

TIME

After

TIME

LISA GRUNWALD

—Book Club Kit—

Dear Readers,

Novels and love affairs sometimes get started for the same reason: serendipity. In the case of this novel, I was doing research in a library when I found a 1946 book about Grand Central Terminal. I was thumbing through it when I happened to read a few paragraphs about a beautiful young woman who appeared in the terminal every year, lost and confused. One night, a man who worked there agreed to walk her home, but she disappeared on the way. When he finally reached her house, her aunt said that the same thing had happened on the same day every year—ever since the young woman's death years before.

I was working on other things at the time, but I couldn't get that story out of my mind. There was the mystery of the man and the woman, but then also the romance of Grand Central, such a beautiful, timeless place where so many fascinating things had happened. And so, my chance encounter with this old book led to the chance encounter of Nora Lansing and Joe Reynolds, the two main characters in *Time After Time*.

I think there's a lot book clubs can talk about after reading this novel, and in this kit you'll find some discussion questions that might be starting points. You'll also find a bit of Grand Central history, an explanation of Manhattanhenge, food and drink recipes and a playlist inspired by the book, and a map of some of the key places in Joe and Nora's story.

It's a genuine thrill to hear from real readers, so I hope you'll share your photos and thoughts with me on social media! I'm @LisaGrunwald on Instagram.

With all the best wishes,
Lisa Grunwald



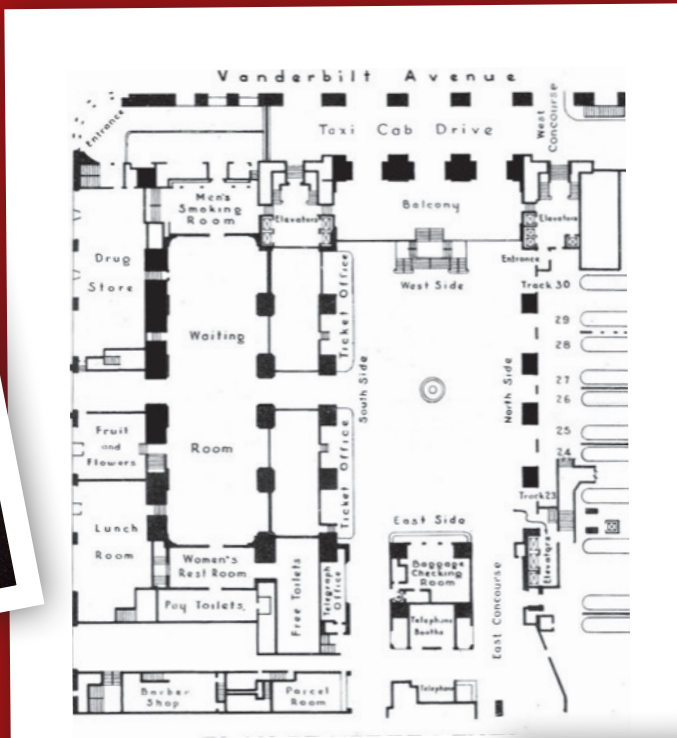
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Nora and Joe test the rules that govern Nora's appearances and disappearances, questioning whether they are linked to time or distance. Which would you rather be: able to go anywhere for a limited amount of time, or confined to a single place with the chance of living forever?
- When Nora discovers that she is being kept "alive" by the M42 power converters and the solar phenomenon known as Manhattanhenge, Joe describes it as "magic with rules." Do you think that all of our technological advancements create a bit of magic in our own lives?
- Discuss the ways in which Joe's genuine concern for Nora's safety and wellbeing can blur into possessiveness and attempts at control. Where do you draw the boundary?
- What does art offer Nora that Joe can't?
- How did you feel about Faye and Joe's relationship as the novel progressed?
- The cover of the book is a sketch from a 1930s fashion magazine. If you could dress for any decade, which would it be and why?
- Talk about a time you sacrificed something for a person you love.
- Grand Central Terminal was designed as a city within a city. Discuss all of the ways that Nora and Joe take advantage of this fact. Do you think that this location makes it possible for Nora to live an authentic, rich life?
- Do you think Nora would have stayed with Joe if she had been able to leave Grand Central?
- Imagine that *Time After Time* took place today. What is different about our society? How differently would Nora and Joe's relationship have formed if this were a contemporary story?
- Nora makes a controversial decision at the end of the novel. What would you have done if you were in her shoes? Do you agree with what she did?

