

January 2025

### From the Librarian

Kia ora koutou,

I hope everyone is having a relaxing start to the year. Dunedin is so quite at this time, but our regulars are still coming in each week as usual. I'm always happy to see loads of books being taken out, especially if they haven't been issued out in years!

I will be turning my attention to the mezzanine level this year and sorting through the books. There are some gems up there, mixed with some books that have persevered beyond their expiry date.

We will be organising more events in the library. I would also love to see this space being used by more groups. If you have any ideas or suggestions, come and have a chat with me. Knitting groups, another book club, creative writing club the possibilities are endless!

- Holly Fletcher

### What's Happening

The 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2025 will mark 155 years since the Athenaeum & Mechanics Institute opened its doors in the Octagon. We will be organising some exciting things to mark this milestone.

In the meantime, if you're a member who joined over five years ago. Then I would love to know when you joined or any stories that you might have of the library. I would like to

keep a record of this, so that it can be added into the institute's history – which will then be held at the Hocken for future generations.

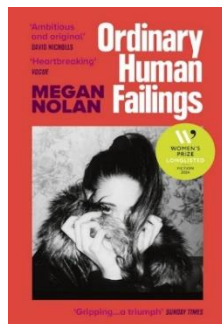


### Book Review

#### Ordinary Human Failings

Megan Nolan

Megan Nolan is an Irish columnist and author. Her essays, fiction and reviews appear in the *New York Times*, *the White Review*, *The Sunday Times* and *the Guardian*. She writes a fortnightly column for the *New Statesman*.



The story begins in London during the 1990s. The Greens, an Irish family, have moved to an estate in South London to escape the stigma of their daughter Carmel's pregnancy. The family are seen by

their new community as peculiar. So, it is no surprise, that when a young girl on the estate is killed the accusations are directed towards the Greens.

At the beginning of the book we are introduced to Tom, a hot shot reporter. He supplies the Greens with hotel accommodation and as much room serve and alcohol as they can consume. In return he wants their story. This is a nod to the British tabloids of the 90s, that thrived on turning people's personal lives into a commodity.

The Green family is made up of Carmel, 27 who started life with such promise and is now troubled. Her daughter Lucy, 10 years old and left to her own devices. Ritchie, Carmel's older brother, who is unable to stop drinking. The father, also a drinker, who is listless and detached. And lastly, the mother Rose who keeps the family floating for as long as she could.

The silence and detachment of family connection is examined through the lens of each member of the family. Nolan's ability to articulate these delicate emotions are cleverly achieved on the backdrop of the senseless death of the girl.

Although, a relatively heavy book it doesn't leave you feeling deflated. These are after all just ordinary people. Who at some point made a few wrong decisions and did their best to navigate those outcomes.