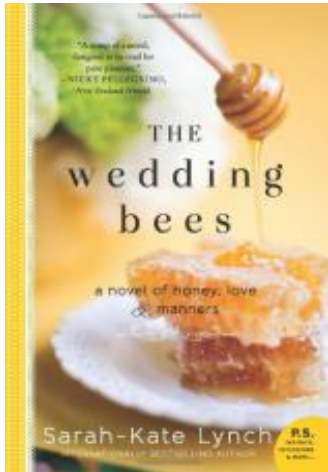


The Wedding Bees: A Novel of Honey, Love, and Manners

by Sarah-Kate Lynch



About the Book

Sugar Wallace did not believe in love at first sight, but her bees did...

Every spring Sugar Wallace coaxes her sleepy honeybee queen --- presently the sixth in a long line of Queen Elizabeths --- out of the hive and lets her crawl around a treasured old map. Wherever the queen stops is their next destination, and this year it's New York City.

Sugar sets up her honeybees on the balcony of an East Village walk-up and then --- as she's done everywhere since leaving South Carolina --- she gets to know her neighbors. She is, after all, a former debutante who believes that manners make the world a better place even if they seem currently lacking in the big city.

Plus, she has a knack for helping people. There's Ruby with her scrapbook of wedding announcements; single mom Lola; reclusive chef Nate; and George, a courtly ex-doorman. They may not know what to make of her bees and her politeness, but they can't deny the magic in her honey.

And then there's Theo, a delightfully kind Scotsman who crosses Sugar's path as soon as she gets into town and is quickly besotted. But love is not on the menu for Sugar. She likes the strong independent woman she's become since leaving the South and there's nothing a charmer like Theo can do to change her mind...only her bees can do that.

THE WEDDING BEES is a novel about finding sweetness where you least expect it and learning to love your way home.

Discussion Guide

1. When George first meets Sugar he observes: "I don't get to meet many people like you these days. You new in

town?? How is Sugar different from the New Yorkers that George is used to? And even though she's a newcomer, are there ways that she fits right into her new home?

2. Sugar's father says that "Wallaces don't clean up other people's messes. That's just not what we do" and Sugar says "I don't rescue people, that's just so sappy." But her longtime friend Jay says "Sugar, you are a one-woman detox center stroke guidance counselor stroke bank teller stroke babysitter stroke you name it." Who is right? What motivates Sugar when she bonds with other people?

3. Why does Sugar seem so alarmed by Theo's impetuous honesty about how he fell in love with her at first sight? Do you think he crossed a line? Why does the usually free-spirited Sugar seem to think he did?

4. What do you make of Ruby's obsession with wedding announcements? What do they represent for her? Would she have approved of Sugar and Grady's fairytale wedding?

5. Early on in the novel, George tells Sugar that "Where you're from is where you're from and a person will always miss it. There's just no getting away from that." Do Theo and Sugar miss where they're from or are they happier where they're transplanted? How do Sugar's feelings about where she's from change once she goes back to Charleston?

6. Sugar's brother Ben tells her that he feels stuck in his life as a successful lawyer, and says "I've envied you over the years, carving out a different life for yourself, going where the wind blows you. That takes guts." Do you envy Sugar? Could you do what she did? Would you want to?

7. Food is perhaps the most important way that Sugar relates to the people in her life, from the cakes and cocktails she makes to cement her relationship with her neighbors to her observation that her mother, despite "all her faults, she could make a really good pie." What role does food play in your life? Are there certain recipes or dishes that are important to your relationships?

8. Of all the happy endings in *THE WEDDING BEES*, which is your favorite and why? Sugar and Theo's wedding? Mr. McNally and Mrs. Keschl? Ruby? Lola?

9. The author, Sarah-Kate Lynch, opens this novel with the dedication: "In praise of random acts of kindness, good manners, and guardian angels." Whose random acts of kindness carry the most weight? Whose good manners are most sorely tested (or most appreciated)? And which of the characters do you think are the guardian angels of this story?

Author Bio

Sarah-Kate Lynch is the author of eight novels and travel editor of *New Zealand Woman's Day*, New Zealand's bestselling weekly magazine.

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