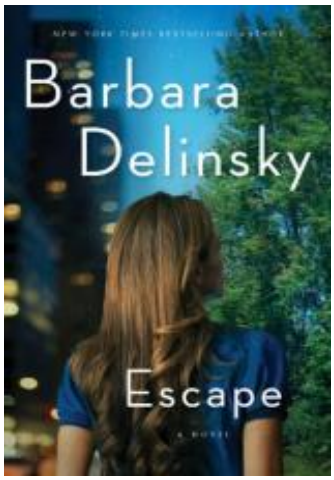
Escape

by Barbara Delinsky



About the Book

In her luminous new novel, Barbara Delinsky explores every woman?s desire to abandon the endless obligations of work and marriage --- and the idea that the most passionate romance can be found with the person you know best.

Emily Aulenbach is 30, a lawyer married to a lawyer, working in Manhattan. An idealist, she had once dreamed of representing victims of corporate abuse, but she spends her days in a cubicle talking on the phone with vic¬tims of tainted bottled water --- and she is on the bottler?s side.

And it isn?t only work. It?s her sister, her friends, even her husband, Tim, with whom she doesn?t connect the way she used to. She doesn?t connect with much in her life, period, with the exception of three things --- her computer, her BlackBerry, and her watch.

Acting on impulse, Emily leaves work early one day, goes home, packs her bag, and takes off. Groping toward the future, uncharacteristically following her gut rather than her mind, she heads north toward a New Hampshire town tucked between mountains. She knows this town. During her college years, she spent a watershed summer here. Painful as it is to return, she knows that if she is to right her life, she has to start here.

Discussion Guide

1.) High salaries help Emily and James tolerate their jobs for a while. How did you react when Emily?s father stressed the importance of being practical and earning a good wage? In your own life, how do you balance ?nancial needs with the quest for a meaningful life?

2.) What do you think Jude really wanted from Emily when he began writing letters to her? Why wasn?t he able to commit to her earlier? Would you have been more attracted to Jude or James?

3.) Discuss the way the novel addresses the theme of parenting. In her quest for a child, how does Emily?s perception of motherhood change? Why is it dif?cult for Jude to know how to enter his child?s life? Are there right and wrong reasons for wanting to become a parent?

4.) What did Emily?s parents teach her about marriage? How do Emily?s roles as a daughter and sister compare to your roles in your family?

5.) As an innkeeper, Vicki has a completely different livelihood from Emily?s. Despite their wounded friendship, what does Vicki help Emily discover about home and a truly comfortable life?

6.) How do Emily?s feelings about Jude change throughout the novel? Was she being honest when she told people she did not come back just for him?

7.) Healing gradually takes place for many of the characters in Escape. As Emily immerses herself in the animal shelter and in Lee?s dramatic case, what does she discover about her own healing process? Besides legal counsel, what did Lee need in order to heal?

8.) In chapter sixteen, we see a comparison between Emily and Jude: she was to her father what Jude was to Amelia, a child rejecting a parent?s dream. What is the best way to discern the best course for our lives? Have you ever had to shed someone else?s plans for you?

9.) Emily reaches a tipping point when James cancels on her for an important business dinner but expects her to attend his. How would you have reacted if you had been Emily, or James? At its heart, is Escape also about a war between the sexes?

10.) When Emily ?ees New York, she ?ees her routine with James as well and creates a new balance of power. What does their story tell us about the keys to a happy marriage?

11.) What does the coyote signify to Emily? How does its message shift?

12.) Both James and Jude experience major turning points near the end of the novel. When James?s faith in his law ?rm is shaken, and Jude makes missteps that keep him from being a hero, what sort of men do they become?

13.) How does Emily cope with the harsh judgment she received in Bell Valley? What are the pros and cons of her two worlds: Bell Valley versus Manhattan?

14.) Barbara Delinsky thanks her fans for providing their ideal escapes in response to a question she posed on Facebook. How would you have responded? Where would you go if you wanted to just pick up one day and disappear?

15.) Delinsky is a master at delivering realistic portrayals of ordinary people in extraordinary life dilemmas. How does Emily?s situation compare to another favorite Delinsky novel you?ve read?

Author Bio

Barbara Delinsky is the author of more than 20 *New York Times* bestselling books, including BEFORE AND AGAIN, THE SCENT OF JASMINE and LOVE SONGS. She has been published in 28 languages worldwide. A lifelong New Englander, Delinsky earned a B.A. in psychology at Tufts University and an M.A. in sociology at Boston College. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband, more books than she'll ever be able to read, two tennis racquets, and enough electronic devices to keep in close touch with her children and their families.

Critical Praise

"Delinsky nails it in her trademark latest, a captivating and moving story about a woman who's had enough of her life and wants a fresh start... [She] keeps the story moving with some nice twists on a familiar plot, rich characterizations, and real-feeling dilemmas that will keep readers hooked."

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