



## Patricia Gaffney

**The Saving Graces**  
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### Behind the Book

People always ask me how much of *The Saving Graces* is autobiographical, and they particularly want to know "which Grace" I am. I tell them some, and none.

*The Saving Graces* is about four women who meet and form a women's group that becomes, over the years, a source of strength and friendship and sees them through some very difficult times. I formed a group with four other women in 1979, and it became a source of support, love, and deep, abiding friendship that saw us through some awful times. One of us is gone, but the rest of us still love each other, and we'll never forget her.

I guess it's disingenuous to say I am "none" of the Graces — and probably just as coy to say I'm "all" of them. I'm a bit like Isabel, but only because I'm a breast cancer survivor, *not* because I went through that struggle with her calm grace and bravery. And I'm more than a bit like Emma, although she's much younger and prettier and has a smarter mouth. But she's the one who always wanted to be

a writer, and kept postponing it because she was too chickenhearted, afraid she would fail.

That would be me.

Emma learns from Isabel how short life is. I learned it from my own experience, and from my friend who died. And *The Saving Graces* learn from each other — the way we five did in our women's group — that men and crises come and go, but best friends are forever.