

a dangerous business jane smiley

A Dangerous Business: Unpacking Jane Smiley's Exploration of Power, Morality, and the American Dream

Author: Jane Smiley, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, is renowned for her insightful and often critical portrayals of American society. Her expertise lies in exploring the complexities of power dynamics, familial relationships, and the elusive nature of the American Dream. Her extensive body of work, which includes novels like *A Thousand Acres* and *The Greenlanders*, showcases her deep understanding of human nature and its intersection with social structures. This understanding is profoundly evident in her work, "A Dangerous Business," though the specific title and content require further clarification as no such widely known single work with that exact title by Jane Smiley exists in readily available databases. This analysis will therefore assume the prompt refers to a broader thematic element present across her works, focusing on the recurring motifs of ambition, moral compromise, and the precarious pursuit of success within the American context.

Keyword: Throughout this exploration of the thematic elements within Jane Smiley's oeuvre, the recurring phrase "a dangerous business" will be used to encapsulate the precarious nature of the pursuits undertaken by her characters, highlighting the often-destructive consequences of unchecked ambition and moral compromise.

Introduction:

Jane Smiley's novels repeatedly portray the pursuit of wealth, power, and status as "a dangerous business." Her characters, often driven by ambition, frequently navigate treacherous ethical terrain, highlighting the potential for self-destruction and societal damage inherent in the relentless pursuit of the American Dream. This analysis will examine this recurring theme across her works, supported by textual evidence and critical analysis, to demonstrate how Smiley uses her fiction to critique the moral compromises often associated with success in American society.

Power and Corruption in Smiley's Works:

One key aspect of "a dangerous business" in Smiley's writing is the insidious nature of power. In *A Thousand Acres*, a reimagining of *King Lear*, the power struggle among the daughters mirrors the corrupting influence of unchecked authority. The siblings' ruthless pursuit of inheritance reveals the moral decay that can accompany the acquisition and retention of power. Similarly, in *The Last Hundred Years*, the various families' struggles for dominance within their communities illustrate the cyclical nature of power, often leading to violence and betrayal. These works exemplify how Smiley depicts the attainment and wielding of power as "a dangerous business" because it frequently erodes integrity and fosters interpersonal conflict.

Moral Compromise and the American Dream:

Smiley's exploration of "a dangerous business" is inextricably linked to her critical examination of the American Dream. The idealized promise of success and prosperity is often presented as a treacherous path in her novels. Characters frequently engage in morally questionable actions to achieve their goals, highlighting the inherent contradictions between the idealized vision and the harsh realities of achieving it. In many instances, the pursuit of the American Dream becomes a self-destructive endeavor, leaving characters isolated and disillusioned despite their material gains. This is exemplified in the compromised integrity and damaged relationships that often result from such pursuits, showcasing the moral costs associated with the relentless pursuit of success.

The Peril of Ambition:

Many of Smiley's protagonists are driven by immense ambition, often leading them down paths of self-destruction. This relentless drive for achievement, while often fueling their initial success, ultimately proves detrimental to their well-being and relationships. The pursuit of ambition, in Smiley's portrayal, is often depicted as "a dangerous business" that compromises personal values and creates significant rifts between individuals. The characters' desperation for validation and acceptance frequently leads them to engage in morally questionable behavior, underscoring the dangerous consequences of unchecked ambition.

Data and Research Findings:

While there isn't readily available quantitative data directly analyzing the thematic elements of "a dangerous business" across Smiley's novels, qualitative analysis reveals a consistent pattern. Critical essays and literary analyses consistently point to Smiley's recurring exploration of power structures, moral ambiguity, and the pitfalls of ambition. These critical studies support the argument that Smiley uses her fiction to expose the dark side of the American Dream, showcasing how the relentless pursuit of success can lead to moral compromise and self-destruction.

Publisher and Credibility:

Many of Jane Smiley's novels have been published by prominent literary houses like Knopf and Viking, known for their rigorous editorial processes and commitment to publishing high-quality literary fiction. These publishers' reputations contribute to the credibility and wider reach of Smiley's work, allowing her critiques of the American Dream and its potential for moral compromise to reach a broad audience.

Editor and Experience:

While pinpointing a specific editor for every aspect of Smiley's thematic work is impossible, experienced editors at these prominent publishing houses played a significant role in shaping her novels. Their experience in literary editing ensures the quality and impact of Smiley's work, enabling her powerful message about "a dangerous business" to resonate effectively with readers.

Summary:

This analysis argues that "a dangerous business," as a recurring theme in Jane Smiley's work, refers

to the precarious path of ambition and the ethical compromises inherent in the pursuit of power and the American Dream. Smiley's novels illustrate the destructive potential of unchecked ambition and the moral costs associated with the relentless pursuit of success. Her characters often find themselves trapped in cycles of self-destruction, highlighting the dark side of the idealized American narrative.

Conclusion:

Jane Smiley's powerful fiction consistently portrays the pursuit of success as "a dangerous business." Through meticulously crafted characters and intricate plots, she exposes the inherent contradictions and moral complexities of the American Dream, urging readers to consider the potential consequences of unchecked ambition and the ethical compromises often required to achieve it. Her work serves as a stark reminder that the path to success is rarely straightforward and often comes at a significant personal and moral cost.

FAQs:

1. What is the central theme explored in Jane Smiley's works relating to "a dangerous business"?
The central theme revolves around the ethical dilemmas and potential self-destruction inherent in the relentless pursuit of power, wealth, and the American Dream.
1. How does Smiley depict the American Dream in her novels? Smiley often presents a critical and often cynical view of the American Dream, revealing its potential for moral compromise and self-destruction.
1. What role does ambition play in Smiley's portrayal of "a dangerous business"? Ambition is a driving force behind many of her characters' actions, but it often leads to disastrous consequences, highlighting its perilous nature.
1. Are there any recurring characters or character archetypes in Smiley's exploration of this theme? While not explicitly recurring characters, Smiley consistently utilizes ambitious protagonists who grapple with the ethical ramifications of their pursuits.
1. How does Smiley use setting to enhance her portrayal of "a dangerous business"? The settings often reflect the characters' internal conflicts and the societal pressures that contribute to their moral compromises.

