



The Lake Season

Hannah McKinnon

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Set in the weeks leading up to an idyllic New England wedding, this “enticing and refreshing” (Nancy Thayer, *New York Times* bestselling author) novel sparkles with wry wit, sweet romance, and long-kept family secrets.

Iris Standish has always been the responsible sister: the one who studied hard, settled down, and always made the right choices—even when they came at the expense of her passions. Meanwhile, her sister Leah dropped out of college to “find herself” by hiking through Yellowstone and switches jobs nearly as often as she switches lovers, leaving Iris to pick up the pieces in her wake.

But now Iris’s life is coming apart at the seams, and when Leah calls her back to their childhood home with a desperate cry for help, she is thrust headfirst into preparations for her sister’s wedding to a man their New Hampshire clan has never met...with her own marriage and family on the brink.

Still, despite the rush of dress fittings, floral arrangements, and rehearsal dinners, Iris is learning to put herself first. And amid a backdrop of late-night swims and a soul-restoring barn renovation comes Cooper Woods, a high school crush who beckons with the promise of a new start.

While Leah faces a past that has finally caught up to her, Iris prepares to say goodbye to a future that is suddenly far from certain. As Hampstead Lake shimmers in the background, Iris must decide when to wade in cautiously and when to dive—and, ultimately, how to ferry herself to safe harbors in this “glittering...memorable” novel of second chances and the ties that bind (Michelle Gable, nationally bestselling author of *A Paris Apartment*).

The Lake Season Details

Date : Published June 2nd 2015 by Atria/EEmily Bestler Books

ISBN : 9781476777641

Author : Hannah McKinnon

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Fiction, Contemporary

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From Reader Review The Lake Season for online ebook

Laurel-Rain says

As the older, responsible sister, Iris Standish has had a good run. A lovely home in suburban Boston, Massachusetts, three healthy children, and a part-time career as a literary agent. Yes, her oldest, Sadie, is now a teen and pretty sulky and occasionally rude, but the younger two are still lovely.

Suddenly, Iris's husband Paul tells her that he wants a separation. And in a flash, her world begins to unravel. She forgets things, her house becomes a mess around her, and her children are looking at her strangely.

Her sister Leah's postcard with the cryptic message "Please come" couldn't have arrived at a better time.

Off she goes to the family home in Hampstead, New Hampshire...her children are at camp and she wants to get away from Paul's disapproving, critical presence.

But home is not what she expected, and Leah is glowing, announcing her upcoming wedding preparations as the reason she needs her sister. While Iris is feeling unneeded at her own home, she is feeling even more like an outsider here as Leah, of the irresponsible past and the mood swings, overshadows her and makes her feel like a sore thumb. And then draws her needlessly into the wedding preparations, while she flits off to do whatever she desires.

Then Iris sees an old high school friend, Cooper Woods, the handsome guy she never had, and he asks her to help him with the barn restoration he is doing at her parents' place. She feels needed again. But then Leah inserts herself once more, as if she must take up all the air in the room. In spite of it all, something begins to develop between Iris and Cooper. Can it continue? Will she finally move on?

"The Lake Season" grabbed hold of me and kept me turning pages, feeling a wide range of emotions, from enjoying the beautiful settings to annoyance and frustration with Leah's behavior. Sibling rivalry takes a dramatic turn, and before long, Iris will discover the well-kept family secrets about Leah.

In the middle of all that unfolds around her, Iris begins to find herself again. Who she once was, and who she will become. A delightful read that earned 4.5 stars.

Kathy says

Hannah McKinnon's *The Lake Season* is an absolutely delightful gem! An idyllic lakefront property is the perfect setting for Iris Standish to rediscover herself as she tries come to terms with her upcoming divorce. She also learns startling information about her younger sister Leah who is also home preparing for her upcoming wedding. But it is her unexpected romance with Cooper Woods that truly helps her heal but the future of their relationship is uncertain once Iris returns to her regular life.

