



# Eden

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## **Eden** Jeanne McWilliams Blasberg

Becca Meister Fitzpatrick—wife, mother, grandmother, and pillar of the community—is the dutiful steward of her family’s iconic summer tradition . . . until she discovers her recently deceased husband squandered their nest egg. As she struggles to accept that this is likely her last season in Long Harbor, Becca is inspired by her granddaughter’s boldness in the face of impending single-motherhood, and summons the courage to reveal a secret she was forced to bury long ago: the existence of a daughter she gave up fifty years ago. The question now is how her other daughter, Rachel—with whom Becca has always had a strained relationship—will react.

*Eden* is the account of the days leading up to the Fourth of July weekend, as Becca prepares to disclose her secret and her son and brothers conspire to put the estate on the market, interwoven with the century-old history of Becca’s family—her parents’ beginnings and ascent into affluence, and her mother’s own secret struggles in the grand home her father named “Eden.”

## **Eden Details**

Date : Published May 2nd 2017 by She Writes Press

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Author : Jeanne McWilliams Blasberg

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## From Reader Review Eden for online ebook

### Diana Paul says

Eden--No Family Paradise

"Eden" is in my favorite genre--psychological family drama.

Like other mothers, the women in the Meister clan who are mothers or mothers-to-be make demands on their children whom they love but they also stifle them, especially their daughters. They stifle their own feelings as well. "Eden" is emotional and dramatic and things left unsaid result in the main characters being blind to what is going on in their own families. The unspoken is sometimes far more powerful than what's spoken as the family reveals long-held secrets. What is moving in "Eden"--and skillfully crafted by Blasberg--is not that the gulf between parent and child has been closed but that it's still there. A very timely exploration of stressed relationships that is terrific reading!

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### Jennifer Blankfein says

Family saga than spans generations- loved the relationships and drama with the historical backdrop that included the stock market crash, the hurricane of 1938 and World War II...full review to come. Follow my blog Book Nation by Jen for all reviews and recommendations.

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### Janelle says

EDEN by Jeanne McWilliams Blasberg is a story about the Meister family and their love affair with Eden, the family's summer home. This beautiful, rich, character-driven story spans many generations and seamlessly alternates between different points of view, both in the past and the present. Becca and her two brothers preside over Eden. When Becca's husband unexpectedly passes away, she is left penniless and in debt and must fight for the house to stay in the family. I fell in love with the heavenly beach setting. I love how real the characters felt and how engrossed I was in the story of these women. This was a masterful debut novel by Blasberg and I cannot wait to see what she comes out with next! I highly recommend this to anyone who LOVES reading about family drama with plenty of secrets!

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### Cindy Roesel says

Jeanne McWilliams Blasberg's debut novel, EDEN (SheWritesPress) is inspired from her own personal childhood journals. It's the story of the wealthy multi-generational Meister family between the years 1920-2000, when the United States experienced seismic social, technical and economic tipping points. Becca Meister Fitzpatrick, wife, mother and grandmother has been the anchor encouraging family members

to return every summer to the Rhode Island, oceanfront estate, "Eden." "Eden," which Becca's parents built for the family, is the biblical word for paradise and there are biblical undertones throughout the book, which add to the flavor and complexity of the novel.

It starts in the 1920's, when patriarch, Bernard, changes the spelling of his name, arrives at Yale, able to pass so he can maneuver his way into society. He marries, Sadie, a woman outside his faith which causes scandal, but nothing wealth can't eliminate.

Now in her 70's, Becca has learned her recently deceased husband, has lost the family's nest egg and "Eden" may have to be sold. It's the days leading up to the Fourth of July weekend and Becca has to share the news with the family, including her three brothers who each have vested interests in "Eden," but don't share her love.

The novel alternates between past and present and includes actual historical references, such as the hurricane of 1938. EDEN also includes episodes of how women were "banished" to "hospitals" for post-partum depression, alcoholism and experiencing difficult pregnancies. Blasberg fluidly highlights society as it changes over eight-decades.

While reading EDEN, I was reminded of J. Courtney Sullivan's novel, MAINE (2011). Both are set in upper class, summer enclaves, which help focus on the family dysfunction, but there, the similarities stop. As Leo Tolstoy wrote, "All happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." That's why we love reading novels about family's, their ups and downs, particularly their problems, because they're never the same – but rich or poor, we've all got them.

EDEN is a gem of a novel and I'm quite surprised it's Blasberg's debut. I look forward to her future work. By the way, Jeanne includes a flow chart of the characters and their relationships, which is helpful if you get a bit mixed up. There are a lot of characters to keep straight. I referred to it several times.

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### **Suzanne Leopold says**

Becca Meister has spent all of her summers living at her family's estate in Rhode Island. The property is named "Eden" and has been owned by her family through multiple generations. Now in her 70's, Becca is the current owner along with her two brothers. Her secure life becomes unhinged after her husband's death . She finds out that he has mismanaged their retirement funds and she can no longer support the upkeep on the house. She is forced to reach out to her family for help.

Fearing that this could be her last summer in Eden, she invites her children along with her brothers and extended family to celebrate July 4th. With the entire clan present, she hopes to secure a future for Eden. Becca decides that it's also time to reveal some Meister family secrets that originated in the house.

The mystery unfolds with Eden as a common thread that keeps the family connected. Throughout the highs and lows of each individual story, love and family prevails. I enjoyed reading this family saga by Jeanne McWilliams Blasberg.

