



***IMPROPER ORDER* BY DEIRDRE SULLIVAN**

BEFORE YOU READ...

- Look at the cover of the novel.
- Jot down three things you see or notice on the front and back covers.
- What do you make of the information you get on the cover?
- What kind of book does the cover lead you to expect?
- Does the cover raise any questions for you?
- Does it make you want to read the book? Why or why not?

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY – A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Your author bio is something you have to write when you have a book published. My one goes like this:

Deirdre Sullivan is many things: a riddle within a mystery within an enigma, a champion napper and the guardian of two ungrateful guinea pigs who keeps vowing to destroy her. She would like to see them try, the little fools. They have NO IDEA who they're dealing with.

She enjoys acting, reading, writing, crafting and day-dreaming about the Viking who will one day rescue her from her life of drudgery. Also cake. She really, really does enjoy cake.

But I have another, slightly more professional one that goes like this:

Deirdre Sullivan is from Galway. She studied Legal Science and French at NUI Galway and completed an MA in Drama and Theatre Studies before going on to do a postgraduate course in Primary Education in Coláiste Mhuire Marino. She currently lives in Dublin, where she is teaching and working on her next book. *Improper Order* is a sequel to *Prim Improper*, which was shortlisted for the CBI/Bisto Book of the Year Award 2010-11.



- Which one tells you more about the author?
- Write your own bio.
 - What kind of information will you include?
 - What will you leave out?

THEMES

Growing up is hard enough, but Prim also has to cope with the loss of her mum and now also the fact that the man who caused the accident that killed her has been freed from prison. She is also beginning to work out how she feels about her developing sexuality, how to cope with being attracted to boys, and how to support her childhood friend who is just coming out as gay.

So, the biggest themes are:

- Struggle to find meaning in things, family, friends, people, words and oneself
- Support systems we build for ourselves and how they do and do not work for us (friends, diaries, counselling, pets, games, parties, alcohol)
- Old age (Ciara's grandmother), death, loss, grief
- Sexuality
- Loyalty (to Joel, to Ciara, to Ella, to Felix, to Kevin)
- Feminism: anger at how women are treated and have been treated in the past, and gaining confidence in one's own femaleness
- People who are different (Ella, Joel)
- People who are destructive (Karen)

As you read each chapter, think about how each of these themes is dealt with. Can you find examples of each one?

Although the book is about loss and grief, it's also funny. Why do you think the author uses humour in this story?

How does Primrose use humour in her own life?



DEFINITIONS

In the book, Prim defines a lot of words, and that's also what she is trying to do with her life and herself.

Pick a new word and write a definition for it yourself, using your own voice as opposed to the factual, dry language that is normally found in dictionaries.

QUICK REVIEW

1. Give a summary of the novel in no more than ten sentences.
2. Complete the following statements.
 - When I was reading *Improper Order* I was reminded of ...
 - The one thing I really like about this novel is ...
 - However, I am not so sure about ...
 - A question I would like to ask the author is ...
 - I wonder why ...
 - What I learned from reading *Improper Order* is ...