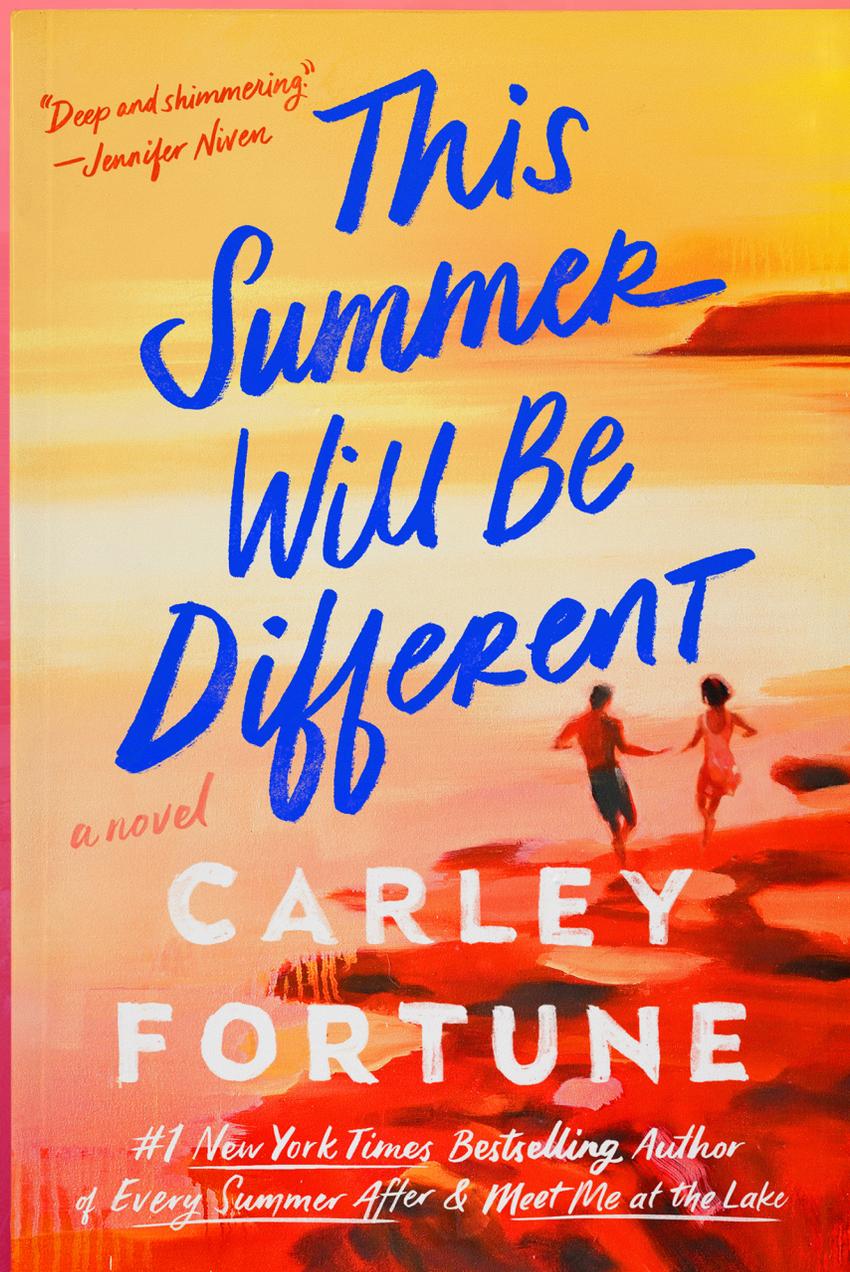


BOOK CLUB KIT



*"Deep and shimmering."
—Jennifer Niven*

This Summer Will Be Different

a novel

CARLEY
FORTUNE

*#1 New York Times Bestselling Author
of Every Summer After & Meet Me at the Lake*

BERKLEY

A CONVERSATION WITH *Carley Fortune*

What compelled you to set this story on Prince Edward Island rather than in lake country like your previous two novels?

I first visited PEI years ago with my best friend, Meredith. We stayed with her aunt in Summerside, drove all over the island, attended the Canadian Oyster Shucking Championship in Tyne Valley, committed to a seafood-only diet, and had an absolute blast. Each time I visit, I fall in love with the island a little more. But even if you've never been, there's a good chance you have a strong connection to PEI thanks to *Anne of Green Gables* and its adaptations. I saw this as an opportunity to look at the island with contemporary eyes while paying tribute to Lucy Maud Montgomery, and I wanted to share my admiration of the island and islanders with the world.



Secrets are a major theme in *This Summer Will Be Different*. Tell us about your decision to explore this topic in a romance.

