

By the New York Times bestselling
author of From the Corner of the Oval


**Book
Club
Kit**

Rock the Boat

Beck
Dorey-Stein

A Novel





Author's Note

Dear Reader,

Yesterday I was scouring every drawer for that thing I used to use years ago—a comb—when I came upon the most holy of treasures.

The life-saving love child of science, sorcery, and summer, sunscreen protects us from cancer, sure, but its true superpower lies in its transportive scent. Without hesitation, I popped the bottle for an unsanctioned hit. One whiff and I was on a beach, two whiffs and I was never coming back—all that salt air and bared-skin potential pulled me into a sunny dreamscape full of tan bodies and maskless faces. It was glorious and joyful and so far away from where we've been.

I don't need to tell you it has been an *interesting* time to be alive and that this upcoming summer feels different. Precariously sexy, Summer 2021 is warming up fast and encouraging everyone's (wander)lust, from grandpas on jet skis to Italian greyhounds in bikinis. After more than a year of struggle, heartbreak, and uncertainty, we deserve to have some fun. YOU deserve to have some fun. In fact, I wrote *Rock the Boat* specifically because you have earned a mental vacation to kick back and soak up some sun and lighthearted drama in Sea Point, New Jersey. Yes, New Jersey. You'll have to trust me.

Rock the Boat is an invitation to slow down and hang out with three lost souls during one unforgettable summer at home. Just a fair warning: their flaws might initially make you cringe. I first wrote them to exorcise the frustration I felt toward societal pressures and privilege, but I kept writing them because I believe so much of what we want is shaped by our surroundings and the company we keep. These characters needed to rediscover just how lucky they were and how restorative the natural world, true friendship, and hard work can be. Honestly, I needed the reminder, too.

Oh, and you know what else I needed? A story with a happy ending. So, if you're looking for a car accident or grave diagnosis on the last page, this is not the book for you. In fact, it is my hope for *Rock the Boat* to be the novelistic equivalent of sunscreen: Summer at your fingertips.




Lather up and thank you for reading!

Beck Dorey-Stein





Discussion Questions

1. What did you think of the town of Sea Point? How did the setting affect the read?
 2. How does the book explore ideas of home and family?
 3. When Kate and her sister Bernadette are at their parents' house, they "regress as teenagers." How does Kate's personality change during her time in Sea Point? Do you find yourself acting differently when you visit your hometown? What do you think it means to be "grown up"?
 4. Who was your favorite character and why?
 5. Why do you think Miles, Ziggy, and Kate have grown apart at the beginning of the novel? What mistakes do they each make in terms of their relationships with one another, and how are these remedied?
 6. Why do you think Jo is initially hesitant to cede ownership of The Wharf to Miles? How does Miles change and grow throughout the book?
 7. At the start of the novel, Kate wants nothing more than to move back to Manhattan and win Thomas back. How do her priorities shift? What do you think the author is trying to say about the components of a happy, successful life?
 8. What roles do class and privilege play in the story?
 9. Ziggy reflects that "the path he'd walked his entire life had left him utterly lost." How are these characters forced to choose new paths? Have you ever had to make a change in your life after realizing you were on the wrong path?
 10. What did you think of the book's ending? Were you surprised by who Kate ended up with?
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Jerry's Paloma

Pretend you're drinking with Kate, Ziggy, and Miles at Summersault with this refreshing Paloma recipe.

Ingredients:

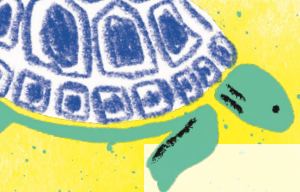
- Kosher salt
- 1 grapefruit wedge
- ¼ cup fresh grapefruit juice
- 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 1 tsp. sugar
- ¼ cup mezcal or tequila
- ¼ cup club soda

Instructions:

1. Pour some kosher salt on a plate. Rub half the rim of a highball glass with the grapefruit wedge; dip rim of glass in salt.
2. Combine grapefruit juice, lime juice, and sugar in glass; stir until sugar is dissolved.
3. Stir in mescal, add ice, and top off with club soda.
4. Garnish with grapefruit wedge.

Source: [bonappetit.com/recipe/paloma](https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/paloma)





Bev's Birthday Cake

Bev's Birthday Cake is the perfect dessert for every occasion—birthday or not.

