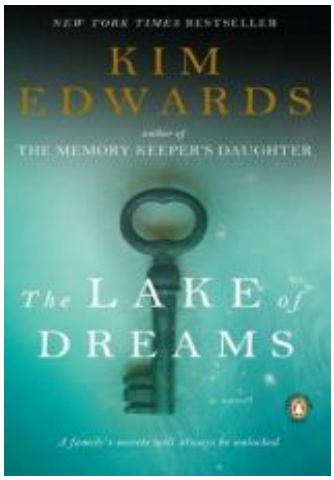
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The Lake of Dreams

by Kim Edwards



About the Book

The highly anticipated new novel from the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of The Memory Keeper's Daughter

With revelations that prove as captivating as the deceptions at the heart of her bestselling phenomenon **The Memory Keeper's Daughter**, Kim Edwards now gives us the story of a woman's homecoming, a family secret, and the old house that holds the key to the true legacy of a family.

At a crossroads in her life, Lucy Jarrett returns home from Japan, only to find herself haunted by her father's unresolved death a decade ago. Old longings stirred up by Keegan Fall, a local glass artist who was once her passionate first love, lead her into the unexpected. Late one night, as she paces the hallways of her family's rambling lakeside house, she discovers, locked in a window seat, a collection of objects that first appear to be useless curiosities, but soon reveal a deeper and more complex family past. As Lucy discovers and explores the traces of her lineage --- from an heirloom tapestry and dusty political tracts to a web of allusions depicted in stained-glass windows throughout upstate New York --- the family story she has always known is shattered, Lucy's quest for the truth reconfigures her family's history, links her to a unique slice of the suffragette movement, and yields dramatic insights that embolden her to live freely.

With surprises at every turn, brimming with vibrant detail, **The Lake of Dreams** is an arresting saga in which every element emerges as a carefully place piece of the puzzle that's sure to enthrall the millions of readers who loved **The Memory Keeper's Daughter**.

Discussion Guide

1. By virtue of her actions and beliefs, Rose was effectively excised from the Jarrett's family history. How unusual do you think it was for women to suffer this fate?

2. Is the name of the Jarrett family business, "Dream Master," hopeful or ominous?

3. Before she became pregnant, Rose longed to become a priest, and Lucy loved the church despite the fact that "God seemed as silent as my father, as angry as my uncle, as distant as the portrait of my great-grandfather in the hall" (p. 74). In your view, what have been some consequences of denying women the priesthood and leadership roles within the church? How has this situation changed in recent decades. How does it persist? Do you feel this should change further? If so, how? If not, why not?

4. "Just knowing she had existed opened new and uneasy possibilities within my understanding of the story I thought I'd always known by heart. And I felt responsible, too" (p. 142). Why is Lucy so driven to uncover the truth about Rose? Is there a family story to which you are deeply attached? If yes, what is it and why? What happens if you try to imagine that story from the perspective of the various people involved, including those on the fringes?

5. Have you, like Lucy, ever revisited romance with an old flame while you were involved with someone new? Did you tell your new partner about your lapse? Did the encounter ultimately strengthen or weaken your new relationship?

6. Although Rose does not intend to leave Iris, her spontaneous response to the march for suffrage makes her an outcast and puts her relationship with her daughter at risk. If you are a parent, is there a cause so important to you that you would risk losing your own child in order to support it? Was the victory that Rose helped win ultimately worth her sacrifice?

7. Do you think it was Lucy's great-grandfather, Joseph, or her grandfather, Joseph, Jr., who hid the will? Why didn't he destroy it instead?

8. When they're viewing the stained-glass panel of Jesus and the woman with the alabaster jar, the Reverend Suzi explains that she is not a fallen woman and that, in the Gospels, Jesus defends her. "Yet here we are, millennia later, and we don't tell her story. We don't even have her name" (p. 339). What do you imagine her story to be?

9. "Rose, I was sure, had acted out of love, yet for Iris her mother's absence had remained an unresolved sadness at the center of her life" (p. 354). Do you agree with Lucy about Rose's decision to keep her real identity a secret from Iris --- even after the latter was estranged from Joseph and Cora? What has changed culturally to make such a choice seem startling today?

10. Does Lucy make the right decision in choosing to stay with Yoshi rather than renewing her love affair with Keegan? Is a romantic relationship with someone from another culture easier or more difficult to maintain?

11. Towards the end of **The Lake of Dreams**, Edwards writes, "the earthquakes had eased --- the underwater island had finally formed" (p. 375). Discuss the ways in which Edwards employs images of the natural world throughout the novel.

12. For generations, most women have taken for granted the rights won them by the suffrage movement and the early pioneers of family planning. How did reading **The Lake of Dreams** alter your perception of these bygone women ---

especially now that birth control and abortion are, once again, hotly debated topics?

Author Bio

Kim Edwards is the author of a short story collection, **The Secrets of a Fire King**, which was an alternate for the 1998 PEN/Hemingway Award, and has won both a Whiting Award and the Nelson Algren Award. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, she currently teaches writing at the University of Kentucky.

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