I set myself one goal when I wrote this book, and that was to have fun. To me, complicated relationships—filled with love but also lies and secrets—are gloriously messy and fun. I always want my characters to feel authentic, like the reader is snooping on real people, and the way Lucy's secret-keeping slowly builds to the point where it's gotten out of control felt honest to me.

This novel is as much a love story between the two main characters, Lucy and Felix, as it is between Lucy and her best friend, Bridget. Why was portraying such an intimate and powerful friendship so important for this story?

The idea for this book began with Prince Edward Island and a pair of best friends on a girls' trip. Friendship was there before romance. I wanted Lucy's best friend to be wildly, unfailingly supportive—the kind of best friend I have. I think many of us can relate to having fears around what it would be like to lose the person we rely upon most, whether that's a parent, a partner, or someone else. For Lucy, that person is Bridget. At times, Bridget plays a mother to Lucy, giving her the encouragement and guidance Lucy's own mom doesn't offer. At other times, she's more like a sister. They laugh. They fight. They dance in the kitchen in their socks. But as they grow up, Lucy needs to learn how to let her friend move forward and stand on her own so she can do the same.

As much as *This Summer Will Be Different* is a romance, it's also a coming-of-age journey for Lucy. How did you go about creating Lucy's internal struggles and portraying their complexities within the novel?

I like to switch up the kinds of women I write about so that I'm tackling fresh emotional journeys with each book. The protagonist in my second novel, Fern, is prickly with a very strong sense of self. I wanted Lucy to be the opposite. She's sweet and cheery and lacks self-confidence. Lucy's coming-of-age requires her to interrogate herself—her fears, her passions, her reliance on others—to reach a new stage of adulthood.

This book is much sexier than your previous novels and doesn't shy away from the undeniable chemistry between Lucy and Felix. What inspired this idea and why did you decide to use sex as the catalyst to bring these characters together?

Much sexier! Ha. I guess it's because sex is fun! Or it should be. It delighted me to begin a story with what seems like the perfect vacation hookup, only to have it end

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in disaster. The idea that Lucy and Felix would promise never to fall into bed together, only to repeatedly fail at that, felt inherently funny to me. And I liked setting a steamy, modern love story on Prince Edward Island, a place we associate with the chaste romance of Anne and Gilbert. I hadn't written a couple like Lucy and Felix, whose physical connection comes first and whose emotional connection grows later. It strikes me as the way many relationships develop—the sexy stuff usually comes before deeper feelings.

Lucy doesn't have the best relationship with her parents or brother but views her aunt as a second mother. Why did you want to explore this type of family dynamic?

I had a fabulous aunt, my mom's sister, who we lost to cancer the year before I began writing fiction. My mom and I are very close, but there is no denying that I take after my aunt Colleen in a lot of ways. I wish she was still with us for so many reasons—she was so dry and wise and a beautiful quilter, knitter, and baker. She was a great friend to my mom, and her children and grandchildren miss her immeasurably. I think Colleen would have gotten such a good kick out of this phase of my life. I have two young children now, and the bond they have with my brother is so special. Uncle Ben is basically a celebrity in our house. Aunts, uncles, and cousins can play such a big role in our lives—one that doesn't always receive a lot of attention—and I wanted to honor those bonds.

What do you hope readers take away from reading *This Summer Will Be Different*?

As always, I want readers to escape with me. I want someone to open this book and feel transported to a gorgeous island on Canada's East Coast, to feel the sun and the wind on their cheeks, to stick their toes in the sand and stare up at great red cliffs and out at a shimmering sea. I want you to taste the oysters, to hear Bridget singing in the shower, and to stare into Felix Clark's extraordinary blue eyes. I want readers to be able to sink into this love story, to fill their hearts up, and maybe start dreaming about their version of Lucy's flower farm.

Discussion Questions

1. What's your most memorable vacation, and why?
2. Lucy feels a sense of belonging when she's on Prince Edward Island. Have you ever traveled to a place that felt like home?
3. If you were in Lucy's shoes, would you have told Bridget that Lucy had slept with Felix that first time?
4. If not, is there a point where you think Lucy should have fessed up?
5. Who do you think "caught feelings" first: Lucy or Felix? What do you think that moment was for each of them?
6. Bridget and Lucy's friendship is tested as they grow into their adult lives. Do you think it's possible to maintain the same depth of friendship as we get older?
7. Aunt Stacy advises Lucy to live her life for herself and no one else. Do you agree with this advice? Why or why not?
8. After Bridget's wedding, Felix and Lucy decide that it's not the right time for them to begin a relationship. What did you make of this choice?
9. What's your relationship to *Anne of Green Gables*, if any?