Although their sixteen year marriage has been troubled for quite some time, Iris is still stunned when her

husband Paul tells her he wants a divorce. Barely able to cope with day to day life, a cryptic postcard from Leah provides Iris with an excuse to escape to her childhood home. The family farm has undergone a few changes in her absence but the one thing that appears to be exactly the same is her sister. Leah still seems to be a little reckless and attention seeking, but Iris becomes concerned by some of Leah's inexplicable behavior. Although Iris tries to get Leah to open up, Leah refuses to confide in her and their relationship becomes strained when the sisters fall back into childhood patterns.

Iris immediately feels like an outsider at her childhood home and she is further dismayed once she realizes how far out of the family loop she is. Leah's return does not help with the disconnect Iris is experiencing and when Leah steps back into her role of the favored daughter, Iris is not only hurt, but angered that no one expects Leah to take responsibility for her actions. Iris takes refuge in assisting Cooper with the barn renovations and she is pleasantly surprised by their easygoing friendship. In the beginning, working with Cooper provides her a mindless distraction from her worries, but as she becomes skilled at new tasks, Iris begins to thrive as she recovers her lost self-esteem. Her camaraderie with Cooper soon gives way to a mutual attraction and as they tentatively embark on a romance, sibling rivalry, jealousy and startling revelations threaten their fragile bond.

The Lake Season paints a realistic portrait of life's messy relationships. Siblings' relationships are often complicated by rivalry that sometimes lasts into adulthood while parental relationships often suffer from lasting resentment over perceived parental favoritism of one sibling over another. Marriages sometimes never recover from the stress establishing careers, infertility and raising children. Although staying together seems like the best choice for the children, should parents be expected to give up their happiness to give their kids a two parent household? **Hannah McKinnon** brilliantly weaves all of these thought-provoking topics into an emotional and compelling story that is heartwarming and ultimately healing. An utterly fantastic novel with a beautiful setting and an incredible cast of characters that I absolutely loved and highly recommend.

Jasmina says

3.5*

Elvan says

The Lake Season falls into the category of Beach Reads, the kind of book with a predictable troubled heroine who finds redemption in some way. The locations may change from coastal small towns to mountain resorts. The heroine might have a dynamic job or a part time career which she juggles along with one to three children. Often divorce looms. How will our heroine cope and where will she find the strength to carry on? Will there be reconciliation or a new love interest? Will the beloved hobby turn into a profitable career option? These books are kick-back and feel good reads because we assume there will be a HEA for the heroine. We just have to get through her challenging life to reach that happy ending.

Iris Standish is the responsible older sister. She juggles a marriage, three kids and a part time job reviewing manuscripts and contacting publishers as a freelance agent. (Okay, that is an ideal job for book lovers who read this genre) Her kids are precocious and her teenager is challenging. Her husband wants a divorce.

Reeling and unable to consider how her life is about to change, depressed at the cold indifferent attitude of her husband Paul, she gets an urgent call from her younger sister Leah. Leah insists Iris come home to their parents farm to help with her wedding preparations.

Leah is the wild child of the family, running from one adventure to another and always supported by her doting mother. Iris has felt ignored and unappreciated by her parents and has not brought her family for a visit in five years. Needing to regroup and find herself, Iris leaves her kids in her husband's capable hands and heads home to help with the wedding. The players are identified and the story can now evolve to its hopeful happy ending.

This is Hannah McKinnon's debut novel. She writes with an easy style. The first half of the book does drag a bit but as the wedding looms and crisis after crisis force family members to face their past and forge a path to the future the pace improves.

I did struggle to like both Iris and her sister Leah. Iris is conflicted and indecisive. You just want to slap some sense into her or find her a spine, something to keep her family from treating her like a doormat. Leah is all over the place emotionally. One moment she is everyone's best friend and the next she flying off with Iris's potential love interest for a weekend in Vermont. The small town loves her work ethic and how much she has helped her parents get their market garden operation off the ground but she spends most of her time sulking and ignoring her fiancé Stephen. As facts are revealed the reader does gain some respect and empathy for both sisters. The same cannot be said for their mother Millie. She is a one dimensional inflexible character who shows no growth at all. She is balanced by the girls doting and loveable dad.

