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A Visit from the Good Squad

Prompt 1:

Jennifer Egan constructed this novel in a unique way that, often at times, made the storyline a little difficult to follow. What makes this narrative structure difficult is that it isn’t flowing continuously. Instead, it jumps from story to story which makes it hard to keep track. There is no clear chronological order to make the novel easy to understand. Each story discusses a new character or recurring characters at different stages in their lives. The novel also flip-flops in setting. The first chapter is present day Sasha then the second chapter is present day Bennie. The third chapter however flips to younger, teenage Bennie. We learn about his love life and friends Scotty, Alice, Jocelyn, and Rhea, who he was in a band with. Chapter four was also hard to follow because it was set up into three parts and also jumped from past to present and introduced more characters such as Mindy, Charlene, and Rolph. The last few chapters fast forward to the present day characters. The narrators also change. For example, in Chapter 12 the narrator is Alison, Sasha’s daughter. Overall, it was hard to follow the order because I couldn’t tell what was the past and what was the present, especially when it came to Bennie because the story mostly revolved around him at various random points. However, this form of narrative was helpful in understanding the progression of the characters and their overall development. We see Bennie to grow up to be a successful movie producer and married to Sarah but also becoming a cheater. We also get to see how Sasha battled her struggles with drugs and a violent, absent father but managed to become a loving mother to her two kids.

Prompt 3:

Sasha shows some similarities to Maggie from *Maggie Girl of the Streets*. Both Sasha and Maggie ran away from their homes. Sasha ran away at seventeen while in Naples and Maggie ran away at a young age in New York City. Also both female characters struggled on the streets once they ran away. Sasha turned to drugs to compensate for her pain and at the end of Maggie’s story we learn that she becomes a prostitute on the streets. Furthermore, both characters lacked a strong father figure. Sasha’s father, Andy, was violent and abusive. He left her when she was only six years old and wanted nothing to do with her. Ted, Sasha’s uncle, tells the readers that Sasha’s father did not hold back his violence even in public when they went to the beach. Maggie’s father was also aggressive and abusive, constantly yelling in their house. Both protagonists had undesirable childhoods and homes that made them leave to start a new life. Some differences include that Maggie was kicked out by her mother and brother for falling in love with Pete. Another difference is that Sasha experiences a semi happy ending with Drew and her children, whereas Maggie is still on the streets, alone. She breaks her bad habits to settle down in life. Maggie loses her love, Pete, to another woman.