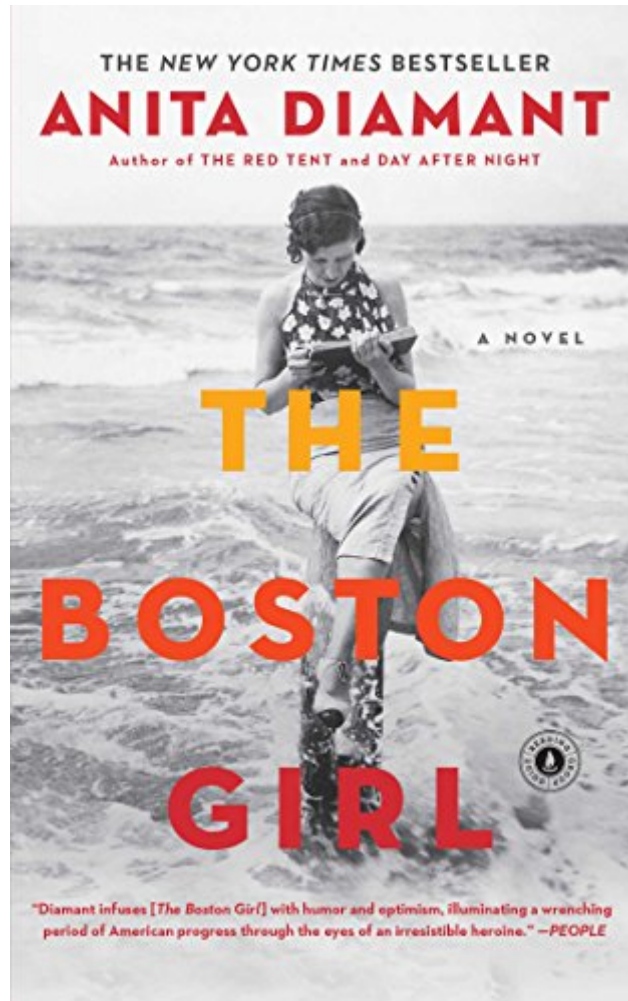




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The Boston Girl: A Novel



Synopsis

New York Times bestseller! An unforgettable novel about a young Jewish woman growing up in Boston in the early twentieth century, told “with humor and optimism” through the eyes of an irresistible heroine • (People) “from the acclaimed author of *The Red Tent*. Anita Diamant’s “vivid, affectionate portrait of American womanhood” (Los Angeles Times), follows the life of one woman, Addie Baum, through a period of dramatic change. Addie is *The Boston Girl*, the spirited daughter of an immigrant Jewish family, born in 1900 to parents who were unprepared for America and its effect on their three daughters. Growing up in the North End of Boston, then a teeming multicultural neighborhood, Addie’s intelligence and curiosity take her to a world her parents can’t imagine—a world of short skirts, movies, celebrity culture, and new opportunities for women. Addie wants to finish high school and dreams of going to college. She wants a career and to find true love. From the one-room tenement apartment she shared with her parents and two sisters, to the library group for girls she joins at a neighborhood settlement house, to her first, disastrous love affair, to finding the love of her life, eighty-five-year-old Addie recounts her adventures with humor and compassion for the naïve girl she once was. Written with the same attention to historical detail and emotional resonance that made Diamant’s previous novels bestsellers, *The Boston Girl* is a moving portrait of one woman’s complicated life in twentieth century America, and a fascinating look at a generation of women finding their places in a changing world. “Diamant brings to life a piece of feminism’s forgotten history” (Good Housekeeping) in this “inspirational” page-turning portrait of immigrant life in the early twentieth century” (Booklist).

