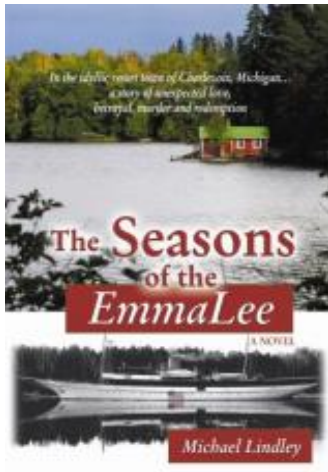


The Seasons of the EmmaLee

by Michael Lindley



About the Book

The Seasons of the EmmaLee takes you back to the idyllic resort town of Charlevoix, Michigan in the years before and after World War II, to share the life of Emily Compton, a young woman of privilege whose family owns the magnificent cruising yacht, the *EmmaLee*. Jonathan McKendry, son of a local boatyard owner, finds himself tragically drawn into their world by his fascination for the great ship and attraction to the Compton's daughter, Emily. Their story is one of unexpected love, betrayal, murder and redemption, bringing the two cultures crashing together while creating an even greater divide.

The story simultaneously tracks the meeting of two people decades later who are drawn together by the return of the *EmmaLee* to Charlevoix. Sally Thomason, a descendant of the family that first owned the ship, struggles with a tragedy linked to her family's history. She meets Alex Clark, the new owner of the *EmmaLee*, and as their relationship grows they search for common ground to help each other move beyond the past to build new lives.

This compelling first novel from Michael Lindley plays out against a beautiful scenic backdrop and historical context. It explores the deep and often complex emotions of class differences, family betrayal and shattered dreams.

Discussion Guide

1. What was your overall impression of the book? Which characters were you most drawn to?
2. The book is written in alternating chapters going back and forth from the 1940's and present day. Did you find this technique effective in carrying the different story lines forward?
3. At the beginning of the book the author includes a quotation from William Somerset Maugham... *"We are not the same persons this year as last; nor are those we love. It is a happy chance if we, changing, continue to love a changed person."*

Which characters in the book do you feel this idea most relates to?

4. The primary setting for the book is in Charlevoix, Michigan. Even if you've never been to Northern Michigan how do you feel the location added to or impacted the story?

5. The character, George Hansen, served as a narrator to set up much of the early story as well as an important participant in both the early and later story lines. What was your impression of the strength of George's character in helping both Jonathan and later Sally, through very difficult challenges?

6. Did you consider Luke McKendry to be a "tragic" character, or just truly evil? What caused Luke to head down such a destructive path? On page 237 when his brother Jonathan says, "*How many times have I tried to help Luke and reach out to him? Some people just don't want to be helped,*" do you agree that Luke felt that he was beyond help?

7. When Luke McKendry died in the boathouse fire, do you feel that it was just a drunken accident, or did he have some greater purpose in this final act?

8. What message did the scene with Jonathan and George riding down to the Holy Island Bridge try to convey?

9. How did you react to Emily Compton's character as she defied her family and friends to come to Jonathan's defense and ultimately to fall in love with him?

10. How would you describe Connor Harris and his role in the story? Do you feel that he adequately punished for his deeds?

11. After a failed marriage, Sally Thomason then lost her parents and daughter in a tragic boating accident. She turned to the comfort of a woman, Gwen Roberts, to find a new path in her life. How did you feel about Sally's relationship with Gwen and how it was affected when she later met Alex Clark?

12. How did you feel about Gwen's reactions to Sally and Alex's courtship and final decision on their future?

13. Sally finds an unfinished painting of her lost daughter. What role did that painting play throughout the story?

14. If there was a sequel to this story, what would happen to characters like Gwen Roberts? Would she stay in Charlevoix or return to New York. What about Mary Alice Gregory, the uptight and snobby socialite? Would Alex and Sally's relationship last?

Author Bio

Michael Lindley has been writing professionally for over twenty years in his career as a marketing and advertising executive. More recently, he has begun publishing his first works of fiction. His short story, *Back to the River*, was published by the literary outdoor magazine, *Sporting Tales*, which has featured the work of Zane Grey and Ernest Hemingway.

Lindley's first novel, **The Seasons of the EmmaLee**, was released in February of 2006. It was named "a great summer

beach read" by *Traverse Magazine* and was the Book of the Month at River Bank Books in Grand Rapids in April.

Lindley was born and raised in Michigan and spent the summers of his youth living in northern Michigan where much of his family had lived for many generations. His great grandparents emigrated to the Lake Charlevoix area in the early 1900's, following opportunities in the lumber industry. His great grandfather became an accomplished carpenter and home builder and built many homes and cottages on and around Lake Charlevoix and Walloon Lake. Later, the family owned and operated a small marina and boatyard on Lake Charlevoix.

With his family's roots and love of the outdoors, Lindley gained a deep affection for the North Country and was always fascinated by its history. In preparation for writing **The Seasons of the EmmaLee**, he spent considerable time at the Charlevoix Historical Society and Public Library.

After years living in the South, he now resides in West Michigan with his wife, two children, and English Setter, Sage. Away from the keyboard, he finds time for the pursuit of trout and salmon with a fly rod on the many rivers of his home state.

Critical Praise

"...EmmaLee reads elegantly and is artfully crafted."

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