

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
ALL THE DAYS OF SUMMER

nancy
thayer
the
summer we
started over

A Novel



Book Club Kit

NANTUCKET BLUES

Hello, You Fabulous People!

Yes, it is I, Dinah Lavender, author of over one hundred delicious romance novels, and here I am, sharing all my secrets with you.

Wait.

Sorry. It's me, Nancy Thayer. I want to thank you all for being part of a book club, for loving and discussing books. I hope my books add something pleasurable and meaningful to your lives.

My novels center around family and friendship, although there's always some romance thrown in, because we all want romance in our lives, don't we? Or do I mean love? What's the difference between romance and love? A good discussion question, don't you think?

I'm often asked where my ideas come from. The truth is that I'm inspired by the people I know in my life and the various losses, heartbreaks, and challenges they're going through. Sometimes, though, a character will actually appear out of thin air. That's where Dinah Lavender came from.

I was at my computer, starting to write *The Summer We Started Over*. I wanted to center the book on a family recovering from deep personal loss. Just then, one of my best friends called. Her name is Dinah, she lives in Palm Beach, and she's the most glamorous, fabulous, generous, and drop-dead gorgeous person I know. As we spoke on the phone, a voice in my head said: Dinah Lavender, a romance writer! My real Dinah's last name is not anything like Lavender and she doesn't write novels.

I could hardly get off the phone fast enough. I started tapping away on my computer about Dinah Lavender, the romances she writes, how she looks, and the part she plays in my new novel. Dinah Lavender was completely there, as if she'd been beamed down from a cloud. A lavender cloud. With sparkles.

I've dedicated the book to my real friend Dinah because she was the beginning of the inspiration. I have never read Barbara Cartland, who wrote 723 novels, but I suggest you Google her, just to see what she looked like.

I hope you enjoy meeting Dinah, and all the people in *The Summer We Started Over*.

Love,
Nancy

Oodles of hugs and kisses,
Dinah



Discussion Questions

1. *The Summer We Started Over* explores many poignant themes, including grief, self-discovery, embracing change, and taking chances on love and personal fulfillment. Which theme and storyline resonated the most deeply with you, and why?
2. Examine the role of the setting, both the summer season and the location of Nantucket, in the novel. How does the season of change parallel the characters' personal growth and transformation? How does the island's dynamic as a popular tourist destination play a role in the story?
3. Discuss the different paths to happiness pursued by Eddie, Barrett, and Bill. How do their individual journeys reflect their personalities and values?
4. Analyze the theme of pursuing dreams. How do Eddie and Barrett's aspirations compare and contrast, and what obstacles do they face in achieving their goals?
5. How does the theme of grief play out in the story? How do the losses that Eddie, Barrett, and Bill have experienced shape their individual journeys?
6. Explore Eddie's struggle to find her place both professionally, romantically, and in regard to motherhood. How does her uncertainty about her career path, her desires for a fulfilling romantic relationship, and her hesitancy towards motherhood influence her personal growth and overall pursuit of happiness?
7. Analyze Barrett's character and motivations. What drives her passion for opening Nantucket Blues, and how does this dream shape her identity? How does her pursuit of her dream impact her relationships and personal fulfillment?
8. Discuss the role Dinah plays in the lives of Eddie, Barrett, and Bill during *The Summer We Started Over*, and the ways that each of them—and Nantucket!—impact her in return.
9. How does Dove's return, death, and the introduction of her young son Bobby impact each of the family members?
10. Reflect on the overall message of the novel. What lessons can be gleaned from the characters' experiences about finding happiness and following one's dreams?

Eddie's Guide to Starting Over



Take a deep breath

Breathe and grieve. If you've been dumped by a lover or fired from a job or betrayed by a friend, this is hard. Cry. Remember, you're not alone. We start over dozens of times in our lives. New homes, new loves, new friends, new disasters, new pleasures, new delights.



Keep a journal

It doesn't matter if you can't spell or write a proper sentence. This is the place to let it all out, to say all the terrible, true things you want to say about yourself and anyone else. Write "He's a toad!" or worse. Write "I hope she falls down the stairs and breaks her front teeth" or worse. This is your psychological escape valve. This is your way to metaphorically break all the furniture and set the house on fire. You will feel so much better afterward.



Buy new clothes

Get your hair styled and your nails done. Don't say, "I won't spend money on new clothes until I've lost ten pounds." This is NOT the time to try to lose ten pounds, and new clothes are life-affirming. Anyway, you look good.



Move

Move to a new apartment or house if you can, but more importantly, MOVE. Scientists and poets all agree that when you walk or run, your mind refreshes itself. Don't do a treadmill indoors, unless you're living in Alaska. Leave your safe place, where you soothe yourself with Ben & Jerry's and Cheetos, and go outside. Breathe fresh air. Remember how big the world is, how far away the sky is. The world starts over every day, and so can you.



Read

Read poets Mary Oliver and Louise Glück. Read mysteries and historical romances. Read someone you've never read before and don't read it all if you don't like it. It's such a freedom to say, "Nope, not for me. I'll start a new book!"



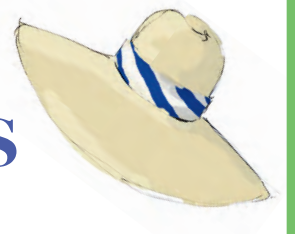
Dance

At home. Play your favorite music, especially by Aerosmith, Taylor Swift, or Beyoncé, as loud as you can and dance. Sing. Scream. Dance and sing and scream until you're sweaty and exhausted.



Take a Shower

Put on your new clothes. Step outside. Start over.