—BITS of history—



Biltmore room key



1939 map of
Grand Central's
Main Concourse

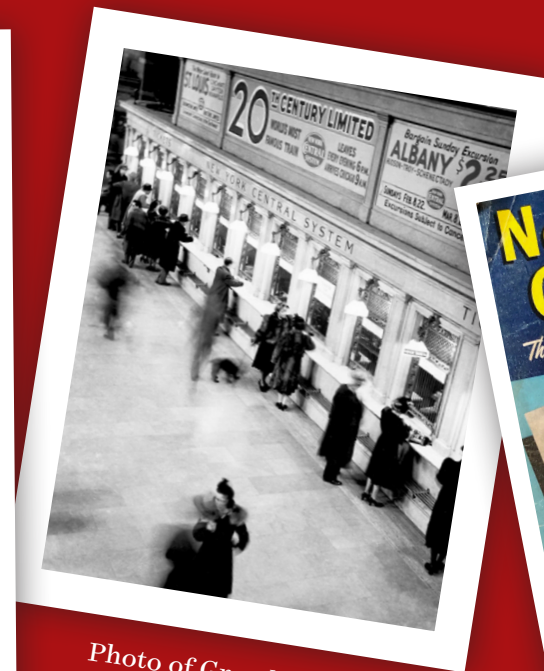


Photo of Grand Central
from the 1930s



New York Central
train schedule



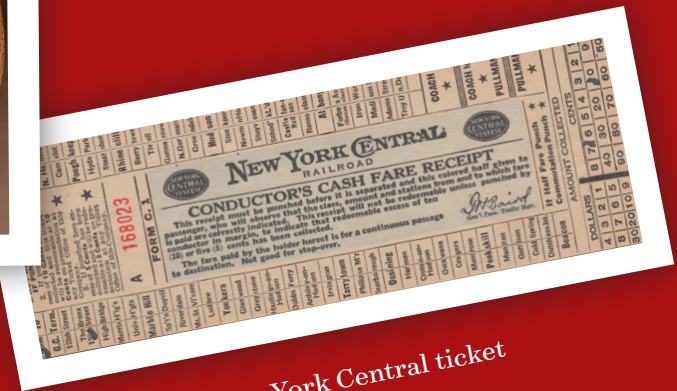
Sign for M42
inside Grand Central



New York Central toy train



A button from a
Red Cap's Uniform



New York Central ticket

FUN FACTS ABOUT

—*Grand Central Terminal*—

- There are 2,500 stars in the ceiling of the Main Concourse of Grand Central. About 60 of these are actually small electric bulbs that seem to twinkle.
- Familiar constellations in the ceiling include Orion, Aquarius, and Pegasus, but as early as 1913, the year the terminal opened, visitors noticed a number of errors. Most (but not all) of the constellations had been painted backwards, and some were in the wrong position relative to one another. Though the defense at the time was that the stars had been depicted as if seen from above the heavenly sphere, the more accepted explanation is that the painters just messed up. And yet, the beauty is undiminished.
- Grand Central was one of the first train stations in the world to be fully electrified—from the trains that were able to run far underground without coal, to the fixtures and features of the building itself. The celebration of the use of electricity is evident in the thousands of exposed light bulbs on the terminal's massive chandeliers.
- Back in the 1930s and 1940s, Grand Central had—in addition to its many shops, restaurants, and food stalls—a newsreel theater, a renowned art gallery co-founded by John Singer Sargent, an art school, an infirmary, and a morgue.
- Eventually the art school was replaced by CBS's first East Coast television studio, and it was from a desk in that newsroom that the renowned Walter Cronkite delivered the shocking bulletin of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Today that fourth-floor space is occupied by a tennis club with a regulation court, a junior court, and practice areas. (Call ahead to reserve time).
- The porters in Grand Central were called Red Caps because of their hats (Green Caps delivered messages and mail). In the 1940s, Red Cap #42, Ralston Crosbie Young, was featured in the "Most Unforgettable Character" column in *Reader's Digest*. Known around the terminal as the Red Cap Preacher, he led prayer meetings three days a week in an empty train car on Track 13.
- Down the ramp near the Grand Central Oyster Bar restaurant is an alcove known as the Whispering Gallery. Because of the particular arc of its tiled vault overhead, words whispered into one corner of the alcove can be heard 30 feet away in the diagonal corner.

