

Book Review: More Than Enough
By Anna Quindlen

Anna Quindlen's latest novel "More Than Enough" is packed with her trademark focus on interpersonal relationships between family members as well as friends. What's missing, however, are the flaws; the warts and blemishes that exist in everyone, and every relationship, even if to a small degree.

Polly Goodman is a 42-year-old English teacher at an all-girls private high school in New York City. She and her husband, Mark, a veterinarian at the Bronx Zoo, are at the IVF stage of trying to have a child. The women in her book club, who are also her closest friends, give her an ancestry test kit as a joke. But when Polly sends in the spit sample, she's matched to a Black teenage girl, Talia Burton, living in Vermont.

It must be a mistake, Polly reasons.

And yet, she not only welcomes having the girl (who is searching for information about her own family history following her mother's death) in her life but begins to examine her own family history.

As I mentioned, the narrative focuses on relationships; perhaps too many relationships, which kept me from becoming more invested in one or two. Polly is especially close with the women in the book club, particularly Sarah, who is recovering from cancer, as well as her older brother Garrison, who's gay. She's heartbroken over her father who has dementia and is rapidly going downhill in a facility. And cool and distant with her mother, a NYC judge.

The other problem is that all these people are nice. They'd give you the shirt off their back. In other words, there are no villains here. And that's a bit unrealistic. Because while Quindlen's well-written prose helps me to care about these people – and why not, because

they're all nice – it doesn't create the angst or tension that would pull me more deeply into the story as opposed to just surface reading.

I give three stars to “More Than Enough” which is overloaded with relationships but less than enough on substance.