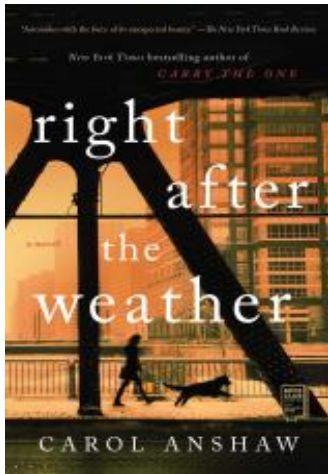


Right After the Weather

by Carol Anshaw



About the Book

The author of the “graceful and compassionate” (*People*) *New York Times* bestseller **CARRY THE ONE** presents a new and long-awaited novel exploring what happens when untested people are put to a hard test and, in its aftermath, find themselves in a newly uncertain world.

It’s the fall of 2016. Cate, a set designer in her early 40s, lives and works in Chicago’s theater community. She has stayed too long at the fair, and knows it’s time to get past her prolonged adolescence and stop taking handouts from her parents. She has a firm plan to get solvent and settled in a serious relationship. She has tentatively started something new, even as she’s haunted by an old, going-nowhere affair. Her ex-husband, recently booted from his most recent marriage, is currently camped out in Cate’s spare bedroom, in thrall to online conspiracy theories, and she’s not sure how to help him. Her best friend Neale, a yoga instructor, lives nearby with her son and is Cate’s model for what serious adulthood looks like.

Only a few blocks away, but in a parallel universe, we find Nathan and Irene --- casual sociopaths, drug addicts and small-time criminals. Their world and Cate’s intersect the day she comes into Neale’s kitchen to find these strangers assaulting her friend. Forced to take fast, spontaneous action, Cate does something she’s never even considered. She now also knows the violence she is capable of, as does everyone else in her life, and overnight, their world has changed.

Anshaw’s flawed, sympathetic and uncannily familiar characters grapple with their altered relationships and identities against the backdrop of the new Trump presidency and a country waking to a different understanding of itself. Eloquent, moving and beautifully observed, **RIGHT AFTER THE WEATHER** is the work of a master of exquisite prose and a wry and compassionate student of the human condition writing at the height of her considerable powers.

Discussion Guide

1. Although Cate speaks positively about Maureen in early chapters, it becomes clear that there is some disconnect in their relationship and she has to start selling herself on the romance. Where did you notice this happening?
2. Discuss Cate's friendship with Neale as compared to her relationships with Maureen and Dana beyond two being lovers, one a friend.
3. Cate would probably describe her relationship with Joe as an intergenerational friendship. What value do you think this friendship holds for each of them?
4. Graham is an "open-ended presence" (p. 25) both in Cate's apartment and in her life. They have an unusual arrangement. How does it change through the course of the novel?
5. How are all of Cate's relationships a way of building a family?
6. The author intersperses Cate's perspective with Nathan's point of view. What does this add to the narrative?
7. Cate comes to Neale's rescue, but the experience leaves her isolated, and she realizes that in the aftermath "she has arrived on another side of everything. No one is over here with her" (p. 155). Why do you think she feels alone? Does she also, as Dana suggests, feel powerful? How do you think you would feel in her situation?
8. If you came upon a friend in the same situation, do you think you'd jump in to stop the assailant?
9. How does the incident in the kitchen change Neale and Cate's relationship?
10. A theme of this novel considers what we owe to the people who have cared for us. Discuss how this theme plays out throughout the narrative.
11. At the end, Cate has pulled off the highway. What direction do you think her life will take from here?
12. Do you think she's a slightly different person from who she is at the start of the book?

Author Bio

Carol Anshaw is the author of *RIGHT AFTER THE WEATHER*, *CARRY THE ONE*, *AQUAMARINE*, *SEVEN MOVES* and *LUCKY IN THE CORNER*. She has received the Ferro-Grumley Award, the Carl Sandburg Award, and a National Book Critics Circle Citation for Excellence in Reviewing. She lives in Chicago and Amsterdam.

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