FUN FACTS ABOUT

—*Grand Central Terminal*—

- The east balcony, where an Apple store now reigns, was the site of a large lounge for servicemen during World War II. The elaborate set-up featured not only places for the men to rest, but also pool tables, board games, a 200-book library, a snack bar, and a popular machine called a Panoram. The Panoram was essentially a jukebox with a small screen that showed synchronized three-minute film clips known as “Soundies”—the direct ancestor of the music video.
- The huge space that is now called Vanderbilt Hall—where the annual Grand Central Christmas Market is set up—was originally the terminal’s main waiting room. It was lined with rows of wooden benches (some of which remain, in the corners). If you look carefully, you can see small indentations in the marble floor made by thousands upon thousands of waiting passengers’ feet.
- The granite that was blasted to make way for Grand Central was carted away and eventually used to line the banks of the Hudson River.
- Grand Central Terminal is not the same as Grand Central Station. Grand Central Station is a post office branch and also a subway (technically 42 Street-Grand Central Station). If you’re talking about the place where trains end (or *terminate*) and begin their routes, the place where you can see stars sparkle indoors, the place where you can shop, eat, get your shoes shined, get your watch fixed, and meet a friend at the gold clock, then you’re talking about Grand Central Terminal.

MANHATTANHENG



Like the phenomenon at Stonehenge in England, Manhattanhenge in New York City occurs on only a few days of the year. Weather permitting, it affords a spectacular view of the rising or setting sun. In England, those special days fall on the winter and summer solstices, and the sun is framed between monoliths, suspended over a central stone. In Manhattan, due to the angle of the island and its street grid, the days occur some weeks before and after the true solstices, giving New Yorkers extra chances to see the sun—framed not by ancient stones but by shimmering buildings.

Once known as the Manhattan Solstice or Solar Grid Day, “Manhattanhenge” as a term was coined by Neil deGrasse Tyson, who offers a more scientific explanation on the Museum of Natural History’s website. In recent years, Manhattanhenge sunsets—which occur in May and July—have even taken on a kind of festival atmosphere, with onlookers gathering on side streets to look toward the Hudson River, hoping for clear skies and good camera angles. In the winter, only the few and the warmly dressed venture out to see the Manhattanhenge sunrises, which occur in December and January. But both sunrises and sunsets have been captured by countless photographers, including amateurs like myself (photo to the left).

FOOD AND DRINK IDEAS

—for your book club event—

The Ultimate Grilled Cheese Sandwich

Nora's favorite food is taken up a culinary notch in this delicious recipe. Serves 4.

Ingredients:

8 slices of good quality bread
(I use thick-cut artisan bread)
Mayonnaise for spreading
12 oz. Gruyere cheese sliced thinly or grated,
at room temperature
6 oz. white cheddar cheese sliced thinly or grated,
at room temperature
4 slices thin Muenster cheese, at room temperature
2 yellow onions, diced
1 tsp. fresh thyme, minced
2 tsp. fresh rosemary, minced and divided
1 tsp. brown sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
3 tbsp. butter, divided
1 tbsp. olive oil

Instructions:

Add 1 tbsp. butter and olive oil to a skillet and heat over medium-low heat. Add diced onions, salt, pepper, fresh thyme, and 1 tsp. of fresh rosemary to the hot skillet and sauté, stirring often, until onions are soft and starting to brown, about 10 minutes. Stir brown sugar into the onions and cook another minute. Transfer onions to a plate. Spread one side of two pieces of bread with a little bit of mayonnaise. To the same skillet, add remaining butter and rosemary, and heat over medium heat. Swirl to coat the bottom of the skillet with the melted butter. Add both pieces of bread, mayonnaise side down, and cook until bread is golden brown and crunchy, about 2-3 minutes. As soon as you add the bread to the skillet, add a bit of cheese to the top of each piece of bread. Once it starts to melt a little, sprinkle a couple tablespoons of the caramelized onions over the top of one of the pieces of bread. When the bread is good and golden brown, sandwich the pieces of bread together and cook on low until cheese is fully melted. Transfer to a plate. Repeat with remaining slices of bread and ingredients.



