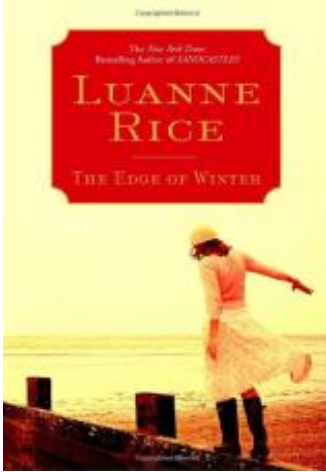


# The Edge of Winter

by Luanne Rice

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## About the Book

Neve Halloran and her daughter have shared a fierce love for the austere beauty of Rhode Island's South County ever since Neve guided Mickey's first baby steps along the sandy shore. Now, with Mickey a teenager and Neve's last hope for happiness with her daughter's loving but unstable father gone, both will struggle to make a new life together amid the windswept landscape that sustains them.

Captivated by a fragile wildlife sanctuary, Mickey will move toward womanhood in the company of a lonely boy who shares her instinctive way with the creatures of the coast. And Neve will find herself drawn to a man who has devoted his life to the sanctuary, but who is unable to share the pain of a recent loss or reconnect with the father who still bears the scars of World War II.

As winter gives way to spring, and spring to summer, a secret will emerge that has lain buried in the depths just offshore for decades, a secret that will galvanize the small seaside community. For the waters bear their own vestige of the past and their ceaseless rhythms may point the way to hope and new beginnings.

Lyrical, luminous, and utterly captivating, **The Edge of Winter** is Luanne Rice at her most penetrating and insightful, in a moving exploration of the bonds that shape us and set us free.

## Discussion Guide

1. What wounds, emotional and otherwise, do Neve and Mickey cope with in the novel's opening chapters? How does their approach to fear and insecurity change in the days that follow?

2. Did your perception of Richard change as you read about him? What is the best way for Neve, and other single parents in her situation, to balance trust and caution with an ex-spouse? Would you have taken Richard to court?
3. Discuss the landscape and its role in **The Edge of Winter**. What makes this wilderness an appropriate setting for this storyline? In what way do the seasons, on the cusp between winter and spring, reflect the transformations experienced by the characters?
4. Were you able to empathize with Tim and Joe's wish for secrecy about Damien's identity as an artist? Do such secrets harm or help a family in the aftermath of tragedy?
5. What do children and parents learn from each other in this novel? What aspects of the bonds between mothers and daughters, fathers and sons were illustrated?
6. What is special about Mickey and Shane's adolescence? In what ways are they naïve, and in what ways does their optimism give them greater power and determination than the novel's adults possess? What tests, such as the test of Mickey's friendship with Jenna, define the turning points faced by most teenagers?
7. How did you interpret Josh's actions toward Mickey? Despite his family's wealth, and his idolization of his father, was he lacking anything important in his life?
8. Mickey misunderstood the sight of Shane's flamethrower and later saw the perished seamen when she was underwater. What do these images indicate about her view of the world? What drives her sensitivity, including her inability to see her father's shortcomings?
9. When do Neve and Tim rediscover their ability to fall in love? Why are they a good match, especially in terms of overcoming one another's resistance to relationships?
10. Chapter seventeen features a newspaper quote from Joe O'Casey: "When a creature loses its ability to fly, it affects every one of us. My brother Damien showed me that; he celebrated birds in every one of his paintings, showed us their beauty and pure poetry. Every bird I help, I think of Damien." How does this philosophy apply to the other characters in the novel? In what ways have they lost their ability to fly? How do nature and love help them take flight again?
11. What does the novel indicate about the ways "family" can be defined? What very realistic aspects of contemporary stepfamilies are presented?
12. Discuss the significance of the trip to Washington. What does a class trip mean to Mickey and Shane at first? Why do their mothers believe it's important for them to go? What transforms it from a social activity into an exercise in citizenship?
13. How would you have felt about the raising of U-823 if this issue had arisen in your community? What is the best way for us to honor those who died in combat?

**14.** What do the stories of Tim, Joe, and Damien indicate about the way military service affects family relationships? When men and women join the armed forces, how does this impact the civilians in their lives, across all generations?

**15.** The novel's closing scene depicts an unlikely reunion and an image of peace. How does that moment speak to causes and solutions for conflicts worldwide?

**16.** What unique perspectives does **The Edge of Winter** offer, setting it apart from Luanne Rices's previous works? In what ways does it underscore themes woven throughout her fiction?

## 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*

In 2002, Connecticut College awarded Rice an honorary degree. Her papers are 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

?An involving tale of love, loss, and redemption, then deepens the story with a resonant appreciation for nature.?

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