The men in the story are also one-dimensional. Iris's husband Paul is evil walking. He is cold and indifferent to the needs of his wife. The farm handyman Cooper Woods is a caricature, a fantasy of the perfect love interest. He is gorgeous, single, caring and understanding. While Iris waffles he stands by patiently being cute and adorable. He's a great guy. He does have a past but we learn very little of his back story. When Paul shows up for Leah's wedding I wanted Cooper to grow a spine as well. Too nice is sometimes too much of a good thing.

I did enjoy reading this book and can see this author joining the ranks of better than average Chick Lit writers. Add a little depth to the men in her stories and she can rank up there with many of the better Beach read authors on the market today.

*ARC received from publisher via NetGalley.

Judy Collins says

*An ideal summer beach read, and perfect for book club discussions, Hannah McKinnon's **THE LAKE SEASON**, is a moving beautiful story of sisters, dark family secrets, with a stunning idyllic lakefront setting in New England--A desperate last-chance summer, rediscovery, and new possibilities for the future.*

Iris has always been the responsible sister, while her sister **Leah** dropped out of college, the free-spirit, hiking through Yellowstone and job hopping, leaving Iris to pick up the pieces. Everyone always liked Leah, the life of the party, and Iris boring and uptight.

Now, Iris finds her life and marriage falling apart (Paul, husband and three children-Sadie, Lily, and Jack). She feels no one likes her at the moment, so why stay. Once again Leah calls her back to their childhood home for help, off she goes to help with the preparations for her sister's wedding to a rich man the family has never met.

The air is filled with tension upon the arrival. Iris is looking forward to the time away from her own family to decide about her own life and future. However, will she put her responsibility for others aside to find her own passion? What about an unexpected romance with an old class mate Cooper Woods, while working with the barn renovations?

Leah always been the favorite daughter and seems never to take responsibility for her actions - a case of sibling rivalry? Everyone loves Leah, she's engaged, yet they have not been in touch for years. Leah seems to have it all, but something isn't quite right. Leah does not act like someone madly in love. What gives?

Families aren't easy – they are complex and most of the time our friends know more about us than our own family members. McKinnon cleverly takes all the messy-life topics and creates a compelling and heartwarming realistic story for a summer of healing, forgiveness, sisterhood, and rediscovery!

Charming and heartfelt! Add to your summer beach read collection.

Mermaidka says

Krásné ?tení.... Ze za?átku jsem se trochu obávala, že ji ve svém "porozchodovém splínu" nedám, ale je tak p?kn? psaná, že to nešlo ji odložit. Hlavní p?íb?h byl o Iris - matce t?í d?tí, který její manžel po šestnácti letech navrhne "odlou?ení". Iris odjíždí na farmu rodi??, kde se chystá svatba její mladší sestry Ley. Ale ani zde není idilka. Iris poznává, že sesta není "ve své k?ži" a do toho se potká na stavb? s Cooperem - st?edoškolkým idolem. :-)

Velice milé letní ?tení.

Na knihu m? nalákala nádherná letní obálka.

Christina (Confessions of a Book Addict) says

Iris has found herself at an important crossroad. She has been married for many years to her husband, Paul, and has three lovely kids with him. Things with Paul haven't been great for years, but she didn't see it coming when Paul announces he wants a divorce. Iris finds herself going through the motions of her life and living it in quite desperation. On a whim, she decides that a summer at her parents' farm on a beautiful lake is exactly what she needs as well as the children. Plus, she has to be up there in a few weeks to help plan her sister's wedding, even though they haven't talked in a few years. She is going to spend a few weeks without her children as they are at camp and then they will meet up with her at her childhood home. Things aren't that simple for Iris though. Once she gets to the farm, she realizes that she had no idea what kind of operation her parents as well as her sister, Leah, had going on and it has become a rather successful business. She also can tell something is going on with Leah, but no one in her family will be straight with her. To Iris, it appears

that Leah has jumped into this marriage with a man that she just met and to top it off, Leah acts strangely from time to time. It doesn't help that Iris's teenage crush, Cooper Woods, is working on restoring her parents' barn, so she is constantly running into him and an unlikely friendship forms. *The Lake Season* by Hannah McKinnon is an entertaining debut that examines the complexities within families, but also the ups and downs of moving on with your life. The idyllic setting makes for a great summertime read.