FOOD AND DRINK IDEAS

—for your book club event—

SILVER DOLLAR PANCAKES

Take Joe's favorite diner snack for a whirl. Serves 34.

Ingredients:

1 cup all-purpose flour (spooned and leveled)
1 ½ tsp. baking powder
1 cup whole milk
1 tsp. sugar
¼ tsp. coarse salt
2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted

Variations:

- Put ice cream and chocolate sauce on top.
- Layer Gruyere cheese and ham on top.
- Serve with sour cream, smoked salmon, and chopped chives.
- Top with cream cheese and fruit preserves.

Instructions:

In a small bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. In a medium bowl, whisk together milk, butter, and egg. Add flour mixture to milk mixture and whisk until just moistened (batter should have some lumps). Heat a large nonstick or cast iron skillet over medium. With a paper towel coated in butter, lightly grease skillet. Working in batches, drop batter by tablespoonful into skillet. Cook until bubbles appear on top and a few have burst, 2 minutes. Flip and cook until browned on underside, 1 minute. Repeat with more butter and remaining batter, wiping skillet clean between batches.



FOOD AND DRINK IDEAS

—for your book club event—

Oysters Rockefeller

Pretend you're at Grand Central's Oyster Bar. Serves 3 dozen.

Ingredients:

3 dozen fresh oysters in the shell, washed
1 medium onion, finely chopped
½ cup butter, cubed
1 package (9 oz.) fresh spinach, torn
1 cup grated Romano cheese
1 tbsp. lemon juice
⅛ tsp. pepper
2 pounds kosher salt

Instructions:

Shuck oysters, reserving bottom shell. Set aside. In a large skillet, sauté onion in butter until tender. Add spinach; cook and stir until wilted. Remove from the heat. Stir in the cheese, lemon juice, and pepper. Spread kosher salt into two ungreased 15x10x1-in. baking pans. Lightly press the oyster shells down into the salt. Place one oyster in each shell; top each with 2 ½ teaspoons spinach mixture. Bake, uncovered, at 450° F until oysters are plump, 6-8 minutes. Serve immediately.



FOOD AND DRINK IDEAS

—for your book club event—

Manhattan

Pair this with the oysters and toast to the good life. Serves 1.

Ingredients:

2 oz. rye whiskey

1 oz. Carpano Antica Formula or other sweet vermouth

2 dashes of Angostura bitters

Ice

1 maraschino cherry, for garnish

Instructions:

Fill a pint glass with ice. Add the rye, vermouth, and bitters and stir well. Strain into a chilled coupe glass. Garnish with the cherry.



FOOD AND DRINK IDEAS

—for your book club event—

Sidecar

Enjoy a taste of history with this timeless drink. Serves 1.

Ingredients:

2 tbsp. superfine sugar

1 lemon wedge

3 tbsp. Cognac

2 tbsp. Cointreau or other triple sec orange liqueur

1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1 cup ice

Instructions:

Spread superfine sugar on small plate. Rub lemon wedge halfway around rim of chilled martini or coupe glass. Dip moistened side of glass in sugar to lightly coat outside rim of glass. Set aside. In cocktail shaker, combine Cognac, Cointreau, and lemon juice. Add ice and shake vigorously until well chilled, about 30 seconds. Strain into prepared martini or coupe glass and serve.



FOOD AND DRINK IDEAS

—for your book club event—

Prohibition Sour

Stay dry with this non-alcoholic beverage. Serves 1.

Ingredients:

1 oz. lemon syrup

½ oz. orange syrup

Juice of one lime, freshly squeezed

Crushed ice

6 oz. carbonated water

Instructions:

Put the syrups and lime juice into a 12-oz. glass. Add a scoop of crushed ice. Fill with carbonated water. Stir and serve garnished with a slice of lime.