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Customer Reviews

The only other book by Anita Diamant I've read is *The Red Tent*, which is one of my favorite novels. Because of that, I was a little surprised at this one as it is so completely different. *The Red Tent* is lush and evocative. *The Boston Girl* is a Jewish Grandmother recounting her life. And it is absolutely delightful! I think this book hit me on two emotional levels. For one thing, Addie Baum reminds me of my grandmother. Sort of. On the surface, there probably isn't that much in common between Addie, a Jewish girl growing up in the North End of Boston, and my grandmother, a Norwegian girl growing up in small town North Dakota, other than they are about the same age. But, Addie reminded me of what I always pictured my grandmother to be as a young woman--spunky and ahead of her time. The other tie for me was that this book takes place in Boston and I lived there for 3 years. While I don't miss the city, it is fun to read about place with which I'm familiar. Diamant vividly creates early 20th century Boston and it was great fun for me to take a trip back in time with her. This book reads exactly like what it is: a grandmother telling her granddaughter about her life and what shaped her into the woman she became. There are several times in the book where Addie makes asides, telling her granddaughter not to tell her mother something or, well, hinting about things that happened in her life that probably wouldn't be proper to talk about (her granddaughter, as you discover at the end of the book, gave up the hinting and just lays it all out--I almost snorted tea through my nose when that little bit came up!). This was one of those books that I just could not put down--I plowed through it in a little over a day, which is pretty fast for this mother of young kids. Yet, I still kept scratching my head about how this was so different from Diamant's *The Red Tent*. I guess it is the measure of a skilled author to be able to write in such different voices. I highly recommend this book to, well, just about anyone. Just be warned...if you think you'll be reading something along the lines of *The Red Tent*, you'll need to adjust your expectations (trust me, it will be worth it!)

A special thank you to Scribner and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review. *The Boston Girl* by Anita Diamant is an emotionally moving and gripping story of a Jewish grandmother, born in the early 1900s, surviving life in Boston in the early 20th century during the women's movement--told with compassion and humor for an engaging multi-generational historical fiction. At the beginning of the novel Addie Baum, now eighty-five years old, is asked by her twenty-two year old granddaughter, Ave how she became the woman she is today. Addie begins telling her poignant and honest story growing up with unhappy Russian immigrant parents, and life with her sisters. (Wow, I wish my mom or grandmother would tell me these stories, as when I ask, they do not get into any of these juicy details)! Addie had a poor and rough childhood after their family came to America to live in Boston. Things changed when she was a teen with some more positive role models, when she joined a library group which was held at a neighborhood settlement house. We learn about her sisters and a young's girl's aspirations and dreams, as her older sister, Betty was constantly fighting with their parents and moves out to become a saleswomen at a department store. (Unheard of in this era, as they were more concerned about getting married, versus going to college or having a career) Addie learns about Rockport Lodge and goes on vacation at the inn for young girls in a seaside town and is nurtured by Miss Chevalier, where she forms a close friendship with Filomena (loved her) for life. Filomena demonstrated all the new freedom and liberation in store for women with lots of fun stories. Over the years, Addie experienced tragedies and joys, as she makes her way to womanhood, finding her way from a secretarial job to a newspaper, where she works her way to columnist and finds true love with a labor lawyer, Aaron Metsky, and a career as a social worker and a teacher. Told from Addie's POV, *The Boston Girl* was so much fun, as the descriptions and settings were so vivid, and colorful, making you feel as though you will sitting by the fire, chatting with a cup of tea and a friend; as we see a young girl blossom into a wise woman and her personal journey through the controversial and new and exciting times for women in this era. A beautiful relationship and special moments between a special grandmother and granddaughter, with intimate meaningful moments of love, work, and relationships. A huge fan of multi-generational stories of women where we learn the secrets of our grandmothers and generations past. This is my first book by Diamant and look forward to reading more, as have heard so much about *The Red Tent* and *Day After Night*. Highly recommend for women of all ages!

Addie's story is deceptively simple. She started her life as a Boston girl after immigrating with her father and sisters from Russia in 1896. The novel is formed from the interview she has granted her

granddaughter near the end of her life. Without drama or pathos, she tells the story of her journey from the tenements where she shared a tiny apartment with her Jewish family, Along the way she is part of the growth of women's rights in the new world. Along the way are the unavoidable pains and sorrows. Diamant's special gift is her creating the world of her characters from history. The reader enters the world view that prevails the era of the story, and is then able to appreciate the struggle of our narrator, Addie, to enact a stage of her own. Addie is forced to find her voice and to create it from whole cloth. She does it in simple language that lures the reader into the discourse. At some point, the complexity of her issues become apparent, and the novel takes on that extra dimension of richness that distinguishes a good book from other releases. Addie is a memorable character, specific to her time, who proves the fact that the soul has truths to share across the years.

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