



Dear Reader,

Most of us think of family as the people we grew up with—brothers, sisters, parents, aunts, uncles. Maybe an ornery aunt Maude who shouts about how in her day, no one glued their internet to their faces or conversed with robots. But DNA isn't the only factor that creates family. To me, family is also a choice. As an only child, I've always been fascinated by sibling dynamics, especially adult siblings. Do they choose to be friends, or do they merely tolerate each other because they'd otherwise have no place to go for holiday dinners?

When I began to write *A Very Typical Family*, I realized the question of what makes a family was central to the story. A teenaged Natalie Walker makes a choice one night that ultimately sends her two older siblings, Lynn and Jake, to prison. Their relationship crumbles into silence until years later when the death of their mother forces them back together. Figuring out what pulls them back together—and whether it's worth it to be pulled—was my goal. Throw in some rotting sea mammals and a hot love interest and you've got a story about what home and forgiveness can look like.

I set the novel in Santa Cruz, California, where I grew up, and where I held my first library card. The Garfield Park branch and the branch downtown are precious to me. There were many afternoons when I rode my bike to the library to spend a delightful foggy afternoon inside reading. I am so grateful that *A Very Typical Family* was selected as a Big Library Read. Thank you for supporting your local library and for coming along with me to see where the Walkers end up.

Yours truly,

Sierra Godfrey

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