

## The Miraculous Flight of Owen Leach

**Jennifer Dupree**

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In Jennifer Dupree's gripping novel, two women in rural Maine examine the meanings of motherhood and family.

Rose is thirty-nine and married, with a two-year-old son and a second child on the way. She and her husband Hank are building a solid, comfortable life in small-town Maine. Meanwhile, in a ratty apartment on the other side of town, nineteen-year-old Sophia, a single mother, is restless. She struggles to care for her infant son, Owen. Both women's lives shift when Sophia slips and drops Owen from her window; Rose, who's standing steps away on the sidewalk below, makes a "Hail Mary" catch: "[Owen] was in the air—a fallen angel. And then, he was in her arms, heavy and solid."

After that devastating moment, Sophia works to prove to herself and to the authorities that she is a fit mother. She takes halting steps to rebuild her life. Rose's reality also splinters. The traumatic catch causes her to miscarry, and she decides that Owen's "miraculous flight" is a sign that the child belongs with her. In her obsessive bid to gain custody of Owen, she neglects Hank and her biological son.

Alternating between Rose, Sophia, and Hank's points of view, this swift story includes enough surprises to evade easy judgments. The cast confronts the consequences of their choices, navigating the complicated relationships within their own families. Adding to the story's power is its setting, Parker—a place with "unpretentious charm" where "borrowed books are returned in mailboxes" and nothing is private.

*The Miraculous Flight of Owen Leach* is a twisting, captivating story about the importance of individual choices—and about the ways that events that seem random end up changing families forever.

KRISTEN RABE (May / June 2022)

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