PLAYLIST

—inspired by the novel—

TIME AFTER TIME

by
Frank Sinatra

MANHATTAN SERENADE

by
Tommy Dorsey
and His Orchestra

GREEN EYES

by
Jimmie Davis

WE'LL MEET AGAIN

by
Vera Lynn

DON'T FENCE ME IN

by
Ella Fitzgerald

I DON'T WANT TO WALK WITHOUT YOU

by Harry James and
His Orchestra & Helen Forrest

STAIRWAY TO THE STARS

by Glenn Miller
and His Orchestra

ONLY FOREVER

by Bing Crosby &
John Scott Trotter

AS TIME GOES BY

by
Rudy Vallee

I'LL BE SEEING YOU

by
Frank Sinatra

TAKE THE 'A' TRAIN

by Duke Ellington
and His Orchestra

YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE

by Jimmie Davis

I COULD WRITE A BOOK

by
Original Broadway Cast
of Pal Joey

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO ON AGAIN

by
Vaughn Monroe

BLUE SKIES

by
Ella Fitzgerald

I LOVE PARIS

by
Ella Fitzgerald

THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC

by
Frank Sinatra

STORMY WEATHER

by
Lena Horne

IT'S BEEN A LONG, LONG TIME

by
Bing Crosby

TIME AFTER TIME

by
Cyndi Lauper

A Q&A

—with Lisa Grunwald—

Q: *How did you come up with the idea behind the novel?*

A: Serendipity is everything. For my previous novel, I needed to know what it would have been like to arrive in New York by train in the 1950s. So I was in the library stacks at Columbia when I found a 1946 book simply titled *Grand Central*.

Perfect. I fanned through the pages the way you do and landed on a few paragraphs about a beautiful young woman who appeared one morning at 4 a.m., lost and confused, by the gold clock in Grand Central. A gateman offered to walk her home, just a few blocks away, where she lived with her aunt. This is from that book:

As they cut across the avenue, the girl fell silent. For the next block or so she uttered not a word. And when he had turned the corner and walked a few yards eastward, the gateman discovered that she was no longer at his side.

According to the story, the gateman doubled back, trying to find her, looking in doorways, more and more agitated. Finally, he went to the address where she'd said her aunt lived.

Though it was still the dead of night [he] rang the bell. A terrified old woman came to the door. He told her everything. And she replied: "It happens this way every year. She was my niece. She was in a gas explosion when Grand Central was being built . . . and thirty-eight years ago tonight—she died."

I don't know how I would have spent the last eight years of my professional life if I hadn't read those words. But I did, and I never forgot them. This novel is the result.

A Q&A

—with Lisa Grunwald—

Q: *How has your personal life informed the emotional themes behind the characters of Joe and Nora?*

A: I had been working on this novel for more than a year before I realized I was writing about my own life. I don't mean I've ever experienced anything supernatural (except once, possibly, but that's another story). And I don't mean that my husband, Stephen, would have the faintest idea what to do in the control tower of a train station.