1. What literary techniques does Smiley employ to convey the theme of "a dangerous business"? Smiley masterfully uses narrative voice, character development, and plot structure to expose the complexities and consequences of her characters' ambitions.
1. How does Smiley's work compare to other authors who explore similar themes? Smiley's perspective stands out due to her sharp critique of the American Dream and the complexities of familial relationships intertwined with ambition.
1. What is the overall message or takeaway from Smiley's exploration of "a dangerous business"? The message emphasizes the importance of ethical considerations in the pursuit of success and warns against the potential for self-destruction inherent in unchecked ambition.
1. Where can I find more information on Jane Smiley's work? You can find extensive information about Jane Smiley and her works on her official website, academic databases, and through reputable literary journals and book reviews.

Related Articles:

1. "The Moral Ambiguity of Success in Jane Smiley's Novels": An analysis of the ethical dilemmas faced by Smiley's characters in their quest for success.
1. "Power Dynamics and Familial Conflict in A Thousand Acres": A close reading of A Thousand Acres focusing on the theme of power struggles and its impact on family relationships.
1. "The American Dream Revisited: A Critical Examination of Jane Smiley's Work": A comprehensive study exploring Smiley's critiques of the American Dream and its promises.
1. "The Role of Setting in Jane Smiley's Portrayal of Ambition": Explores how the settings of her novels contribute to the overall narrative of ambition and its consequences.

1. "Jane Smiley and the Legacy of King Lear in A Thousand Acres": A comparative study analyzing Smiley's reimagining of Shakespeare's classic tragedy.
1. "Moral Compromise and Self-Destruction in Jane Smiley's Fiction": Examines the recurring pattern of characters engaging in morally questionable acts to achieve their goals.
1. "The Psychological Impact of Ambition in Jane Smiley's Novels": Explores the psychological toll of ambition on Smiley's characters and their relationships.
1. "The Cyclical Nature of Power in Jane Smiley's The Last Hundred Years": Analyzes the recurring power struggles and their impact on the characters and community.
1. "A Comparative Study of Jane Smiley's Works: Themes and Literary Techniques": A broader overview of Smiley's writing style, thematic concerns, and recurring motifs across her novels.

a dangerous business jane smiley: A Dangerous Business Jane Smiley, 2022-12-06 From the Pulitzer Prize-winning, best-selling author of *A Thousand Acres*: An amazing "mash-up of a Western, a serial-killer mystery and a feminist-inflected tale of life in a bordello" (The Washington Post). In 1850s Gold Rush California two young prostitutes, best friends Eliza and Jean, attempt to find their way in a lawless town on the fringes of the Wild West—a bewitching combination of beauty and danger—as what will become the Civil War looms on the horizon. "Everyone knows that this is a dangerous business, but between you and me, being a woman is a dangerous business, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise... Monterey, 1851. Ever since her husband was killed in a bar fight, Eliza Ripple has been working in a brothel. It seems like a better life, at least at first. The madam, Mrs. Parks, is kind, the men are (relatively) well behaved, and Eliza has attained what few women have: financial security. But when the dead bodies of young women start appearing outside of town, a darkness descends that she can't resist confronting. Side by side with her friend Jean, and inspired by her reading, especially by Edgar Allan Poe's detective Dupin, Eliza pieces together an array of clues to try to catch the killer, all the while juggling clients who begin to seem more and more suspicious. Eliza and Jean are determined not just to survive, but to find their way in a lawless town on the fringes of the Wild West—a bewitching combination of beauty and danger—as what will become the Civil War looms on the horizon. As Mrs. Parks says, Everyone knows that this is a dangerous business, but between you and me, being a woman is a dangerous business, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise ...

a dangerous business jane smiley: A Dangerous Business Jane Smiley, 2022-12-06 From the beloved Pulitzer Prize-winning and best-selling author of *A Thousand Acres*: a rollicking murder

mystery set in Gold Rush California, as two young prostitutes follow a trail of missing girls. Monterey, 1851. Ever since her husband was killed in a bar fight, Eliza Ripple has been working in a brothel. It seems like a better life, at least at first. The madam, Mrs. Parks, is kind, the men are (relatively) well behaved, and Eliza has attained what few women have: financial security. But when the dead bodies of young women start appearing outside of town, a darkness descends that she can't resist confronting. Side by side with her friend Jean, and inspired by her reading, especially by Edgar Allan Poe's detective Dupin, Eliza pieces together an array of clues to try to catch the killer, all the while juggling clients who begin to seem more and more suspicious. Eliza and Jean are determined not just to survive, but to find their way in a lawless town on the fringes of the Wild West—a bewitching combination of beauty and danger—as what will become the Civil War looms on the horizon. As Mrs. Parks says, Everyone knows that this is a dangerous business, but between you and me, being a woman is a dangerous business, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise ...

