled into the story because Sylvie wasn't weak. Sure, she was blindsided, but she didn't just wither up. She also didn't hatch some crazy revenge plan. She just coped. Diana and Lizzie weren't cliched characters, either. They each bring some depth to their story, and just enough realism to be identifiable.

The thing I liked best is that Weiner could have gone with a typical melodramatic climax. Instead, it was much more subtle, and to me, all the more real. Often times, we don't recognize the significance of events while we are in them.

If you're a "smart" chick lit fan, then check out this one!

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## Jaime says

I've been a little reluctant to read more from Weiner, because the first two books I read focused so much on the weight of the protagonist that it was a little bit of a turn-off. Thankfully, Weiner has grown as a writer and moved away from that to focus on more important issues.

*Fly Away Home* is about what happens to a family when a betrayal is revealed in a very public way. Sylvie, the victimized wife, decides that she needs some time away. She moves to her mother's vacation home, hoping to figure out who she is now that she's not being the Senator's wife. Her oldest daughter, Diana, is a busy doctor with an inattentive husband who finds excitement in the arms of another man, despite seeing what adultery has done to her parents. Her youngest daughter, Lizzie, is a recovering drug addict who is relishing the chance to be the caretaker for a change. I'd tell you more about the men, but they are rather one-dimensional.

I rather enjoyed Sylvie and Lizzie's parts of the story, but had major issues with Diana, for several reasons. First, she's basically a bitch. From the beginning to the end, I had a hard time mustering up any sympathy for her. Weiner tries really hard to make her husband, Gary, as distasteful as possible, but the more distasteful she made him, the worse Diana looks. In fact, I felt bad for Gary, because he married a woman who obviously never loved him to begin with and only married him because she figured she might as well get that part of her life over with. Box checked. I also didn't like the hot and cold relationship she had with her young

son, who seemed so much better off with his recovering addict aunt. And finally, the event that forces Lizzie out of Diana's house made no sense to me. It seemed like an incredibly huge over-reaction. I think we're supposed to accept it because Diana is lashing out at someone else to assuage her own guilt, but it didn't work.

I also found the ending to be a bit disappointing. It's open-ended, and I would have preferred at least a little resolution.

I listened to this on audio and enjoyed Judith Light as narrator.

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## **Judy says**

A disappointing story about the "perfect" Senator's wife who has neglected her two adult daughters (the "good" daughter is an ER doctor and the "bad" daughter is a drug addict fresh from rehab) to devote her life to her husband and his career. Then CNN, and every other news outlet, breaks the news that the Senator has had an affair with a young legislative aide and reports that he used his political influence to find her employment in a top D.C. law firm. Predictably, chaos ensues. Talk about a plot ripped from the headlines. I will admit that I've always been fascinated by the sight of political wives standing by their husband's side during the news conference while the "bad boy" tries to explain himself and his behavior (kudos to you, Jenny Sanford) and wonder how these women, who appear to be either shell-shocked or drugged, or perhaps both, react once the cameras aren't rolling. This book is the story of what happens after the news conference. Each chapter is told from the perspective of the wife, or one of the daughters. Unfortunately, I really didn't connect with any of the characters, except for Milo, the Senator's grandson, and didn't really care what happened. I expected more.

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## **Amanda Shaked says**

Interestingly enough, this was one of the first novels that Jennifer Weiner wrote, when she was still working as a journalist. She tells you all this at the end of the book.....well before any of the political scandals, i.e., Elliot Spitzer, Anthony Weiner, Gov. McCreavy, and their sexual improprieties ever came to light. Thus, the book was almost prophetic, in the sense of it kind of gave you a behind the scenes perspective as to what might really go on behind closed doors, between a political power couple. That being said, I found the story to be a little contrived, and wholly unrealistic. Don't get me wrong, I totally enjoyed reading the book, it was the perfect beach read, a good, enjoyable story, without having to really think.....but with that in mind, it was a little too fluffy to attack what would really happen to a political family in the wake of a sex scandal. A good book, but definitely not one of Jennifer Weiner's best....it is also interesting, because in reading this book, I definitely began to figure out what her formula was for book writing.....she always presents one domineering female character, one dysfunctional sister character, one straight laced female character, and one female character who is struggling with inner turmoil and the need for change. Sometimes she overlaps these personalities and creates different characters, or sometimes she keeps them true to form, but she basically just throws these types of people into the ring, presents a different environment, and then works out how they would react in different scenarios. The men in her books always play a secondary role in that they either contribute to and cause the dysfunction, or take a secondary role in being the supporter of the new and improved character. I would recommend this book if you want something light, and have nothing else on your plate to read.....

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## Love Fool says

Written with an irresistible blend of heartbreak and hilarity, *Fly Away Home* is an unforgettable story of a mother and two daughters who after a lifetime of distance finally learn to find refuge in one another.

I had my doubts about this book because I read one of Jennifer Weiner's other books and didn't care for it that much but this was really good. The ladies are all selfish and you want to shake each one but I didn't grow up with money, fame, or responsibility like this family did so I don't know how I would handle it.

Out of all the characters, Liz was favorite. Sure, she was the biggest fuckup but she has such a kind heart and troubled mind you have to feel for her... even if you think she's a spoiled brat, which she is. But, she wants to do well and change her life so badly so you forgive her for being spoiled and root for her.