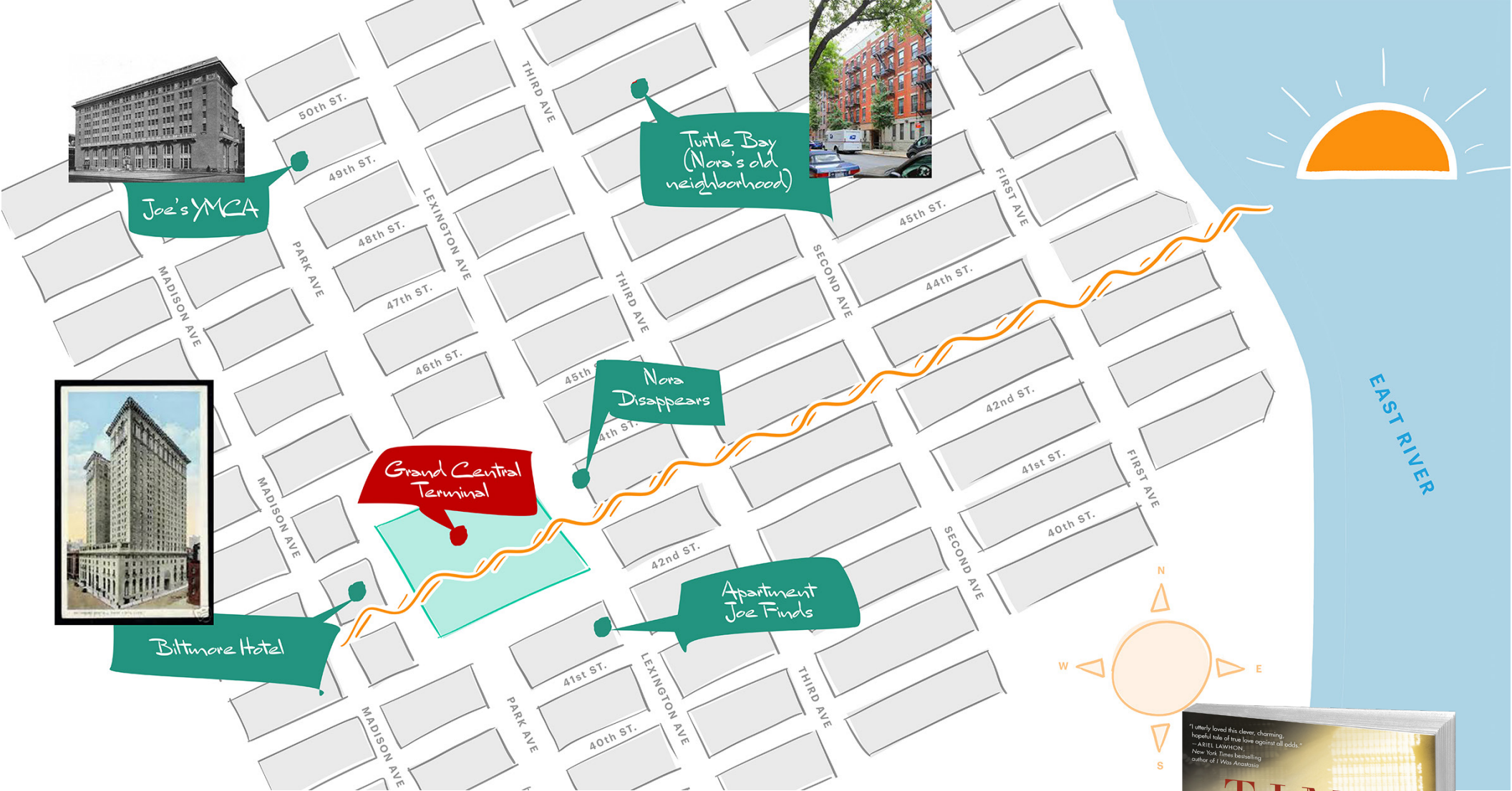
But like Joe and Nora, we did meet somewhat magically—in our case, on a blind date that led us to get engaged four months later. And like Joe and Nora, we have learned what it's like to live with physical restrictions and the practical and emotional challenges they bring.

I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2008 and had a number of unrelated operations between 2012 and 2014. Because of all that, and the fatigue and imbalance that come with my MS, Stephen has had to get used to coming home to a wife who's usually in bed and, more often than not, too tired to get up and have dinner with him, let alone to go out.

But while my world has gotten smaller, Stephen's bursts at the seams. As editor-in-chief of Reuters, he travels all over the world, and is invited to all manner of conferences, cultural events, and dinners. I wish I could go with him, but I do the next best thing, which is to urge him into the night and onto those transatlantic flights.

Fact and fiction don't always mesh, but the parallels helped me find the emotional center of this novel. Like Stephen, Joe is steadfast. Like me, Nora learns to live in a circumscribed world. Joe helps Nora accept her limitations. Nora helps Joe pursue his freedoms.

Writers are always urged to write about what they know. For all the differences of time and place and backgrounds and cosmic events, it turns out that Joe and Nora's struggles with love and freedom are what I know.



VISIT
LisaGrunwald.com