a dangerous business jane smiley: A Dangerous Business Jane Smiley, 2023-01-12

Monterey, 1851. Ever since her husband was killed in a bar fight, Eliza Ripple has been working in a brothel. It seems like a better life, at least at first. The madam, Mrs. Parks, is kind, the men are (relatively) well behaved, and Eliza has attained what few women have: financial security. But when the dead bodies of young women start appearing outside of town, a darkness descends that she can't resist confronting. Side by side with her friend Jean, and inspired by her reading, especially by Edgar Allan Poe's detective Dupin, Eliza pieces together an array of clues to try to catch the killer, all the while juggling clients who begin to seem more and more suspicious. Eliza and Jean are determined not just to survive, but to find their way in a lawless town on the fringes of the Wild West - a bewitching combination of beauty and danger - as what will become the Civil War looms on the horizon. As Mrs. Parks says, 'Everyone knows that this is a dangerous business, but between you and me, being a woman is a dangerous business, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise . . .--Publisher.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Some Luck Jane Smiley, 2014-10-07 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST • From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Thousand Acres* comes the first volume of an epic trilogy that takes us on a literary adventure through cycles of birth and death, passion and betrayal that will span a century in America. "Intimate.... Miraculous.... Staggering.... A masterpiece in the making." —USA Today 1920, Denby, Iowa: Rosanna and Walter Langdon have just welcomed their firstborn son, Frank, into their family farm. He will be the oldest of five. Each chapter in this extraordinary novel covers a single year, encompassing the sweep of history as the Langdons abide by time-honored values and pass them on to their children. With the country on the cusp of enormous social and economic change through the early 1950s, we watch as the personal and the historical merge seamlessly: one moment electricity is just beginning to power the farm, and the next a son is volunteering to fight the Nazis. Later still, a girl we'd seen growing up now has a little girl of her own.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Perestroika in Paris Jane Smiley, 2020-12-01 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • From the Pulitzer Prize-winning and best-selling author: a captivating, brilliantly imaginative story of three extraordinary animals—and a young boy—whose lives intersect in Paris in this feel-good escape" (The New York Times). Paras, short for Perestroika, is a spirited racehorse at a racetrack west of Paris. One afternoon at dusk, she finds the door of her stall open and—she's a curious filly—wanders all the way to the City of Light. She's dazzled and often mystified by the sights, sounds, and smells around her, but she isn't afraid. Soon she meets an elegant dog, a German shorthaired pointer named Frida, who knows how to get by without attracting the attention of suspicious Parisians. Paras and Frida coexist for a time in the city's lush green spaces, nourished by Frida's strategic trips to the vegetable market. They keep company with two irrepressible ducks and an opinionated raven. But then Paras meets a human boy, Etienne, and discovers a new, otherworldly part of Paris: the ivy-walled house where the boy and his nearly-one-hundred-year-old great-grandmother live in seclusion. As the cold weather nears, the unlikelyst of friendships bloom. But how long can a runaway horse stay undiscovered in Paris? How long can a boy keep her hidden and all to himself? Jane Smiley's beguiling new novel is itself an adventure that celebrates curiosity,

ingenuity, and the desire of all creatures for true love and freedom.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Private Life* Jane Smiley, 2010 As her husband's obsessions with science take a darker turn on the eve of World War II, Margaret Mayfield is forced to consider the life she has so carefully constructed. By the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Thousand Acres*.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *A Dangerous Business* Michael Underwood, 2012-09-06 A chance sighting in a café in Amsterdam gives solicitor Rosa Epton an unwelcome shock. At a nearby table sits an ex-client who should be behind bars, having recently been sentenced to five years in prison. So what is Eddie Ruding doing in Amsterdam a few weeks later? On her return to England, Rosa makes a few discreet enquiries, only to draw a blank. But just as she has decided to try to put the matter out of her mind, a newspaper report shocks her into action. Eddie Ruding has been found dead, his crumpled body lying at the foot of the walls of Wandsworth Prison. Rosa, however, is not the only person on the dead man's trail. Everyone from inquisitive journalists to MI5 appears to be taking an interest - and none so much as the dead man's mother, a cockney matriarch with a score to settle.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Duplicate Keys* Jane Smiley, 2010-12-01 From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Thousand Acres* comes a brilliant literary thriller set in Manhattan that's "as taut and chilling as anything Hitchcock put on film (San Francisco Chronicle). "A first-rate cliffhanger." —The New York Times Book Review Alice Ellis is a Midwestern refugee living in Manhattan. Still recovering from a painful divorce, she depends on the companionship and camaraderie of tightly knit circle of friends. At the center of this circle is a rock band struggling to navigate New York's erratic music scene, and an apartment/practice space with approximately fifty key-holders. One sunny day, Alice enters the apartment and finds two of the band members shot dead. As the double-murder sends waves of shock through their lives, this group of friends begins to unravel, and dangerous secrets are revealed one by one. When Alice begins to notice things amiss in her own apartment, the tension breaks out as it occurs to her that she is not the only person with a key, and she may not get a chance to change the locks. Jane Smiley applies her distinctive rendering of time, place, and the enigmatic intricacies of personal relationships to the twists and turns of suspense. The result is a thriller that will keep readers guessing up to its final, shocking conclusion.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Early Warning* Jane Smiley, 2015-04-28 From the Pulitzer Prize-winner: the second installment, following *Some Luck*, of her widely acclaimed, best-selling American trilogy, which brings the journey of a remarkable family with roots in the Iowa heartland into mid-century America *Early Warning* opens in 1953 with the Langdon family at a crossroads. Their stalwart patriarch, Walter, who with his wife, Rosanna, sustained their farm for three decades, has suddenly died, leaving their five children, now adults, looking to the future. Only one will remain in Iowa to work the land, while the others scatter to Washington, D.C., California, and everywhere in between. As the country moves out of post-World War II optimism through the darker landscape of the Cold War and the social and sexual revolutions of the 1960s and '70s, and then into the unprecedented wealth—for some—of the early 1980s, the Langdon children each follow a different path in a rapidly changing world. And they now have children of their own: twin boys who are best friends and vicious rivals; a girl whose rebellious spirit takes her to the notorious Peoples Temple in San Francisco; and a golden boy who drops out of college to fight in Vietnam—leaving behind a secret legacy that will send shock waves through the Langdon family into the next generation. Capturing a transformative period through richly drawn characters we come to know and care deeply for, *Early Warning* continues Smiley's extraordinary epic trilogy, a gorgeously told saga that began with *Some Luck* and will span a century in America. But it also stands entirely on its own as an engrossing story of the challenges—and rewards—of family and home, even in the most turbulent of times, all while showcasing a beloved writer at the height of her considerable powers.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Barn Blind* Jane Smiley, 2017-10-05 Written with the grace and quiet beauty of her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Barn Blind* is a spellbinding story on the classic American themes of work, love, and duty, and the lengths we will go to achieve success. The verdant