Read the rest of my review here:

<http://www.confessionsofabookaddict.com/reviews/the-lake-season-by-hannah-mckinnon/>

Susan says

Holy cow! Everyone needs to read this awesome debut novel!!

Iris Standish's life has been turned upside down. Her husband Paul has blind sided her with wanting a separation. *THE LAKE SEASON* is filled with love, heartbreak, family, and romance. Iris has always had the love of her family, which is why she runs home to them when her life falls apart. But she has always felt like an outsider looking in. Her parents, while maybe not meaning to, have always played favorites with her sister, Leah. No matter what Leah does, no matter how many bad decisions she makes, her parents have always had her back. Iris doesn't feel like they are the same way with her.

Leah has shocked everyone by announcing she is getting married and wants Iris there to help her with all the plans. Once home, Iris is shocked by the changes her family has made to the farm and barn in her absence. The one thing that appears to be exactly the same is her sister. Leah still seems to be a little reckless and attention seeking - you know the kind that always has to be the life of the party. Iris becomes concerned by some of Leah's strange behavior. Although Iris tries to get Leah to open up, Leah refuses to confide in her and their relationship becomes just like it was when they were kids. Iris was always picking up the pieces to the mess Leah would leave behind and she finds herself doing it again. Why don't her parents make Leah take responsibility for her actions?

While all of this is going on, Iris finds herself constantly running into one of her teenage crushes, Cooper Woods. Iris hides out in the barn that Cooper is renovating for her family, to escape her problems. Cooper learns of Iris's troubles at home and offers to listen when she wants to talk. At the same time, he teaches her so many things as she helps him in the restoration of the barn. Their renewed friendship is just what each of them need. Neither one of them is interested in a summer fling, but is there really time for anything more?

I still can't believe *THE LAKE SEASON* is a debut novel. Once I started reading, I couldn't stop. I read this wonderful story in two sittings! Hannah McKinnon pulled me right in from the very first page and never let me go. She does such a great job of describing the scenery and the way the characters are feeling that it was almost as if I were right there with them at the lake and the farm. I love when an author can put me in their story.

I usually am reading many books at one time but once I started *THE LAKE SEASON* all other books were put aside. I found myself cheering for the Standish family, wondering if tragedy would pull this family

together or splinter it further apart. I finished reading the very last page with a huge lump in my throat and a big smile on my face! I can not wait to read more by Ms. McKinnon.

Elizabeth says

This book was a great novel that I just couldn't put down. It hit all the ups and downs I was expecting and more. The storyline took me to a place I've never been and a childhood that was completely different than my own. I loved Iris and her sister, Leah. Their mother, Millie, reminded me of my Mom when I was growing up. I have never read any books by this author, but will certainly seek them out now.

Thank you to NetGalley and Atria Books for the opportunity to read and provide my honest opinion of this book.

Anna says

I received this in a Goodreads giveaway a while back. I should have got to it sooner, as it is a wonderful summer beach read. The idyllic lake setting makes you want to dive in for a brisk swim. But all is not ideal for Iris, and her sister Leah. With her children at camps, Iris has returned home to come to terms with her husband asking for a divorce and to help prepare for Leah's wedding. Iris and Leah's relationship has always been a bit strained and competitive, and buried jealousies surface. Iris takes refuge in the old barns, helping an old high school crush, Cooper Woods, to return them to their glory. Sparks fly between the two and Iris yearns for the love and attention her husband has not demonstrated for years. Leah has her own struggles and secrets to bear. Signs of emotional instability mingle with the happy bliss of wedding preparations. Iris wonders what it is that troubles Leah and what drives the fierce protection of their mother. But despite the strains, difficulties and disputes between them, the family bonds of love are strong in their loyalty to one another. Can Iris and Leah find the happiness they seek, and a chance for new beginnings? While I would consider this a beach read, the book deals with some serious issues, such as divorce, mental illness and other topics of today's society, but shows that second chances are possible.

