ReadingGroupGuides
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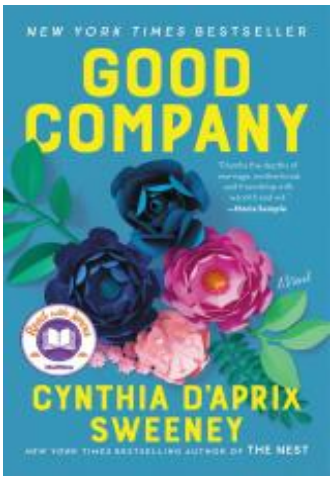
Good Company

by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney



About the Book

A warm, incisive new novel about the enduring bonds of marriage and friendship from Cynthia D?Aprix Sweeney, author of the instant *New York Times* bestseller THE NEST.

Flora Mancini has been happily married for more than 20 years. But everything she thought she knew about herself, her marriage and her relationship with her best friend, Margot, is upended when she stumbles upon an envelope containing her husband?s wedding ring --- the one he claimed he lost one summer when their daughter, Ruby, was five.

Flora and Julian struggled for years, scraping together just enough acting work to raise Ruby in Manhattan and keep Julian?s small theater company --- Good Company --- afloat. A move to Los Angeles brought their first real career successes, a chance to breathe easier, and a reunion with Margot, now a bona fide television star. But has their new life been built on lies? What happened that summer all those years ago? And what happens *now*?

With Cynthia D?Aprix Sweeney?s signature tenderness, humor and insight, GOOD COMPANY tells a bighearted story of the lifelong relationships that both wound and heal us.

Discussion Guide

1. Each character in this novel has a different relationship to their career, in terms of how much they choose to prioritize it over the years and how much success they find. Which character do you think has the most rewarding relationship to their work?

2. Flora and Margot?s relationship was born out of a time when they both shared similar dreams, but their paths diverged significantly as they grew older. What qualities do you think a friendship needs to have to evolve over many decades in this way? How do you think Flora and Margot managed to stay connected rather than drifting apart?

3. Flora and Julian have a marriage that seems, initially, to be rock solid. How much do you think Julian?s infidelity changes that? Does it negate the otherwise positive qualities that their relationship shared, or do you think their marriage is still strong in its own way?

4. Do you think Margot made the right decision to keep Julian?s secret? Do you think she truly had Flora?s best interests in mind, or was she driven by selfish impulses? What would you have done in her shoes?

5. Ruby has only a partial understanding of what is going on with her parents, and yet she is able to bring the family toward a moment of possible reconciliation at the end. How do you think she sees her parents? relationship? Do you think Flora and Julian owe Ruby an explanation of what?s happened in their marriage, or should the ups and downs of a relationship remain a private matter? Are children better off knowing the whole truth of their parents? relationship?

6. What do you make of the fact that many of these characters are actors? Do you think their work performing as other people impacts their own character in any way? Are they perhaps more empathetic to others --- or more deceitful? When one?s artistic practice is also one?s career, what are the upsides? The downsides?

7. What perspective do you think David brings to the friend group? How do you think he must feel as the only person who is not an artist, and the only one facing significant medical struggles? What do you make of his and Margot?s shared connection to the medical field --- him as a practicing physician, her as an acting star playing a beloved TV doctor?

8. Flora and Julian have often struggled to make ends meet, while Margot and David are wealthy. How do you think money affects the relationships between these two couples? Do you think their level of financial success is tied to happiness, or not?

9. What do you make of Julian?s decision to keep his old wedding ring, even though it put him at risk to have Flora discover his secret? Does this reflect anything about his views on their marriage?

10. This book is split between New York City and Los Angeles. How do you think these characters? lives change when they move from the East coast to the West coast? Do you think Flora and Julian?s move to LA demonstrates a shift in priorities? Have they given up on old dreams?

11. What do you think Flora will choose to do going forward? What would you do, if you were in her shoes?

Author Bio

Cynthia D?Aprix Sweeney is the author of the instant *New York Times* bestselling novels THE NEST (named a best book of the year by *People*, the *Washington Post* and NPR) and GOOD COMPANY (a "Read with Jenna" selection).

She has been a guest on "Today," "Late Night with Seth Meyers" and NPR?s "All Things Considered." Her work has been translated into more than 28 languages, and THE NEST is in development as a limited series with AMC Studios. Sweeney holds an MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars. She and her husband live in New York City.

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