pastures of a farm in Illinois have the placid charms of a landscape painting, but the horses that graze there have become the obsession of a woman who sees them as the fulfilment of every wish: to win, to be honoured, to be the best. Her ambition is the galvanizing force in Jane Smiley's first novel, a force that will drive a wedge between her and her family, and bring them all to tragedy . . .

a dangerous business jane smiley: Moo Jane Smiley, 2011-08-24 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Thousand Acres* comes “an uproariously funny and at the same time hauntingly melancholy portrait of a college community in the Midwest (The New York Times). In this darkly satirical send-up of academia and the Midwest, we are introduced to Moo University, a distinguished institution devoted to the study of agriculture. Amid cow pastures and waving fields of grain, Moo’s campus churns with devious plots, mischievous intrigue, lusty liaisons, and academic one-upmanship, Chairman X of the Horticulture Department harbors a secret fantasy to kill the dean; Mrs. Walker, the provost's right hand and campus information queen, knows where all the bodies are buried; Timothy Monahan, associate professor of English, advocates eavesdropping for his creative writing assignments; and Bob Carlson, a sophomore, feeds and maintains his only friend: a hog named Earl Butz. Wonderfully written and masterfully plotted, *Moo* gives us a wickedly funny slice of life.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Thirteen Ways of Looking at the Novel* Jane Smiley, 2005 The author celebrates the art of fiction as she looks at one hundred very different examples of the novel, ranging from the classics to little-known gems, and discusses the evolution of the novel and the practice of novel-writing.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *True Blue* Jane Smiley, 2011-09-27 *True Blue* is a beauty, a dappled gray, and when Abby gets to take him to her family's ranch, she can hardly believe her luck. The horse needs a home: his owner—a woman brand new to the riding stable--was tragically killed in a car crash and no one has claimed him. Daddy is wary, as always. But Abby is smitten. *True Blue* is a sweetheart, and whenever Abby calls out, Blue, Blue, how are you? he whinnies back. But sometimes *True Blue* seems...spooked. He paces, and always seems to be looking for something. Or someone. Abby starts to wonder about *True Blue*'s owner. What was she like? What did she look like? One moonlit night, Abby could swear she hears a whisper in her ear: He's still my horse. Filled with riding scenes and horse details, this newest middle-grade novel from a Pulitzer Prize-winner offers a mysterious and suspenseful almost-ghost story.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Ten Days in the Hills* Jane Smiley, 2007-02-13 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • In this novel set in Hollywood Hills after the 2003 Academy Awards, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Thousand Acres* delivers “a blazing farce, a fiery satire of contemporary celebrity culture and a rich, simmering meditation on the price of war and fame and desire.” —Los Angeles Times Book Review In the aftermath of the 2003 Academy Awards, Max and Elena—he's an Oscar-winning writer/director—open their Hollywood Hills home to a group of friends and neighbors, industry insiders and hangers-on, eager to escape the outside world and dissect the latest news, gossip, and secrets of the business. Over the next ten days, old lovers collide, new relationships form, and sparks fly, all with Smiley's signature sparkling wit and characterization. With its breathtaking passion and sexy irreverence, *Ten Days in the Hills* is a glowing addition to the work of one of our most beloved novelists.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Horse Heaven* Jane Smiley, 2000 It's not true, says a character in Jane Smiley's funny, passionate, and brilliant new novel of horse racing, that anything can happen at the racetrack, but many astonishing and affecting things do -- and in *Horse Heaven*, we find them woven into a marvelous tapestry of joy and love, chicanery, folly, greed, and derring-do. Haunting, exquisite Rosalind Maybrick, wife of a billionaire owner, one day can't quite decide what it is she wants, and discovers too late that her whole life is transformed . . . Twenty-year-old Tiffany Morse, stuck in her job at Wal-Mart, prays, Please make something happen here . . . This time, I mean it, and something does . . . Farley, a good trainer in a bad slump; Buddy, a ruthless trainer who can't seem to lose even though he knows that his personal salvation depends upon it; Roberto, an apprentice jockey who has the hands but is growing too big for his dream career

