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Leaving Lucy Pear



Synopsis

From the first page, I was under Anna Solomon's spell. Sue Monk Kidd Chosen as a must-read book for summer 2016 by TIME Magazine, InStyle, Good Housekeeping, The Millions, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, and BookPage Set in 1920s New England, the story of two women who are both mothers to the same unforgettable girl—a big, heartrending novel from award-winning writer Anna Solomon One night in 1917 Beatrice Haven sneaks out of her uncle's house on Cape Ann, Massachusetts, leaves her newborn baby at the foot of a pear tree, and watches as another woman claims the infant as her own. The unwed daughter of wealthy Jewish industrialists and a gifted pianist bound for Radcliffe, Bea plans to leave her shameful secret behind and make a fresh start. Ten years later, Prohibition is in full swing, post-WWI America is in the grips of rampant xenophobia, and Bea's hopes for her future remain unfulfilled. She returns to her uncle's house, seeking a refuge from her unhappiness. But she discovers far more when the rum-running manager of the local quarry inadvertently reunites her with Emma Murphy, the headstrong Irish Catholic woman who has been raising Bea's abandoned child—now a bright, bold, cross-dressing girl named Lucy Pear, with secrets of her own. In mesmerizing prose, award-winning author Anna Solomon weaves together an unforgettable group of characters as their lives collide on the New England coast. Set against one of America's most turbulent decades, *Leaving Lucy Pear* delves into questions of class, freedom, and the meaning of family, establishing Anna Solomon as one of our most captivating storytellers. Anna Solomon writes with a poet's reverence for language and a novelist's ability to keep us turning the page. A gorgeous and engrossing meditation on motherhood, womanhood, and the sacrifices we make for love. J. Courtney Sullivan

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I could not put this book down. Not only did I feel as though I had stepped into 1920s Cape Ann because of Solomon's vivid descriptions and lyrical prose, but I kept turning the pages because of the original story line. I did not know what was going to happen nor did I know how the many intriguing characters were going to resolve their dilemmas. I felt invested in the characters and the story. This is both a beautiful work of historical literary fiction and a page turner. I look forward to reading more books by this talented author.

From its gripping opening scene, Solomon's book had me hooked. The fascinating prohibition era world of Cape Ann, with its temperance societies and bootleggers, is impeccably conjured by Solomon's graceful sentences. Even more intriguing are the central characters of Emma and Bea, each coming from very different worlds and classes, and yet both trapped within the restrictive roles society demands of them. The men who swirl around them are fascinating too, but I was riveted by the complex relationship between these two women, which have at heart a love for the eponymous Lucy Pear. This is a really great literary historical fiction!

A terrific book, with beautifully written interwoven story lines, complex and layered characters, believable, set in an equally interesting and provocative period of history, the Prohibition, in Gloucester, MA. Lucy herself is an unforgettable person; she will stay with you long after you've finished the book. It's the kind of novel you can't put down and which makes you wish for more.

I didn't mean to start reading the book right away but while I was waiting for my husband I read the first page. Then the first chapter and then when I got home I snuck off into the hammock and read until it was too dark and realized all I had left undone. A compelling, smart and rewarding read.

Thank you NetGalley and Penguin Group Viking for the ARC! Wow, what a unique read! Admittedly, and I can't decide between two reasons for this, I had trouble getting into the story. Whether this is because it simply starts out slow or because of the method of storytelling, I'm not sure. But I am really glad I forced myself to continue beyond the first dozen or so pages, as from there on out I couldn't put it down! The author of *Leaving Lucy Pear*, Anna Solomon, utilizes

an ensemble of characters to tell the story. At some points this did get confusing to have the POV continually shifting. What likely made it more confusing was not the writing itself, but the skewed formatting you often encounter with ebooks (in my case, a e-galley on a Kindle). Obviously not the fault of the author. With that said, I couldn't help comparing the style to watching the movie *Amelie*, which I loved. I really appreciate Solomon's ability to develop so many characters over the course of the novel. The evolution of Lillian somehow stuck with me and I found her to be one of the most sympathetic characters of the bunch, even though I have the feeling I should have found Bea or Lucy in that role. Bea was a somewhat disappointing character at many a juncture. Without saying too much and giving away any spoilers, I will only say that my gut feeling told me I should care about her more, as much as say, a Charlotte Perkins Gilman character. Another highlight of this novel is the prose used to describe the coastal area in and nearby Essex County. It had me constantly looking up various locations mentioned, dreaming of taking off to view the places in person. Plus, the time period - the 1920s, swoon! Overall, I certainly recommend the novel "complex, unique and satisfying!"

I was immediately drawn in to Solomon's *Leaving Lucy Pear* and stole every free moment to devour this fascinating novel. The characters are so richly developed - their stories are captivating and beautifully told. I didn't want it to end but felt fulfilled when it did.

Stunning and powerful. Anna Solomon's writing is gorgeous, not just because of her vivid descriptions and beautiful structure, but because through her words we feel our humanity. My heart ached through much of this book. Bea and Emma are rich and complex characters giving us a real look at all of the aspects of motherhood. And love is so palpable, shown in all of its complicated, intricate, and paradoxical forms. One of the best books I've read in a long time.

Leaving Lucy Pear is a wonderful book. Solomon casts a spell on the reader from the first sentence. I could not put it down and stayed up way too late to finish it. Although it is set in the 1920s, the book feels contemporary. The women are compelling characters. I was fascinated by the dilemmas they faced and wanted them all to succeed. Overall, the book offers insights into our past, but also helps us understand who we are today. A redemptive, exciting, and beautiful book!

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