

ONCE
IN A
BLUE MOON
LODGE



a Novel

LORNA LANDVIK

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF
PATTY JANE'S HOUSE OF CURL

A BOOK DISCUSSION GUIDE

for *Once in a Blue Moon Lodge* by Lorna Landvik



A MESSAGE FROM LORNA

One of my first editors was a woman named Leona Never, who while reading through slush pile submissions back in the '50s came across a manuscript she insisted her boss not only read, but publish, pronto. It was *Peyton Place*.

Leona was old-school and managed to rise up in the sexist women-are-secretaries-men-are-bosses era to become a real force in the publishing world. I met her in 1996, when Ballantine was publishing the paperback of *Patty Jane's House of Curl*. She had a whispery voice and in the years we worked together, she'd tell me "You write a different book every time." I took it as a compliment—I think she meant it as a compliment. While I think I have a certain voice, I never wanted to tell the same story over and over.

By the time I write "The End," it usually is. I've resolved problems, tied up loose ends, and humbly thanked my characters for coming into my head and letting me tell their story. I feel both a sense of relief (*whew—I did it!*) and a zip of excitement, because finishing one novel means I can begin another, with a cast of characters (usually two or three) who've shown up and are impatiently chewing gum and practicing swings in my mental batter's box, waiting for their turn to be called up and play.

And yet . . . I am surprised by random whispers I hear from characters in my past books. A song can come on the car radio and it reminds me of Slip; the looming height of a spruce tree can make me think of Fenny; a particularly starry night brings Fletcher to mind.

Throughout the years, characters in *Patty Jane's House of Curl* would pop up in my head (and for a while I'd almost expect to see the fictitious beauty salon on the real street I set it on!), but several years ago, the occasional whispers grew into a yammering—that is, the characters yammering "We want more of our story told!"

And so, I dove back into their world to find out what's what and who's who and who's doing what to whom. And why. And where. And how.

It was so fun. I knew fairly quickly the big life-changing event that Nora was going to experience, but I didn't know I'd go to 1920s Norway to learn more about Ione. New characters appeared, demanding to be woven into the story, some playing big parts, some happy with walk-ons.

Welcome to the *Once in a Blue Moon Lodge*. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

PRAISE FOR *ONCE IN A BLUE MOON LODGE*

“At long last! Patty Jane and her irresistible band of big-hearted merry-makers return to us. Lorna Landvik’s humor is wrapped around a core of love, common sense, and good cooking. Pull up an easy chair, pour a glass of wine, and enjoy this grand family reunion.”

—**FAITH SULLIVAN**, author of *Good Night, Mr. Wodehouse*

“Lorna Landvik creates characters and places so warm and real that reading *Once in a Blue Moon Lodge* feels like coming home (if you’re lucky enough to be surrounded by people and places as weird and wonderful as Lorna’s—I think I am).”

—**NORA MCINERNY**, author of *It’s Okay to Laugh (Crying Is Cool Too)*

“There is a charm and warmth to this hopeful tale in which love is the glue that holds people together. Landvik’s love for her characters is evident.”

—**KIRKUS REVIEWS**

ONCE IN A BLUE MOON LODGE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1.** *Once in a Blue Moon Lodge* is a sequel to *Patty Jane's House of Curl*, although it's not necessary to have read the first book to follow the characters of the second. Have you ever read a sequel you enjoyed more than the book that inspired it?
- 2.** As a senior citizen, Ione is moved to start a group working for social justice called Old Bags for Change. Do you have a particular cause that inspires you to invest time and action?
- 3.** There are several main characters in this book. Whose story resonates most with you and why?
- 4.** Why do you think Ione hid such a big part of her life for so long? Have you ever heard a story or learned a secret about a relative or friend that has surprised or shocked you?
- 5.** Ione describes Berit as not being satisfied with the many gifts she had. Do you think a person like Berit suffers over her own behavior?
- 6.** Nora's heritage is Norwegian and yet the first time she visits Norway is as an adult. Have you, if your ancestors came from another country/countries, visited those places or met distant relatives?
- 7.** Nora escapes to Minnesota's north woods and gets more than the rest and renewal she was seeking. Is there a choice you've made that has altered the course you thought you'd mapped out for yourself?
- 8.** Because of a loyalty she feels toward her deceased husband, Nellie hasn't moved out of the lodge, even though she closes it down for business. Have you ever done something out of loyalty toward someone that you've regretted? That you've been happy about?
- 9.** Nellie's a real eccentric. Is there someone in your own life who could be described the same way?
- 10.** Why do you think Ione is willing to risk so much to let her son feel what he rarely feels: competent and in control? Describe something your own mother did to support you, or something you've done for a child, your own or someone else's.

- 11.** Silvia takes up Patty Jane's impulsive invitation to leave New Mexico and come to Minnesota. Neither of them imagine that one day they'll be in-laws. Have you ever invited someone to do something and been surprised by the unexpected results?
- 12.** Silvia and Harry find success in making music together. If you could have a dream career with a partner, spouse, or friend, what would it be?
- 13.** Thor and Clyde Chuka are important role models for Harry and Lewis. What do you think each man gives these boys?
- 14.** The creative lives lived by those at the lodge inspire Lewis. How do you fulfill your need to make something?
- 15.** If you were hired to teach a class/seminar at the Blue Moon, what would you teach?
- 16.** When she feels the triplets are old enough to know, Nora tells them the story of their parentage. Do you think she should have told them earlier, later, or not at all? While some people believe secrets are ultimately harmful, others believe they are kept to protect themselves or those they love. What do you think?
- 17.** Age doesn't fall on either Ione or Patty Jane as harshly as it does some of their friends. Who in your life has stayed youthful in mind, body, or spirit and how have they done it?
- 18.** The Once in a Blue Moon Lodge is a sanctuary for its inhabitants. Is there a special place that serves as one for you?
- 19.** Ulla had a strong sense of self and wouldn't allow 'Elmer Fudd,' her CP, to define who she was. How is it that with her physical challenges, she was able to easier navigate through life than her sister, Grace?
- 20.** If you could ask the author a question of your own, what would it be?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota, **Lorna Landvik** wanted to be a writer from the time she learned how to read. The summer after high school graduation, she worked in a plastic spoon and fork factory to pay for a trip to Europe with her best friend. For nearly a year, they hitchhiked through the continent, supplementing their income by working as chambermaids in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Upon her return to the US, she briefly attended the University of Minnesota before departing for San Francisco, where she performed stand-up comedy.

She continued to perform improvisational and stand-up comedy in Los Angeles at The Comedy Store, The Improv, and many other clubs. To earn the living that performance wasn't yet providing, she waitressed and temped, working at movie studios and record companies, and, for several very interesting months, at the Playboy Mansion. (It was strictly a clerical position.)

In Los Angeles, she and her husband had their first daughter and her birth inspired them to become members of 'The Great Peace March for Global Nuclear Disarmament.' One thousand people began the march, but after funding fell through, more than half of the marchers left, leaving 450 people to walk across the country in a grass roots movement. She considers the nine months she spent living in a tent a boot camp of sorts, although she was dazzled by the physical beauty of this country and the warmth of its people. She is also thrilled there has been no nuclear war.

After a move back to Minneapolis, where her second daughter was born, she became a cast member of Dudley Riggs' Brave New Workshop. She is the best-selling author of many novels, including *Patty Jane's House of Curl*, *Angry Housewives Eating Bon-Bons*, *Oh My Stars*, *Best to Laugh* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014) and *Mayor of the Universe* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014). She continues to perform in Minneapolis and every January does a one-woman, all-improvised show, *Party in the Rec Room*.