

People

Books

The Red Book

by Deborah Copaken Kogan | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY MEREDITH MARAN

NOVEL

Given the entitlements of her characters, an alternate title for Deborah Copaken Kogan's hilarious, addictive new novel might be *The Born and Bred Book*—not for nothing do the words “Harvard graduate” inspire rolls of the eye. But photojournalist and author Kogan (*Shutterbabe*) satisfies the envy itch with a brilliant, exquisitely modern exposé of just how far from perfect the lives of the elite can be. We meet blue blood Addison, shopaholic stay-at-home mom Mia, journalist Jane and biracial banker Clover, all Harvard class of '89, as they're nervously preparing for their 20th reunion. In their bios for Harvard's alumni publication “The Red Book,” each woman has revealed—and concealed—the realities of her adult life. Now, at the reunion, they must reconcile their official success stories with the harsh truths of their private hells. But as we watch them stumble, we sympathize: No one is exempt from pain. Kogan's characters are so fully realized, their dilemmas so profoundly human, that we come to see them not as members of the vaunted ruling class but as flawed, farcical versions of our own imperfect selves.

A novel about the longings and foibles of those women who seem to have it all