with every passing day; Leo the gambler and his earnest son, Jesse, who understands everything about his father's system except why it doesn't work; Elizabeth, the sixty-two-year-old theorist of sex and animal communication, and her best friend, Joy, the mare manager at the ranch at the center of the universe—all are woven together by the horses that pass among them: two colts and two fillies who begin with the promise of talent and breeding, and now might or might not achieve stardom. There are the geldings -- Justa Bob, the plain brown horse who always wins by a nose, a lovable claimer who passes from owner to owner on a heart-wrenching journey down from the winner's circle; and the beautiful Mr. T., raced in France and rescued in Texas, who is discovered to have some unusual and amazing talents. And then there is the Jack Russell terrier, Eileen, a dog with real convictions -- and the will to implement them. The strange, compelling, sparkling, and mysterious universe of horse racing that has fascinated generations of punters and robber barons, horse-lovers and wits, has never before been depicted with such verve and originality, such tenderness, such clarity, and, above all, such sheer exuberance.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Good Faith Jane Smiley, 2003-04-22 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *A Thousand Acres* comes a “smashing...fascinating” novel (The New York Times Book Review) that conjures all the American obsessions of the 1980s: sex, greed, envy, real estate, and the American dream. In her subversively funny and genuinely moving new novel, Jane Smiley nails down several American preoccupations with the expertise of a master carpenter. Forthright, likable Joe Stratford is the kind of local businessman everybody trusts, for good reason. But it's 1982, and even in Joe's small town, values are in upheaval: not just property values, either. Enter Marcus Burns, a would-be master of the universe whose years with the IRS have taught him which rules are meant to be broken. Before long he and Joe are new best friends—and partners in an investment venture so complex that no one may ever understand it. Add to this Joe's roller coaster affair with his mentor's married daughter. The result is as suspenseful and entertaining as any of Jane Smiley's fiction.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Ordinary Love and Good Will Jane Smiley, 2011-01-05 These exquisite twin novellas chronicle the difficult choices that reshape the lives of two very different families. In *Ordinary Love*, Smiley focuses on a woman's infidelity and the lasting, indelible effects it leaves on her children long after her departure. *Good Will* portrays a father who realizes how his son has been affected by his decision to lead a counterculture life and move his family to a farm. As both stories unfold, Smiley gracefully raises the questions that confront all families with the characteristic style and insight that has marked all of her work.

a dangerous business jane smiley: A Dangerous Business Jane Smiley, 2023-11-07 From the Pulitzer Prize-winning, best-selling author of *A Thousand Acres*: An amazing “mash-up of a Western, a serial-killer mystery and a feminist-inflected tale of life in a bordello” (The Washington Post). In 1850s Gold Rush California two young prostitutes, best friends Eliza and Jean, attempt to find their way in a lawless town on the fringes of the Wild West—a bewitching combination of beauty and danger—as what will become the Civil War looms on the horizon. “Everyone knows that this is a dangerous business, but between you and me, being a woman is a dangerous business, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise... Monterey, 1851. Ever since her husband was killed in a bar fight, Eliza Ripple has been working in a brothel. It seems like a better life, at least at first. The madam, Mrs. Parks, is kind, the men are (relatively) well behaved, and Eliza has attained what few women have: financial security. But when the dead bodies of young women start appearing outside of town, a darkness descends that she can't resist confronting. Side by side with her friend Jean, and inspired by her reading, especially by Edgar Allan Poe's detective Dupin, Eliza pieces together an array of clues to try to catch the killer, all the while juggling clients who begin to seem more and more suspicious. Eliza and Jean are determined not just to survive, but to find their way in a lawless town on the fringes of the Wild West—a bewitching combination of beauty and danger—as what will become the Civil War looms on the horizon. As Mrs. Parks says, Everyone knows that this is a dangerous business, but between you and me, being a woman is a dangerous business, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise ...

a dangerous business jane smiley: A Good Horse Jane Smiley, 2010-10-26 When eighth grader Abby Lovitt looks out at those pure-gold rolling hills, she knows there's no place she'd rather be than her family's ranch—even with all the hard work of tending to nine horses. But some chores are no work at all, like grooming young Jack. At eight months, his rough foal coat has shed out, leaving a smooth, rich silk, like chocolate. As for Black George, such a good horse, it turns out he's a natural jumper. When he and Abby clear four feet easy as pie, heads start to turn at the ring—buyers' heads—and Abby knows Daddy won't turn down a good offer. Then a letter arrives from a private investigator, and suddenly Abby stands to lose not one horse but two. The letter states that Jack's mare may have been sold to the Lovitts as stolen goods. A mystery unfolds, more surprising than Abby could ever expect. Will she lose her beloved Jack to his rightful owners? Pulitzer Prize winner Jane Smiley raises horses of her own, and her affection and expertise shine through in this inviting horse novel for young readers, set in 1960s California horse country and featuring characters from *The Georges* and *the Jewels*.

a dangerous business jane smiley: The Age of Grief Jane Smiley, 2017-10-05 In this brilliant collection of five short stories and a novella, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jane Smiley presents six unforgettable portraits exploring the perils of domestic life. I am thirty-five years old, and it seems to me that I have reached the age of grief. Others arrive there sooner. Almost no one arrives much later . . . In the title novella, a man who has reached the 'age of grief' slowly realizes that his wife is in love with someone else. Unsure whether his marriage is best protected by confronting her or by feigning ignorance, he struggles to repress his anguish and to prevent his wife discovering that he is aware of her infidelity . . . Accompanying this novella are five short stories, including *The Pleasure of Her Company*, in which a lonely, single woman befriends the married couple next door, hoping to learn the secret to their happiness. And *Long Distance*, in which a man finds himself relieved of the obligation to continue an affair that is no longer compelling to him, only to be waylaid by the guilt he feels at his easy escape.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Secrets of the Sprakkar Eliza Reid, 2022-02 The Canadian first lady of Iceland pens a book about why this tiny nation is leading the charge in gender equality, in the vein of *The Moment of Lift*. Iceland is the best place on earth to be a woman—but why? For the past twelve years, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report has ranked Iceland number one on its list of countries closing the gap in equality between men and women. What is it about Iceland that enables its society to make such meaningful progress in this ongoing battle, from electing the world's first female president to passing legislation specifically designed to help even the playing field at work and at home? The answer is found in the country's *sprakkar*, an ancient Icelandic word meaning extraordinary or outstanding women. Eliza Reid—Canadian born and raised, and now first lady of Iceland—examines her adopted homeland's attitude toward women: the deep-seated cultural sense of fairness, the influence of current and historical role models, and, crucially, the areas where Iceland still has room for improvement. Throughout, she interviews dozens of *sprakkar* to tell their inspirational stories, and expertly weaves in her own experiences as an immigrant from small-town Canada. The result is an illuminating discussion of what it means to move through the world as a woman and how the rules of society play more of a role in who we view as equal than we may understand. What makes many women's experiences there so positive? And what can we learn about fairness to benefit our society? Like influential and progressive first ladies Eleanor Roosevelt, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Michelle Obama, Reid uses her platform to bring the best of her nation to the world. *Secrets of the Sprakkar* is a powerful and atmospheric portrait of a tiny country that could lead the way forward for us all.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Bet the Farm Beth Hoffman, 2021-10-05 Eloquent and detailed...It's hard to have hope, but the organized observations and plans of Hoffman and people like her give me some. Read her book -- and listen. -- Jane Smiley, *The Washington Post* In her late 40s, Beth Hoffman decided to upend her comfortable life as a professor and journalist to move to her husband's family ranch in Iowa--all for the dream of becoming a farmer. There was just one problem: money. Half of America's two million farms made less than \$300 in 2019, and many struggle just to

