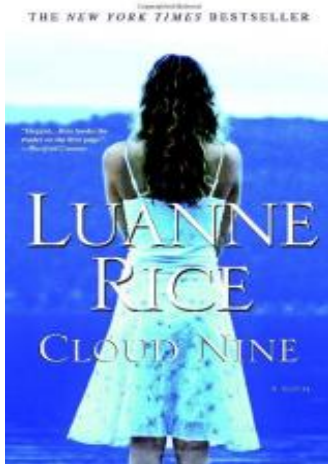


Cloud Nine

by Luanne Rice



About the Book

What would you do with a second chance at life?

Sarah Talbot thought she'd never see another birthday. But against all odds, she beat the illness that could have killed her, reopened her bedding shop, Cloud Nine, and vowed to make the most of a fresh start that few are given. With Thanksgiving approaching, Sarah charts a small plane to take her to Elk Island, a remote spot off the rugged Maine coast where she spent some of her happiest days and where she hopes to reunite with the two most important people in her life. She arrives on the island with pilot Will Burke, a kindred spirit with whom Sarah forges a bond that will give them the courage to confront the past and have faith in the future?no matter how uncertain.

Once Sarah thought happy endings occurred only in books; now she believes they can happen for anyone. And as she and Will grow closer, and something unexpectedly real blossoms between them, she has him believing it, too. But is believing it enough? Is even love enough? Can real life be lived on cloud nine? In this stunning novel, *New York Times* bestselling author Luanne Rice tells a story you will cherish, peopled with indelible characters whose challenges are your own.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the novel's title. What did Sarah hope to give the customers of her bedding shop? How does the world look to her from the sky, with Will piloting? Where do you find your perfect bliss? Which people in your life help you attain it?
2. How does Sarah approach her illness? What gives her the courage to be optimistic during her recovery? What can she teach everyone who faces a daunting challenge?
3. How does Susan cope with the loss of Fred? What is reflected in her wish to change her name, and in the rage she

sometimes expresses in front of her parents?

4. How was Sarah affected by the death of her mother? Is George's response to grief typical of most spouses? Why does Mike feel more comfortable being with George than with Sarah?

5. Discuss Will's ex-wife, Alice, and her newfound wealth with Julian. What is missing from her life, despite the financial success? Were she and Will ever a good match?

6. What does Mike need in order to feel secure in the world? How did your opinion of him shift throughout the novel?

7. Why were Will and Sarah drawn to each other so quickly? How do they forge common ground between her past and his?including his history with the navy, and the loss of parents?

8. How is Sarah changed by being reawakened sexually? How did illness and recovery influence her perception of her body?

9. Many of the novel's characters grapple with the question of why bad things happen to good people. What approaches have you seen to tragedies such as the ones that unfold in **Cloud Nine**?

10. How has Sarah's relationship with her family changed by the novel's closing chapters? What kinds of homecoming experiences did she have? How did the Talbot's Thanksgiving gathering compare to yours?

11. Why is it important for Will to marry Sarah? What pain from the past is washed away in that moment?

12. How did you react to the novel's epilogue? What legacy is left for Susan, and for all of the novel's characters?

13. Luanne Rice often draws on the unique landscape of New England in crafting her novels. What makes the setting of **Cloud Nine** appropriate for the characters' lives? What are the beauties and shortcomings of Elk Island and its remote location?

14. In what ways does **Cloud Nine** underscore the wisdom of love that is evident in each of Luanne Rice's novels? How does this novel offer a new definition of a happy ending?

Author Bio

Luanne Rice is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 36 novels, including three YA novels, that have been translated into 24 languages. Her latest novel is LAST N

Rice's books often center on love, family, nature and the sea. THE BEAUTIFUL LOST deals with teen depression, something Rice

Several of Rice's novels have been adapted for television, including CRAZY IN LOVE for TNT, BLUE MOON for CBS, FOLLOW

12002 Connecticut College awarded Rice an honorary degree. Her paper is located in the college's Special Collection Library. A profile of Rice appeared in *Connecticut College Magazine*, Fall 2014.

She was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from St. Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut.

In June 2014, she received the 2014 Connecticut Governor's Arts Award for excellence and lifetime achievement as a literary artist.

Rice, an avid environmentalist, is honored to be a creative affiliate of the Safina Center.

Critical Praise

"Luanne Rice touches the deepest, most tender corners of the heart."

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