Diana was the biggest bitch but you understand the decisions she made.

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## Anne (Booklady) Molinarolo says

### 2.75 Stars

I was really disappointed with this novel. After reading the Book Blurb, I thought I was going to get a literary version of *The Good Wife*. Sylvie Serfer Woodruff has given all that she is and has to her husband - U.S. Senator Richard Woodruff. She has put him above everyone, including her daughters. She is a glorified gopher - she fetches his breakfast, helps write his speeches, runs every detail of their daily schedule as well as the maintenance of their Manhattan apartment. That is until cable news networks announce the Breaking News - the Senator had an affair with a woman young enough to his daughter and she looks eerily like a younger Sylvie. His wife does stand beside Richard at a mea culpa Presser, but immediately leaves for her family's Connecticut's beach home.

As the book blurb says her two daughters join her there, each with their own secret. There they will discover refuge in each other. But this reunion doesn't happen until the last 1/3 of the book. And honestly the first 2/3's of the book was boring. Why do I as a reader want to care about Sylvie, Lizzie, and Diana Woodruff? I still don't know. The two daughters are screwed up big-time. One is an ER Doc with a god complex, whose master life plan is falling apart. The youngest is a recovering addict, whom is "sensitive." Lizzie hides behind her camera - she feels unworthy. Well, a totally dysfunctional family! I did like Lizzie though.

And what's with the ending? We readers get to imagine what happens to these 3 women? I thought the whole point of Chick Lit was to make the reader smile - I am not.

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## Min says

After the disaster that was Weiner's last book (*Best Friends Forever*), I started this book with trepidation. But it was quite soon that my fears and doubts were put to rest. Weiner hit her stride in the first few chapters and she never lost it.

The book is told alternately from the perspective of the wife and two adult daughters of a New York senator who has been caught having an affair. After the press conference in which he admits to not only having the

affair, but using his influence (but not taxpayer dollars - goody for him!) to get his mistress a coveted job, his wife takes off for a Connecticut beach house.

Each of his two daughters react to the news in different ways, which is not surprising considering that the daughters are extremely different themselves. One is an ER doctor seemingly in control of everything, and the other is a recovering addict trying to straighten out her life - both in Philadelphia (Weiner's current hometown).

Throughout the course of the book, the reader sees how the senator's actions affect each woman. Weiner reveals each women's strengths and vulnerabilities in turn, but never making them weak or simpering (which was her flaw in "Best Friends Forever"). This book made me, once again, a believer in Weiner's talent.

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### **Meredith says**

Wow. I'm really shocked that so many Goodread's folks have given this such good reviews. This book was very disappointing. I have enjoyed Jennifer Weiner's books in the past and this one I could barely get through - I did listen to this on CD.

The characters are so unlikeable and so one dimensional. There's really no reason for us to care about them or their challenges. I'm also finding the sister theme of one sister is the smart crabby sister and the other is the flighty sister really tiresome.

Judith Light reads the book on the CD version and while some of the characters voices are great, some are nails on a chalk board brutal. Every day I considered returning this to the library (do not spend any money on this!) and didn't because I didn't have a backup to listen to during my commute.

On to better things!

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### **Matt says**

I read this book because it was one of those that came up most often as a counter-example in the whole freanztenfreude exploit. I was curious to see what made up the profile of a novel that should've been celebrated as one of the novels but wasn't, by virtue of its treatment of women's issues.

So, I'm a little at a loss. There is a somewhat relentless focus on women's issues, questions of how women identify and define their sense of self and their importance in the world, and the novel explores that for the mother and two daughters it follows in alternating chapters.

In that sense, for me, it was often a little on the nose-- there was a sense here that an effort was made to present three characters who would stand in for all the other middle class white women, and that sometimes that's what we were seeing instead of actual characters. This seemed especially true with the character of Diane, who I never quite felt like we got a handle on.

Also, and this might be a more significant thematic problem with the book, no story seems to really impact the other... In at least some sense, Sylvie's extramarital experience should have some impact on Diane's adultery, but the novel never goes there, and actually denies any connection, which seems a little weird. There are, as a result, no emotional surprises-- in fact, the book feels a little programmatic in a way that's not

always flattering.

But at the end of the day, I think this is a really solid, accomplished book. The writing is consistently good. My real quibbles with the book are questions of taste-- I find realism, qua realism kind of boring, whether it's Weiner or Franzen, and in my experience, neither writer has done what it'll take to change that.

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### **Cheryl says**

Boring! I like Jennifer Weiner and have read all of her other books. This one just didn't do it for me. The plot sounded promising; however, the characterization was very flat and cliched. The older, successful, smart sister vs. the younger, slutty, messed-up sister, and the soon-to-be divorced mother vs. the largely absent father is a characterization found too often in Weiner's other books. I would have liked to have seen some other personality traits in her characters beyond these. I feel she bases her book characters on herself and her own younger sister, and on the family dynamics within her own family when she was growing up. As an author, I think she needs to stretch a little more and branch out from what is safe for her. I basically skimmed this book in 45 minutes and didn't feel I missed out on anything. My main feeling when I finished this book was...bleh!

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