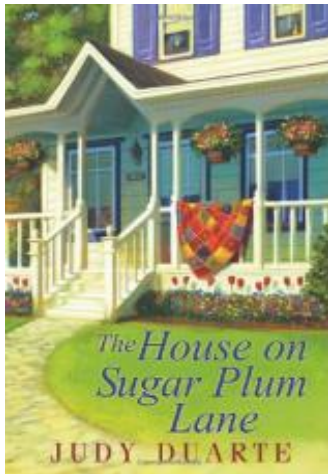


The House on Sugar Plum Lane

by Judy Duarte



About the Book

In her unforgettable *Fairbrook* novels, Judy Duarte created a town that's as warm and as welcoming as home. In **The House on Sugar Plum Lane**, old friends and new characters mingle in a poignant story of second chances, new beginnings, faith, and family.

A woman without a past, and a woman whose future is running out, come together when one finds the pieces of a tattered journal that speaks from the heart.

Amy Masterson, a single mom in search of her roots, finds pieces of a torn journal in a three-story house that once belonged to her family. As she uncovers secrets, betrayals, and emotions buried long ago, she feels an inexplicable bond to another young mother who lived in the old Victorian decades earlier, a woman very much like herself.

Ellie Rucker, her mind failing with age, lives with a neighbor who was kind enough to take her in. Each day, the past slips further from her grasp, and her prayers fade. For years, Ellie had asked God to bless the baby her daughter gave up and to facilitate a reconnection. Time is running out for Ellie, until Amy's faith takes a leap, and a miracle occurs...

Discussion Guide

1. Brandon was running from his past, and Amy was seeking hers. Is there any truth to the adage that one needs to make peace with the past before embracing the future? Why or why not?
2. Barbara kept a secret from her husband. Is it kinder to keep things to oneself that could cause heartbreak to a friend or loved one? Or is honesty always the best policy? Do you think this should apply to life in general? Do you feel differently when it comes to marriage?

3. Maria's ex-husband was incarcerated, and Eddie had a criminal past. Do you think everyone deserves a second chance? Do you feel differently toward Maria's ex than Eddie? Why or why not?
4. Ellie feared she would get dementia and prayed that she would be spared. Do you know someone who has faced or is facing dementia or Alzheimer's? Has either disease affected someone in your family? How do you think you would have handled Ellie's condition?
5. Amy saw Ellie's moment of clarity and lucidity as a miracle. Do you believe in miracles? Why or why not? Have you had any miracles in your own life?
6. Chuck faced his mortality with courage and acceptance. What do you think he learned from his lifetime that may have helped him at the end of his life? What part did faith play in his ability to accept his death?
7. What is the major theme in this book? Is it relevant in your life?
8. Barbara spent more than forty years trying to make up for wronging her husband. Do you think a person can make up for past wrongs by living a better life in the present?
9. Do you consider Brandon's workaholic lifestyle a form of marital infidelity? Or was it a part of his coping mechanism to live a different life than his father? Did Amy react to his perceived neglect in a way that you would agree with?
10. Maria's incarcerated husband wanted to maintain a relationship with his son, which was evident by the letters he wrote to him. Was Maria right or wrong to hide the letters from Danny? Do you agree with Captain's advice to Maria --- that she should talk with Danny and ask how he felt about having a relationship with his father?
11. Was Ellie to blame for any of the rift between her and Barbara? If so, in what way?

Author Bio

Judy Duarte's unpublished stories won the coveted Emily (West Houston RWA Chapter) and Orange Rose (Orange County RWA Chapter) awards, but also earned her the status of a double RWA Golden Heart finalist in 2001. With her third *Fairbrook* novel, she once again gives readers a novel of love, hope and second chances, sure to appeal to readers of Debbie Macomber, as well as fans of inspirational fiction. She lives with her family in Oceanside, California.

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