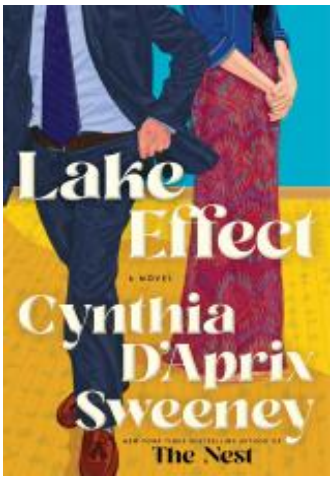
Lake Effect

by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney



About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE NEST and GOOD COMPANY comes a wry and tender portrait of two families forever changed by one lovestruck decision that will reverberate for decades.

It?s 1977, and an air of restlessness has settled on the residents of Cambridge Road in Rochester, New York, a place long fueled by the booming fortunes of Kodak and Xerox and, for some, the mores of the Catholic church. When Nina Larkin is given a copy of THE JOY OF SEX by her newly divorced friend, she no longer can dismiss the nearly nonexistent intimacy of her marriage.

Just as her oldest child, Clara, is falling in love for the first time, Nina finds herself longing for the forbidden: a midlife awakening. An intoxicating fling with a prominent neighbor brings Nina a freedom she never thought possible --- but also risks the reputations of both families and unravels Clara?s world, just as she stands on the threshold of adulthood.

Years later, Clara, now a successful food stylist in New York City, has never been able to move past the long-ago scandal. Drawn back home by the pull of a family wedding and wrestling with her own demons, she makes a pivotal decision that turns her life upside down.

Written with Cynthia D?Aprix Sweeney?s signature humor and insight, LAKE EFFECT is a wise and probing look at love and desire, mothers and daughters, loss and grief, and what we owe the people we love most.

Discussion Guide

1. Food is a recurring motif in the book, from Clara?s career to Nina?s column to family meals. What does food symbolize in the novel? How does it bring characters together or highlight their differences?

2. Nina dislikes Finn initially, citing Honey?s ?nosiness dressed up as consideration? and the demise of many of her favorite small bakeries and grocers from his aggressive expansion of Finnegan?s. What do you think leads to the shift in their dynamic? Do you think their relationship is built on a genuine connection, or is it more about proximity and escaping their respective unhappiness?

3. After Nina?s affair comes to light and she leaves the family home, Clara begins to take on her mother?s role in the family, cooking elaborate meals, organizing the kitchen, and taking care of Bridie. How does this shift in responsibility affect Clara?s relationship with her sister and her father? In what ways does Clara?s assumption of her mother?s role shape her identity and her feelings toward Nina?

4. Clara?s career in the culinary world evolves from working in restaurant kitchens to food styling and television. How do you think her relationship with food reflects her personal growth and emotional state? Does her career bring her fulfillment, or does it create new challenges for her?

5. In the years following his early retirement from Xerox, Sam moves to San Francisco to live as an out gay man but never feels fully comfortable embracing a similar lifestyle to Garret and their friends. What do you think his reluctance to fully immerse himself in this new community says about his personality and desires? How do you think his choice to return to Rochester reflects his journey to self-acceptance and his connection with his family?

6. Finn and Nina?s financial success contrasts with Sam?s more modest life after leaving Xerox. How do you think money and power dynamics influence the relationships among these characters? Do you think financial success is tied to happiness in the story?

7. Clara?s decision to lie about her mother?s death on television has far-reaching consequences, in her relationships to her family and with Philip. What do you think drives her to tell such a bold and public falsehood? Is it an attempt to distance herself from her complicated family history, or a reflection of unresolved feelings toward Nina?

8. The Finnegan grocery store chain is a central part of Finn?s identity and legacy, but it also becomes a source of tension, particularly with Dune. How do you think Finn?s dedication to the business shapes his relationships with his family? Does Dune?s resistance to following in his father?s footsteps reflect rebellion, or is it a search for his own identity? How does the grocery store chain symbolize both stability and conflict within the Finnegan family?

9. Dune undergoes significant changes throughout the story, from his struggles with anger and addiction to his relationships with Clara and Bridie. How do these experiences shape his character arc? Do you think he finds redemption?

10. Many characters in the story grapple with forgiveness --- of themselves and others. How do moments of forgiveness or the lack thereof shape the narrative? Do you think the characters find healing by the end of the story?

Author Bio

Cynthia D?Aprix Sweeney is the author of the instant *New York Times* bestselling novels THE NEST (named a best

book of the year by *People*, the *Washington Post* and NPR) and GOOD COMPANY (a "Read with Jenna" selection). She has been a guest on "Today," "Late Night with Seth Meyers" and NPR?s "All Things Considered." Her work has been translated into more than 28 languages, and THE NEST is in development as a limited series with AMC Studios. Sweeney holds an MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars. She and her husband live in New York City.

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