



Evvie Drake Starts Over

Linda Holmes

A tender, funny novel about a young widow and a former pitcher who rents her upstairs apartment, both quietly trying to start over in a small Maine town. It is warm, hopeful, and full of small moments that feel like a hug.

Reading level: Easy **Best for:** clubs who love character-driven stories with heart, humor, and a soft landing

Discussion

WARM-UP

1. What was the first scene or moment that made you settle in and feel at home in this book?
2. If Evvie's kitchen table could talk, what kind of conversations do you imagine it would remember? Did any of yours come to mind?

DIGGING IN

1. The book is full of small daily comforts (coffee, porches, walks into town). Which little detail did you most want to bring into your own life?
2. Evvie and Dean both carry quiet versions of being 'stuck.' Did the way the story sat with that feeling comfort you, or stir something up?
3. Friendship (especially Andy and Evvie) is the warm undercurrent of the book. Who in your life would you want as your 'Andy,' and why?
4. The Maine setting feels almost like a character. How did the town's mood shape the way you read the story, and where would you want to curl up there?

GOING DEEP

1. Grief in this book is complicated and rarely tidy. Was there a moment that captured something about loss or moving forward that felt true to you?
2. Without giving anything away, how did the book leave you feeling as you closed it, and did any part of it gently nudge you to start something over in your own life?

On the table

🍲 **Slow-simmered chicken and dumplings**
Pure New England comfort, the kind of dish you eat on a quiet evening when you want to feel taken care of.

🍰 **Warm blueberry crumble with vanilla ice cream**
A nod to Maine's beloved blueberries, homey and a little indulgent.

🍪 **Cheddar biscuits with honey butter**
Soft, buttery, and easy to pass around the couch, perfect for a low-pressure night.

To sip

☕ **Maple cinnamon hot cider (no alcohol)**
A warm mug in your hands that tastes like a Maine porch in autumn.

☕ **Honey chamomile tea with lemon (no alcohol)**
Gentle, soothing, and ideal for slow conversations.

🍷 **Bourbon and apple cider toddy**
A grown-up version of the cider for anyone who wants a little extra warmth.

Run of show

7:00 **Soft landing**
Greet guests with a mug of hot cider and let everyone settle into the coziest seats. No rush.

7:15 **Warm-up chatter**
Pass around the warm-up question cards while people fix a plate of chicken and dumplings.

7:35 **Into the book**
Move gently into the theme questions. Encourage tangents and personal stories.

8:10 **Dessert and deeper waters**
Bring out the blueberry crumble and shift into the two deep questions while everyone is sugared and snug.

8:40 **Trivia and bookmarks**
Light trivia round and let folks pick a bookmark to take home.

9:00 **Scorecards and lingering**
Fill out scorecards together, then let the night drift to a soft close.

HOST TIPS

- Lean into soft lighting (lamps, candles, string lights) and put a blanket on every seat.
- Keep food self-serve on the stove or counter so no one has to stop talking to host.
- Let silences breathe. This is not a debate night, it is a comfort night.

Playlist

soft, hopeful folk and acoustic indie, like late afternoon light through a kitchen window

01 Such Great Heights - Iron and Wine

03 First Day of My Life - Bright Eyes

05 Banana Pancakes - Jack Johnson

07 Northern Attitude - Noah Kahan

02 Home - Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros

04 Ho Hey - The Lumineers

06 Carolina in My Mind - James Taylor

08 The Night We Met - Lord Huron

Trivia

1. Who wrote *Evvie Drake Starts Over*? (Linda Holmes)
2. In what year was the novel first published? (2019)
3. What U.S. state is the novel set in? (Maine)
4. What was Dean's profession before he came to town? (Major League Baseball pitcher)
5. What popular NPR podcast does Linda Holmes host? (Pop Culture Happy Hour)
6. What is the first name of Evvie's best friend in the book? (Andy)
7. What pitching-related struggle is Dean known for in the story? (The yips (losing the ability to throw accurately))
8. What is the title of Linda Holmes's follow-up novel published in 2022? (*Flying Solo*)

Rate the book

Coziness ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Characters you'd want as friends ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Made-me-feel factor ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Quiet humor ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Lingering warmth after the last page ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

One word for how this book felt: _____

A small moment I want to remember: _____

Who I'd hand this book to next: _____

YOU'RE INVITED

Come Start Over With Us

Cozy sweaters, warm mugs, and a quiet little novel about second chances. Bring yourself, leave the day at the door.



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