stay afloat. *Bet the Farm* chronicles this struggle through Beth's eyes. She must contend with her father-in-law, who is reluctant to hand over control of the land. Growing oats is good for the environment but ends up being very bad for the wallet. And finding somewhere, in the midst of COVID-19, to slaughter grass finished beef is a nightmare. If Beth can't make it, how can farmers who confront racism, lack access to land, or don't have other jobs to fall back on hack it? *Bet the Farm* is a first-hand account of the perils of farming today and a personal exploration of more just and sustainable ways of producing food.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Deep Past* Eugene Linden, 2019-05-14 "A fascinating thriller... Linden does a masterly job of integrating intriguing speculative science into a page-turning plot." —Publisher's Weekly, starred review If nature could invent intelligence of our scale in a blink of geologic time, who's to say it hasn't been done before... A routine dig in Kazakhstan takes a radical turn for thirty-two-year-old anthropologist Claire Knowland when a stranger turns up at the site with a bizarre find from a remote section of the desolate Kazakh Steppe. Her initial skepticism of this mysterious discovery gives way to a realization that the find will shake the very foundations of our understanding of evolution and intelligence. Corrupt politics of Kazakhstan force Claire to take reckless chances with the discovery. Among the allies she gathers in her fight to save herself and bring the discovery to light is Sergei Anachev, a brilliant but enigmatic Russian geologist who becomes her unlikely protector even as he deals with his own unknown crisis. Ultimately, Claire finds herself fighting not just for the discovery and her academic reputation, but for her very life as great power conflict engulfs the unstable region and an unscrupulous oligarch attempts to take advantage of the chaos. Drawing on Eugene Linden's celebrated non-fiction investigations into what makes humans different from other species, this international thriller mixes fact and the fantastical, the realities of academic politics, and high stakes geopolitics—engaging the reader every step of the way.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Taking the Reins (An Ellen & Ned Book)* Jane Smiley, 2020-03-10 A young rider encounters well-known horses and new friends in the final installment of the *Ellen & Ned* trilogy by Pulitzer Prize winner Jane Smiley. Ellen's family has moved to a new town...but some things, like her love for horses, remain the same. Ellen is now the proud owner of her own horse, Tater. She's learning new skills and challenging herself as a rider...but she still can't stop thinking about Ned, the feisty former racehorse she sees on the ranch during her lessons. In the meantime, Ellen's making new friends and encountering old ones. Most exciting of all is Da, a boy from a riding family who is possessed of a spirit of mischief and daring and knows his own mind. Ellen still has a lot to learn...about horses, friendship, and herself. And will she ever be able to get Ned off her mind?

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Book of Killowen* Erin Hart, 2013 What sort of book is worth a man's life? After a year away from working in the field, archaeologist Cormac Maguire and pathologist Nora Gavin are back in the bogs, investigating a ninth-century body found buried in the trunk of a car. They discover that the ancient corpse is not alone—pinned beneath it is the body of Benedict Kavanagh, missing for mere months and familiar to television viewers as a philosopher who enjoyed destroying his opponents in debate. Both men were viciously murdered, but centuries apart—so how did they end up buried together in the bog?—

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Man who Invented the Computer* Jane Smiley, 2010 Traces physics professor John Vincent Atanasoff's role in the invention of the computer, describing his innovative construction of an unpatented electronic device that eased the lives of burdened scientists by performing calculations using binary numbers.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Best American Short Stories* 1995 Jane Smiley, Katrina Kenison, 1995 Presents a collection of stories selected from magazines in the United States and Canada

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Lost Ones* Sheena Kamal, 2017-07-25 The case of a runaway teen forces a jaded Vancouver woman to confront the ghosts of her past in this intriguing psychological thriller series debut. The call comes in just after five in the morning. . . . It begins with

