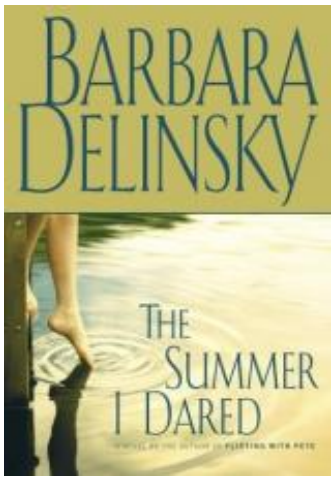
The Summer I Dared

by Barbara Delinsky



About the Book

What comes after the moment that changes your life forever?

This is the question that haunts Julia Bechtel, Noah Prine, and Kim Colella, the only survivors of a horrific boating accident off the coast of Maine.

Julia, a 40-year-old wife and mother, has always done exactly what others expect of her. In the aftermath of her brush with death, though, she realizes that there has to be more to life than obedience.

Feeling strangely connected to Noah, the divorced, taciturn lobsterman who helped save her life, and to Kim, a 21-year-old, whose role in the accident -- and subsequent muteness -- are a mystery, Julia begins to explore her feelings in ways she has never done. With each new discovery, she grows ever more sure that after coming face to face with death, she must have more from life.

Set on the picturesque Maine coast, where lobstermen leave with the tides each morning to haul and set traps, and neighbors gather each night to feast on the catch of the day, **The Summer I Dared** is a story of the risky but rewarding search for self. Ultimately, it is a story of survival, of the irrepressible ability of the human spirit to rebound from disaster and make life anew.

Discussion Guide

1. In **The Summer I Dared**, three people emerge physically unscathed from an accident that takes the lives of nine others. In what ways do the reactions of these three people differ? Discuss the emotions involved. How do those emotions differ and why?

2. What is the central theme of this book? How does the book weigh in on the issue of marital infidelity?

3. Why did Julia put up with Monte? Was she right in staying with him? Was she right in rethinking her marriage after the accident?

4. Consider Janet's early betrayal by George. How did this impact Julia? Is family history destined to repeat itself?

5. Does the excitement of marriage inevitably fade over time? Might Julia have done anything different to avoid it? Discuss some of the major challenges to a marriage and possible ways to cope.

6. Was Julia right in allowing herself to befriend Noah? How has the concept of heterosexual friendship changed from Julia's generation to her daughter Molly's generation?

7. In what ways is Zoe a role model for Julia? Has Julia's mother, Janet, also been a role model for her? Who is the role model for Julia's daughter, Molly? Discuss the impact of role models in our lives.

8.The Summer I Dared tells of Julia's search for self. Outline this search.

9. What is the message in Julia's connection with the Walsh girls? Does this connection play a role in the choices she makes?

10. Noah is a not big talker. Was it lack of communication that destroyed his marriage? During the courase of the story, does his skill at this change?

11. Is violence justified in a lobster war? Should we think less of Noah for his part in that war?

12. Discuss the lessons we teach our children by example. Consider Noah's involving Ian in the lobster war. Consider Julia's involvement with Noah while still being married to Monte. How do these things impact the children involved?

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.

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