Book and beach bag giveaway on my blog until 4/30 <https://www.facebook.com/suzyapproved...>

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### **Barbara says**

This was quite a page-turning family saga. The family was definitely easy to relate to, all the drama, love,

celebrations, and secrets. The author captured that old New England family vibe. It's really like two stories unfolding at the same time, beginning in Pittsburgh with Bunny and Sadie meeting up, marrying, and starting the Meister family in the 1920's, which comes forward in time through the story of their kids with a focus on their daughter Becca. Becca appears in the current time line with her kids and grandkids. The whole thing is centered around Eden, the family home in an upscale New England, seaside town. Very hard to believe this was a debut! I look forward to more by Jeanne McWilliams Blasberg. Thank you to the author for a copy in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Crystal King says**

Jeanne Blasberg's debut is a sweeping epic of several generations of families living in a grand house in the fictional town of Long Harbor, Rhode Island. The house, rightfully dubbed Eden, is the Tara of this family, the center of both happy summers and secrets shoved under the rug. Blasberg's characters are well-drawn and the arc of their lives is richly entwined and artfully depicted. Eden is an emotional story that is a fitting read for a deck chair facing the sea with the sound of the waves as the soundtrack.

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### **Susan Peterson says**

Eden is a sweeping family saga, following the lives of the Meister family over 9 decades. Eden is the family's summer home, witness to the ebb and flow of this family...through joys and sorrows, love and loss, scandals and secrets. The characters in this book are very real, each with their own strengths and weaknesses, and their relationships are sometimes difficult, oftentimes stormy, but mostly loving. The author does an excellent job of pulling the reader in in this story of life, love, and family.

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### **Cindy Burnett says**

While on summer vacation, I was thrilled to make a small dent in my ever growing TBR by reading nine books, all of which were good (amazing in and of itself because I tend to be a picky reader). My two favorites BY FAR were Eden and Party Girls Die in Pearls by Plum Sykes, two very different but equally fabulous reads. Eden combines a beautiful setting with well-drawn and complex characters and a superb plot. As the book opens, Becca, the family matriarch, has learned that the beach house (Eden) where she has spent every summer for decades will have to be sold. She gathers her entire family together to celebrate the 4th of July and attempt to find a way to keep Eden in the family. The story unfolds across generations and time periods as both Eden's and numerous family members' stories and secrets are revealed. I truly loved this book and cannot say enough good things about it. I was so sad when it ended but thought the ending was perfect. I was also please that the author included a family tree at the front of the book because there are a lot of characters, and it was so helpful to flip to it early on when I was having trouble keeping everyone straight. Eden has definitely secured a spot in my best reads of 2017 list, and I have been recommending it to everyone I know.

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## **Mrs Mommy Booknerd <http://mrsmommybooknerd.blogspot.com> says**

REVIEW: What a read. From cover to cover I adored this book. It was heartbreakingly honest and deep and richly driven by the characters. I thought that the book was one of those reads that is hard to forget because you become so emotionally invested in the characters and the story. I wanted to speed through the book and savor it slowly, at the same time. I could see this being a movie or a mini series. So great!

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## **Linda Zagon says**

Wow! Wow! Wow! Kudos to Jeanne McWilliams Blasberg, author of “EDEN” for such an intriguing and amazing story. I love the way the author weaves the story of several generations of families that Eden is a home to. The genres of this novel are Fiction(Adult) and Historical Fiction.

The characters are described as complicated and complex. The timeline in the story vacillates between the past and the present day. I can see how “Eden” is built as a house that becomes a “home” to the various family members, over the years. Certain traditions continue through the years. The artistic descriptions of the home and coastline are breathtaking. The ocean’s beauty and wrath can be seen.

The author describes how the several generations of women tried to conform to the standards of the time. Many years ago, certain illnesses such as epilepsy had to be kept quiet. Single pregnant women went “away” and had to give their babies away. Many years ago mental illness and depression carried more of a stigma. As the years progressed standards did change, but there were different stigmas.

As we are introduced to each family member, we can see that Eden holds a special bond of family meetings and traditions. In each generation, there are hardships and heartbreaks and secrets. The secrets from the past continue to play a part in the present.

There is a possibility that this will be the last summer at Eden, due to financial problems. There are differences of opinions how this problem should be dealt with. Will this be the end of a generational family tradition?

The author discusses such topics as family, love, traditions, secrets, and hope.

I would highly recommend this novel for readers who love historical literature, family and love. This novel had me captivated and I didn’t want it to end. I received a copy of this novel for my honest review! Happy Reading!!!

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### **Cindy says**

Thank goodness for the family tree in the beginning of the story or I would have been completely lost! I loved the beach front setting and the beautiful house Eden but flipping back and forth in time totally had me confused! This was an interesting family saga with characters I had a love/hate relationship with. Beautiful prose and a first book worth reading.

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### **Megan C. says**

This novel is literally the perfect summer read. Beautiful writing, languid pacing, lovely characters and a story that is easy to get swept up in. The characters might be a challenge to keep up with if you're listening to the audio, but after referring to the family tree in front of the print copy a couple of times, I had them down. If you enjoyed Commonwealth or The Nest, this will probably be a good fit for you. Best read in the sunshine (even better at a beach or a lake!) with a cold drink and some time to savor.

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### **Carol Gray says**

A sweeping family saga, Eden chronicles four generations of Meister Fitzpatrick women from 1915 to 2000. The book centers on an extraordinary summer home aptly named after the Biblical paradise. As the novel opens, the family matriarch, Becca, is faced with the loss of this beloved home due to her late husband's financial missteps. She is also planning to disclose a long-held secret to her extended family over a Fourth of July weekend. Fireworks result from both as family love and loyalties are tested and resentments emerge. Eden is both a marvelous summer read and a fascinating look at the changing roles and choices available to women throughout the 20th century—and how these choices, or lack of choice, reverberate through generations. You will love this book! I certainly did.

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### **F.J. Soto says**

The mystery unfolds with Eden as a common thread that keeps the family connected. Throughout the highs and lows of each individual story, love and family prevails. I enjoyed reading this book.

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