a phone call that Nora Watts has dreaded for fifteen years—since the day she gave her newborn daughter up for adoption. Bonnie has vanished. The police consider her a chronic runaway and aren't looking, leaving her desperate adoptive parents to reach out to her birth mother as a last hope. A biracial product of the foster system, transient, homeless, scarred by a past filled with pain and violence, Nora knows intimately what happens to vulnerable girls on the streets. Caring despite herself, she sets out to find Bonnie with her only companion, her mutt Whisper, knowing she risks reopening wounds that have never really healed—and plunging into the darkness with little to protect her but her instincts and a freakish ability to detect truth from lies. The search uncovers a puzzling conspiracy that leads Nora on a harrowing journey of deception and violence, from the gloomy rain-soaked streets of Vancouver, to the icy white mountains of the Canadian interior, to the beautiful and dangerous island where she will face her most terrifying demon. All to save a girl she wishes had never been born.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Lily Jane Smiley, 2016-05-07 A Vintage Shorts "Short Story Month" Selection From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of the classic *A Thousand Acres* and winner of the 1985 O. Henry Award, "Lily"—first published as part of the classic collection of short stories, *The Age of Grief*—is the dazzling, tragic portrait of a beautiful and lonely young poet who meddles in her longtime friends' marriage when they come to visit. Neither Kevin nor Nancy seemed at all interested in Lily's life in the couple of years since they've last seen her. But she has suffered through hours of their squabbling, awkwardly endured complaints from each about the other, and when Kevin finally demands to know if his wife still loves him, Lily must decide whether she wants to end this frustrating intrusion into the calm of her life for good. An ebook short.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Dark Aemilia Sally O'Reilly, 2015-04-01 For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright; Who art as black as hell, as dark as night. —William Shakespeare, Sonnet 147 In the boldest imagining of the era since Shakespeare in *Love and Elizabeth*, a finalist for the Italian Premio del Castello del Terriccio, this spellbinding novel of witchcraft, poetry, and passion, brings to life Aemilia Lanyer, the Dark Lady of Shakespeare's Sonnets—the playwright's muse and his one true love. The daughter of a Venetian musician but orphaned as a young girl, Aemilia Bassano grows up in the court of Elizabeth I, becoming the Queen's favorite. She absorbs a love of poetry and learning, maturing into a striking young woman with a sharp mind and a quick tongue. Now brilliant, beautiful, and highly educated, she becomes mistress of Lord Hunsdon, the Lord Chamberlain and Queen's cousin. But her position is precarious; when she falls in love with court playwright William Shakespeare, her fortunes change irrevocably. A must-read for fans of Tracy Chevalier (*Girl With a Pearl Earring*) and Sarah Dunant (*The Birth of Venus*), Sally O'Reilly's richly atmospheric novel compellingly re-imagines the struggles for power, recognition, and survival in the brutal world of Elizabethan London. She conjures the art of England's first professional female poet, giving us a character for the ages—a woman who is ambitious and intelligent, true to herself, and true to her heart.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Horse Heaven Jane Smiley, 2001-01 #1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK A WISE, SPIRITED NOVEL . . . IN WHICH] SMILEY PLUMBS THE WONDROUSLY STRANGE WORLD OF HORSE RACING. --People ONE OF THE PREMIER NOVELISTS OF HER GENERATION, possessed of a mastery of craft and an uncompromising vision that grow more powerful with each book . . . Racing's eclectic mix of classes and personalities provides Smiley with fertile soil . . . Expertly juggling storylines, she investigates the sexual, social, psychological, and spiritual problems of wealthy owners, working-class bettors, trainers on the edge of financial ruin, and, in a typically bold move, horses. --The Washington Post A NOVEL OF PASSION IN EVERY SENSE . . . SHE DOES] IT ALL WITH APLOMB . . . WITH A DEMON NARRATIVE INTELLIGENCE. --The Boston Sunday Globe WITTY, ENERGETIC . . . It's deeply satisfying to read a work of fiction so informed about its subject and so alive to every nuance and detail . . . Smiley's] final chapters have a wonderful restorative quality. --The New York Times Book Review RICHLY DETAILED, INGENIOUSLY CONSTRUCTED . . . YOU WILL REVEL IN JANE SMILEY'S HORSE HEAVEN. --San Diego Union-Tribune Chosen by the Los Angeles Times as One of

the Best Books of the Year From the Trade Paperback edition.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Horse Girl* Carrie Seim, 2022-03-29 Mean Girls meets Black Beauty in *Horse Girl* by celebrated author Carrie Seim--a funny and tender middle-grade novel about finding your forever herd. This book is funny and exciting. Beautifully portrays both the pleasures and risks of riding horses and also of being a teen. Very original, and a great pleasure to read.--Jane Smiley, Pulitzer Prize-winning author *Wills* is a seventh grader who's head-over-hoof for horses, and beyond excited when she gets the chance to start training at the prestigious Oakwood Riding Academy. But Amara--the Queen of the #HorseGirls--and her posse aren't going to let the certifiably dork-tagious *Wills* trot her way into their club so easily. Between learning the reins of horse riding, dealing with her Air Force pilot mom being stationed thousands of miles from home, and keeping it together in front of (gasp!) Horse Boys, *Wills* learns that becoming a part of the #HorseGirl world isn't easy. But with her rescue horse, Clyde, at her side, it sure will be fun. Complete with comedic, original hoof notes to acquaint the less equestrian among us, *Horse Girl* delivers everything a young readers wants: mean girls, boy problems, and embarrassingly goofy dad jokes. And it does so on the back of a pony.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Poison Penmanship* Jessica Mitford, 2010-09-07 Jessica Mitford was a member of one of England's most legendary families (among her sisters were the novelist Nancy Mitford and the current Duchess of Devonshire) and one of the great muckraking journalists of modern times. Leaving England for America, she pursued a career as an investigative reporter and unrepentant gadfly, publicizing not only the misdeeds of, most famously, the funeral business (*The American Way of Death*, a bestseller) and the prison business (*Kind and Usual Punishment*), but also of writing schools and weight-loss programs. Mitford's diligence, unfailing skepticism, and acid pen made her one of the great chroniclers of the mischief people get up to in the pursuit of profit and the name of good. *Poison Penmanship* collects seventeen of Mitford's finest pieces--about everything from crummy spas to network-TV censorship--and fills them out with the story of how she got the scoop and, no less fascinating, how the story developed after publication. The book is a delight to read: few journalists have ever been as funny as Mitford, or as gifted at getting around in those dark, cobwebbed corners where modern America fashions its shiny promises. It's also an unequaled and necessary manual of the fine art of investigative reporting.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Book Tour* Andi Watson, 2020-11-17 A page-turning, Kafkaesque dark comedy in brilliant retro style, this graphic novel watches one man try to keep it together while everything falls apart. Upon the publication of his latest novel, G. H. Fretwell, a minor English writer, embarks on a book tour to promote it. Nothing is going according to plan, and his trip gradually turns into a nightmare. But now the police want to ask him some questions about a mysterious disappearance, and it seems that Fretwell's troubles are only just beginning... In his first book for adults in many years, acclaimed cartoonist Andi Watson evokes all the anxieties felt by every writer and compresses them into a comedic gem of a book. Witty, surreal, and sharply observant, *The Book Tour* offers a captivating lesson in letting go.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Lamplighters* Emma Stonex, 2021-03-16 "Transported me effortlessly...Haunting, harrowing and heartbreaking, this is a novel that will stay with you." --Ashley Audrain, New York Times bestselling author of *The Push* "A ghost story and fantastically gripping psychological investigation rolled into one. It is also a pitch-perfect piece of writing. . . . As with Shirley Jackson's work or Sarah Waters's masterpiece *Affinity*, in Stonex's hands the unspoken, unexamined, unseen world we can call the supernatural, a world fed by repression and lies, becomes terrifyingly tangible." --The Guardian (London) Inspired by a haunting true story, a gorgeous and atmospheric novel about the mysterious disappearance of three lighthouse keepers from a remote tower miles from the Cornish coast--and about the wives who were left behind. What strange fate befell these doomed men? The heavy sea whispers their names. Black rocks roll beneath the surface, drowning ghosts. And out of the swell like a finger of light, the salt-scratched tower stands lonely and magnificent. It's New Year's Eve, 1972, when a boat pulls up to the Maiden Rock lighthouse with relief for the keepers. But no one greets them. When the entrance door, locked from the inside, is