Ingredients:

- 2 pints ripe, well-rinsed strawberries
- ½ cup sugar, or more to taste
- 4 cups flour
- 3 tbsp. sugar
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 5 tsp. baking powder
- 1 ¼ cups butter
- 3 cups whipping cream
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- A dash of Campari (to add to the whipped cream)

Instructions:

1. Pick over and hull strawberries. Cut in half or slice, depending on size. Gently crush about a quarter of the berries with a fork to release their juices. Mix with remaining berries and the ½-cup of sugar, adding more sugar if necessary. Set aside, covered, for about half an hour to develop flavor.
2. Preheat oven to 450°F.
3. Into a large mixing bowl, sift together flour, 3 tablespoons sugar, salt, and baking powder. Add ¾-cup of softened butter and rub into dry ingredients as for pastry. Add 1 ¼ cups cream and mix to a soft dough. Knead the dough for 1 minute on a lightly floured pastry board, then roll it out to about ½-inch thickness. Using a 3-inch biscuit cutter, cut an even number of rounds—2 rounds per serving.
4. Use a little of the butter to grease a baking sheet. Place half the rounds on it. Melt remaining butter and brush a little on the rounds; place remaining rounds on top. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes, or until golden brown.
5. Remove from the oven and pull shortcakes apart. Brush the insides with some of the remaining melted butter.
6. Beat remaining cream until it thickens. Add vanilla. Beat again just until thick.
7. Place a bottom half of a shortcake on each plate. Top with a generous spoonful of berries. Cover with a top half, add a few more berries, and top with whipped cream—Bev adds a dash of Campari to her whipped cream! Serve immediately.

Adapted from: cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/11823-strawberry-shortcake





QUIZ: Which Sea Point job would you have?

How do you spend your spare time?

- A. Figuring out how to optimize every area of my life
- B. Reading
- C. Tinkering around the house
- D. Experimenting in the kitchen
- E. Painting

What do you look for in a work environment?

- A. An efficient place where things run smoothly and we're generating maximum profit
- B. A quiet place with smart, passionate colleagues
- C. A place where I feel important, knowledgeable, and confident in solving problems
- D. Fast pace, thrilling workdays, high stakes—but you can leave it all at work when you go home
- E. A calm and inspiring atmosphere where I have the space to be creative

How does your most satisfying workday end?

- A. Business has been strong, and we've felt that our fingers are on our customers' pulse
- B. The community has come together and I've guided readers toward their perfect books
- C. Everything in the house is running smoothly and efficiently
- D. With a shift drink, a sweaty brow, and full-body exhaustion
- E. I've expressed myself and put something beautiful on a canvas


Mostly A's: Like Jo Hoffman, you're the ultimate boss. The Wharf would be lucky to have you in charge.

Mostly B's: Like Katie, you're comfortable around books and community. The library is your ideal workplace!

Mostly C's: Like Ziggy, you love to work with your hands and solve problems for people. You'd be a fantastic plumber and contractor, designing and building your own Daffodil Cottage.

Mostly D's: Like Miles, you've found your match in the high-energy environment of The Wharf's kitchens.

Mostly E's: Like Bev, you're a creative spirit and a born artist. Keep channeling your energy into your paintings—you never know what they might sell for!





QUIZ: Which Sea Point resident are you?

What's your dream job?

- A. Anything involving books!
- B. CEO . . . or maybe cook?
- C. Builder/plumber

How do you like to spend your free time?

- A. Dancing in my room or out with friends.
- B. Partying and jet-setting.
- C. Working with my hands and relaxing.

Are you a planner?

- A. Absolutely—I've got a 3-point plan for everything.
- B. Not really—I tend to sit back and things just fall into place.
- C. Yes and no—I like blueprints, but it's harder when it comes to my future.

What do you do when you have a crush?

- A. I devise my strategy for getting together—then plan our bright future as a couple.
- B. Text them intermittently for years just to see if anything's still there.
- C. Not much.



How do you break up with someone?

- A. We're not broken up. We're getting back together just as soon as I . . .
- B. I let them think it's their idea.
- C. I don't do exclusivity in the first place. No relationships, no breakups!

Mostly A's: You're Kate!

Mostly B's: You're Miles!

Mostly C's: You're Ziggy!





Rock the Boat Playlist

*Welcome to Summer in Sea Point! Roll down those windows, crank up that volume,
and get ready to get sunburnt and sonically turnt!*

1. "Road to Nowhere" by Talking Heads
2. "All the Days" by HAERTS
3. "Breaking Up is Hard to Do" by Neil Sedaka
4. "Two Weeks" by Grizzly Bear
5. "Tougher Than the Rest" by Bruce Springsteen
6. "Beverly" by Low Cut Connie
7. "Miles From Nowhere" by Yusuf / Cat Stevens
8. "I Slept with All Your Mothers" by Harriet
9. "Lovefool" by The Cardigans
10. "Come On Up to the House" by Tom Waits
11. "Get a Job" by The Silhouettes
12. "Seasons (Waiting on You)" by Future Islands
13. "Nowhere to Run" by Martha Reeves & The Vandellas
14. "Look at What the Light Did Now" by Flo Morrissey, Matthew E. White
15. "Wait for Love" by St. Lucia
16. "I'm Goin' Down" by Vampire Weekend
17. "Rock the Boat" by Hues Corporation

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