



The Gift Counselor: A Novel

Sheila M. Cronin

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Winner of the Beverly Hills Book Award. Shortlisted for the Wishing Shelf Book Award. Do all gifts have strings attached? Yes, believes pert, inquisitive Jonquil Bloom as she sets out to counsel gift givers at a local department store. A single mom and UCLA graduate student in psychology, gifts fascinate Jonquil. When are they sincere? When are they not? Skilled at helping customers choose the ideal gift for any occasion, she soon discovers that her elegant theory doesn't apply to every situation, leaving her to wonder: what are true gifts? Ten-year-old Billy Bloom is the center of her life. Billy yearns to have a dog but his mom has told him repeatedly that she is allergic to them. Instead, his bedroom is crammed full of toy animals, each demonstrating her misguided attempts to distract him. Billy, a generous and hopeful boy, refuses to give up. Into their lives enters Claude Chappel, a native French Canadian and general contractor. Claude, eager to settle down, is instantly captivated by Jonquil. Past traumatic losses make her wary of him. Still, his charms are irresistible, if impetuous. After a bumpy start they begin seeing each other. Yet, Claude cannot help but notice that the gift counselor has denied her own son what he most wants. This troubling paradox spurs him to action. A romantic and touching story filled with humor, insight and drama, *The Gift Counselor* will warm your heart all year through, and become the ideal gift for family, friends and co-workers. Book club recommended. Be sure to order early and often!

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