battered down, rescuers find an empty tower. A table is laid for a meal not eaten. The Principal Keeper's weather log describes a storm raging round the tower, but the skies have been clear. And the clocks have all stopped at 8:45. Two decades later, the keepers' wives are visited by a writer determined to find the truth about the men's disappearance. Moving between the women's stories and the men's last weeks together in the lighthouse, long-held secrets surface and truths twist into lies as we piece together what happened, why, and who to believe. In her riveting and suspenseful novel, Emma Stonex writes a story of isolation and obsession, of reality and illusion, and of what it takes to keep the light burning when all else is swallowed by dark.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Georges and the Jewels* Jane Smiley, 2009

Seventh-grader Abby Lovitt grows up on her family's California horse ranch in the 1960s, learning to train the horses her father sells and trying to reconcile her strict religious upbringing with her own ideas about life.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Blind Assassin* Margaret Atwood, 2010-12-10 "Ten days after the war ended, my sister Laura drove a car off a bridge." These words are spoken by Iris Chase Griffen, married at eighteen to a wealthy industrialist but now poor and eighty-two. Iris recalls her far from exemplary life, and the events leading up to her sister's death, gradually revealing the carefully guarded Chase family secrets. Among these is "The Blind Assassin," a novel that earned the dead Laura Chase not only notoriety but also a devoted cult following. Sexually explicit for its time, it was a pulp fantasy improvised by two unnamed lovers who meet secretly in rented rooms and seedy cafés. As this novel-within-a-novel twists and turns through love and jealousy, self-sacrifice and betrayal, so does the real narrative, as both move closer to war and catastrophe. Margaret Atwood's Booker Prize-winning sensation combines elements of gothic drama, romantic suspense, and science fiction fantasy in a spellbinding tale.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *The Once & Future King* T. H. White, 2015-10-13 The definitive modern take on the timeless tale of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round table. The legends of King Arthur date back to medieval Europe, and have become some of the dominant myths of Western culture. In *The Once & Future King*, T. H. White reinvents the story for a modern audience. The novel starts by introducing the reader to a young Arthur – just a child, and far from the King he will become – as he is raised by the wizard Merlyn, and moves on to chronicle his rise to Kingship, the affair between Guinevere and Lancelot, and the eventual destruction of the round table. The first section, released independently as *The Sword in the Stone*, was adapted into an animated film by Walt Disney Pictures. Penguin Random House Canada is proud to bring you classic works of literature in e-book form, with the highest quality production values. Find more today and rediscover books you never knew you loved.

a dangerous business jane smiley: *Raft of Stars* Andrew J. Graff, 2021-03-23 "A rousing adventure yarn full of danger and heart and humor." —Richard Russo An instant classic for fans of Jane Smiley and *Kitchens of the Great Midwest*: when two hardscrabble young boys think they've committed a crime, they flee into the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Will the adults trying to find and protect them reach them before it's too late? It's the summer of 1994 in Claypot, Wisconsin, and the lives of ten-year-old Fischer "Fish" Branson and Dale "Bread" Breadwin are shaped by the two fathers they don't talk about. One night, tired of seeing his best friend bruised and terrorized by his no-good dad, Fish takes action. A gunshot rings out and the two boys flee the scene, believing themselves murderers. They head for the woods, where they find their way onto a raft, but the natural terrors of Ironsforge gorge threaten to overwhelm them. Four adults track them into the forest, each one on a journey of his or her own. Fish's mother Miranda, a wise woman full of fierce faith; his granddad, Teddy, who knows the woods like the back of his hand; Tiffany, a purple-haired gas station attendant and poet looking for connection; and Sheriff Cal, who's having doubts about a life in law enforcement. The adults track the boys toward the novel's heart-pounding climax on the edge of the gorge and a conclusion that beautifully makes manifest the grace these characters find in the wilderness and one another. This timeless story of loss, hope, and adventure runs like the river itself amid the vividly rendered landscape of the Upper Midwest.

a dangerous business jane smiley: Annie John Jamaica Kincaid, 1997-06 Annie John grows from a precocious, fearless, ten-year-old living in a Caribbean paradise into a young woman who realizes she must leave Antigua to escape her mother's shadow.

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