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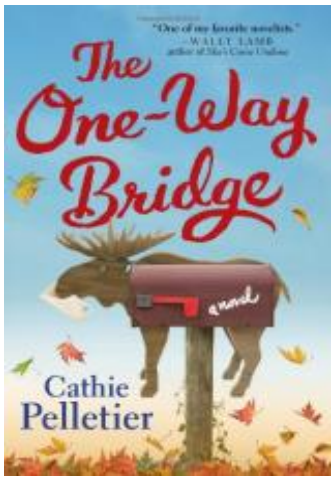
The One-Way Bridge

by Cathie Pelletier



About the Book

In her highly anticipated new novel, acclaimed literary master Cathie Pelletier returns to Mattagash, Maine, the beloved New England town where it all started.

Welcome to Mattagash, the last town in the middle of the northern Maine wilderness. The road dead-ends here, but Mattagash's citizens are fiercely proud.

Yet this simple town connected by a single one-way bridge is anything but tranquil. While neighbors bicker publicly over trivialities such as offensive mailbox designs and gossip about suspicious newcomers, they privately struggle to navigate deeper issues --- scandals, loss, failed ambitions, the scars of war...and a mysterious dead body in the woods.

With her trademark wit and keen eye for detail, Pelletier has assembled an unforgettable cast of endearing and eccentric characters, from scheming mailmen and peeping toms to lovesick waitresses and loggers whose underhandedness belies their ingenuity. The citizens of Mattagash will make you laugh and cheer for them as they stumble into one another's lives and strive to define themselves in a changing world that threatens to leave them behind.

THE ONE-WAY BRIDGE is an extraordinary portrait of family, loneliness and community --- and the kinds of compromises we all make in the name of love.

Discussion Guide

1. Cathie Pelletier uses humour to navigate through numerous themes of THE ONE-WAY BRIDGE (family, loneliness, love, sacrifice). How does this technique shape her characters and the overall message of the book?

2. What did you think of the book?s alternating viewpoints? In what ways did the characters? storylines parallel each

other, and how did they diverge?

3. In what ways did the town?s remoteness perpetuate the inner struggles of the characters? How did the outside world spark change?

4. Why does Harry Plunkett?s absurd mailbox strike a chord with Orville Craft? After reading the novel what do you think the underlying causes of their feud were?

5. Billy Thunder and Harry Plunkett are from two different worlds, but they seem to have an unspoken bond that develops throughout the book. What do you think they see in one another?

6. Near the end of the novel, Edna thinks, ?that maybe marriage is like Monet and his garden. It?s reciprocal.? What does she mean by this? In what ways do the other relationships found within the novel share this reciprocity?

7. One of the major themes of the book is inner conflict. Which character?s conflict did you identify with most? If faced with the same issue, how would you have confronted it differently?

8. At the end of the novel, the rivalry between Harry and Orville comes to head at the town?s one-way bridge. What is symbolic about this particular setting?

Author Bio

Cathie Pelletier was born and raised on the banks of the St. John River in northern Maine. She is the award-winning author of nine other novels, including THE FUNERAL MAKERS, a *New York Times* Notable Book; THE WEIGHT OF WINTER, winner of the New England Book Award; and RUNNING THE BULLS, winner of the 2006 Paterson Prize for Fiction. As K. C. McKinnon, she has written two novels, both of which became television films. After years of living in Nashville, Tennessee, Toronto, Canada and Quebec, she has returned to Allagash, Maine and to the family homestead where she was born. She is working on her next novel.

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