Dinah Lavender's Guide To Nantucket

Jewelry

NANTUCKET BLUES

Straight Wharf

Bracelets, rings, necklaces. Sapphire, aquamarine, turquoise. I already bought the blue topaz earrings. Sorry!

HEIDI WEDDENDORF

At Erica Wilson's

27 Main Street

Darlings, the pearl and gold earrings!



JEWEL IN THE SEA

6 Straight Wharf

Diamonds are a girl's best friend!

PAGEO JEWELERS

46 Main Street

I bought the black opal ring—it was only a bit over \$7,000



Attire

PETER ENGLAND

3 Old South Wharf

Elegant soft knits, très nautical



MURRAY'S TOGGERY SHOP

62 Main Street

*Old School/Yacht Club
Nantucket Reds*

VIS-À-VIS

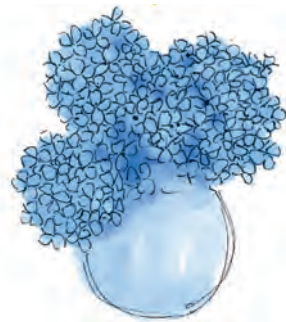
34 Main Street

Luxurious, a bit boho, fab

HEPBURN

3 Salem Street

Audrey & Katherine, of course



Restaurants

TOPPER'S

The Wauwinet

Triple A, 5 Diamonds! On the waterfront, you can sail there.

THE CHANTICLEER

'Sconset

*Mondo Bossa Tres Leche Cake
Can you get that anywhere else?*

BRANT POINT GRILL

Overlooking the harbor

The White Elephant Cocktail with Tequila. Ole!

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THIEVES

Broad Street

*Legendary in town, casual
Whale's Tale Pale Ale
Cute men at the bar*



Bookstores

MITCHELL'S BOOK CORNER

Main Street

A treasure trove!

BOOKWORKS

25 Broad Street

The sister ship with a special nook for children



Nantucket Blue Cocktail



Ingredients:

3 oz. Prosecco
1 tsp. Curacao
1 tsp. Zubrowka
3 frozen blueberries

Use a champagne flute so you can enjoy the rising bubbles.

Add 1 Teaspoon Curacao.

Note: Curacao tastes like bitter orange because it is from the bitter orange laraha, a citrus fruit from the Caribbean. If you love the flavor of bitter orange, you can add more. One teaspoon will be enough to make the drink blue.

Add 1 Teaspoon Zubrowka.

Zubrowka is a heavenly sipping Polish vodka unlike other vodkas. It contains a stem of bison grass and has a picture of a bison on the label. Alone, Zubrowka is smooth and lightly fragrant. Added to the Curacao, it cuts the bitterness and adds a mild spiciness to the cocktail.

Add 3 oz. Prosecco.

Really, any Prosecco will do as long as it isn't a rose, which would change the color of the drink. Caposaldo Prosecco is an inexpensive and less sweet choice to mix with other alcohols.

Some experts say that mixing any two liquors can hit you harder. Others say it's only how much you consume, not the mix.

3 blueberries (optional)

I often freeze a few blueberries and drop them into the cocktail because they create wonderful celebratory bubbles.



Strawberry Shortcake

Ingredients:

1 quart fresh strawberries
¾ cup sugar
1 tbsp. Chambord
Bisquick shortcake
Reddi-wip

Remove stems. Slice in half. Mix with sugar and be sure the berries are wet. Leave for an hour or more, to let the berries make juice. Add Chambord, a raspberry liqueur, if you want.

Follow directions on Bisquick to make shortcake. If you're making strawberry shortcake, it's summer and you've got a lot of cooking to do.

Slice shortcake biscuits in half. Top each half with strawberries and juice. Add Reddi-wip and place one half strawberry on top. If you're having a casual meal, put the Reddi-wip can on the table. Everyone loves making their own pile of whipped cream.

Summer/Winter Berry Cheesecake

Ingredients:

Frozen blueberries

Bakery cheesecake

In August, on Nantucket, pick a cup or two of wild blueberries. The low bushes are all over the island, and the little berries are the sweetest. Rinse, put in plastic bag and freeze.

In January, buy a cheesecake from one of our wonderful bakeries. An hour before dinner, take blueberries out to thaw. Sprinkle on cheesecake. It will taste like summer.



Learn more

About the Artist

Heather Stillufsen, a self-taught illustrator and author, is the creative mind behind Rose Hill, an illustration and design company dedicated to spreading positivity and joy through her artwork. Heather's passion for drawing began in childhood, and she has been wielding a pencil ever since. Her delicate and whimsical illustrations, characterized by a flowy feminine style, have become instantly recognizable and garnered attention from women worldwide since 2012.

Heather's art covers a wide range of themes, from florals to fashion and family to friendship her art demonstrates a contemporary sensibility that appeals to people of all ages. Her meaningful words, written from the heart, offer readers hope for a brighter day and inspiration to live life to the fullest.

In addition to her line of greeting cards, Heather has authored and illustrated six books. Her elegant illustrations grace yearly calendars, journals, planners, stickers, mugs, cards, art prints, coloring books, hand-painted needlepoint canvases, and more.

Beyond her licensed work, Heather collaborates with clients to create custom illustrations, book covers, branding, and various projects. Monthly, her art can be found in *Woman's Day* Magazine. Heather resides in Westfield, New Jersey, with her husband and takes pride in being the mom of two daughters, Summer and Saylor.

To stay connected with Heather and her artistic journey, you can follow her on Instagram, Facebook, and (X) Twitter. Explore and shop her creations at rosehilldesignstudio.etsy.com.



For more from Nancy Thayer:
nancythayer.com

  NancyThayerBooks

For more from Heather

 [heather_stillufsen](https://www.instagram.com/heather_stillufsen)