



POPULAR FICTION

ANN DUNNE/MAIREAD BYRNE

OLD FRIENDSHIPS, NEW BEGINNINGS



**THREE
NIGHTS
IN NEW YORK**
BY MICHELLE
JACKSON
(Poolbeg, €15.99)

Author Michelle Jackson carved a niche for herself when she hit on a winning formula with her first novel *Two Days in Biarritz*, in which friends come to turning points in their lives over a short break abroad. She continues the theme — this time with *Three Nights in New York* (in bookshops next weekend).

This one is about three girls who were best friends in college until Nicky slept with Eve's boyfriend. The boyfriend left Ireland as soon as he found out Nicky was pregnant.

Now, 15 years later, Nicky is a single mum of 14-year-old Daniel, working as assistant editor on a women's magazine; Eve is a hard-nosed, high-maintenance man-eater with a high-flying job; and Rachel, the prettiest, is on the surface a yummy mummy living in a des-res in Portmarnock. But behind the perfect suburban facade, she is controlled by her violent husband, Derek.

When the three friends are reunited in New York and they meet up with Rachel's brother Conor, all their lives are changed forever. Rachel embarks on a passionate affair, Conor and Eve don't hit it off at first, but he soon becomes her unlikely knight in shining armour, as well as inadvertently finding Daniel's long-lost father. Always unlucky in love, Nicky seems likely to be let down again. Back in Ireland, events come to a head.

Fast-paced and heart-warming, Jackson's second novel is hard to put down.

Her depiction of New York is so vivid that if you haven't visited there, you will feel you have and if you have

been there, you will feel like you are back. When the setting was Biarritz, you could almost taste the vin blanc and smell the sea. Can't wait to see where it will be next!

This is another novel that starts with friends in college. Set in the days of the Celtic Tiger before the recession clipped our wings, *Barefoot Over Stones* is the debut novel of author Liz Lyons from Kilcorny in Co Cork. A former Trinity student, she has chosen to write about what she knows well.

Ciara and Alison meet in college, share the usual grotty student flat and become firm allies despite the wide differences between them. Their lives in college are proceeding beautifully until a gorgeous young med student, Dan Abernethy, falls in love with Alison. The attraction is mutual and instant.

The friendship of the two girls comes to an abrupt end after "a betrayal".

Many years later after tragedy has struck, the two women are in a situation where they are able to re-examine how strong their bond was and eventually experience the redemptive power of true friendship.

This is an impressive debut, holding your interest with characters that are comprehensively and sympathetically drawn. The summer is almost upon us, so whether you're sitting by a pool abroad or on a beach in Kerry, this is one to take with you.



**BAREFOOT
OVER
STONES**
BY LIZ LYONS
(Transworld
Ireland, €15.49)

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Saks and the city: Michelle Jackson's new novel vividly conjures up the Big Apple