Michelle says

I read an ARC of this many months ago and it's stayed with me. Such a wonderful, memorable, affecting read. My blurb:

Two sisters, a glittering New England lake, and one desperate, last-chance summer set the stage for Hannah McKinnon's emotionally affecting new novel, *The Lake Season*. The story features the complex Iris and her unpredictable sister Leah but its power extends well beyond the beautiful, heartbreakin bond between these two women. A memorable rumination on life, loss, and how to find a path home.

Julie says

The Lake Season by Hannah Roberts McKinnon is a 2015 Atria/ Emily Bestler Books Publication. I was

provided a copy of this book by the publisher and Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

This book is women's fiction at it's finest. I have a habit of reading several books at one time, but once I got several chapters deep into this one, I couldn't put it down.

Iris and Leah are sisters, but you would never know it judging by their personalities. Iris is a solid, hard working person who got the good grades in school, was dependable, reliable, and did all the right things, but she was practically ignored by her parents in favor of her sister, Leah, who was beautiful and talented, but was never consistent, went through men at warp speed, partied hard, and never really made much of her life. But, her parents always got her out of trouble, gave her money if she asked, and made excuses for her.

Now, Iris is going through a crisis of her own, right when Leah decides to finally settle down and get married. So, Iris heads home to stay with her parents for the summer and plan a wedding for her flighty sister.

But, Iris could never have predicted the way this summer would end, what deeply rooted pain and resentments would come to light, what secrets would be unveiled, and how she herself will change in just a few short months, leading her on a road of self discovery with a renewed sense of hope and confidence, even if the road is still a rocky one.

We see life mostly through Iris's point of view as she tells us about her sister, her husband, her kids, her job, and her parents. Iris is just a little hard on herself and it's obvious she has spent most of her life trying to please people, starting with her parents, then her husband. But, now Iris needs to do something for herself, even if it's painful and terrifying.

However, as Iris returned home to New Hampshire, I couldn't help but notice how little self confidence Iris has, and how it's so often true that the way we view ourselves is so different from the way others see us. So, Iris is shocked at times, surprised at others times, sometimes pleasantly so, by the confessions made by her friend Trish, her sister, and her mother. Iris sees that maybe she had been taken notice of after all and that maybe she had something going for herself that others were envious of.

Still, even if she did have a life others wished to have, at this moment in time it's all in jeopardy. Iris's future is up in the air as her husband hints that maybe their marriage has run it's course. What will she do now? What will happen to the children, her career?

While she ponders these things, and goes through the painful process of realizing her marriage is a failure and is about to come to an end, out of the shadows walks Cooper Woods and before too long, Iris begins to gain perspective, learns dark family secrets, becomes closer to her unstable sister, and becomes a more well rounded person, and discovers a new found confidence in herself.

Watching Iris go through this transformation is often heartbreak, and I felt her insecurities, and her indecision is so human and real. Iris finds it very hard to let go of that people pleasing habit she has, often teetering on the edge of settling for something less, in order to do what she thought was best for others. It is a situation many people have gone through and her concerns were real and legitimate, and while I hoped she wouldn't waffle and back down, going backwards and not forward, I found I wouldn't be able to judge her too harshly. But, I so wanted Iris to feel complete on her own, without needing approval from her mother, or sister, or anyone for that matter.

Personal growth did come at a cost, and all that Iris goes through in this story was hard on her. The truth about Leah is a gripping story on it's own. Again, I was struck by the preconceived notions we have of

people, the judgments we make without knowing all the facts. Leah seemed to have so much promise, but continually threw it all away, and never seemed to have any accountability. Iris will learn the reasons for some of this behavior and will gain a much better understanding of her sister and her mother in the process.

I never knew how to feel about Millie. I saw she was mother doing the best she could, but didn't realize the damage she was inflicting on Iris in the process. Millie is not the warmest person on earth, and some of her advice to Iris got under my skin, but often I felt bad for her. Iris never understood her mother's favoritism, but will learn her mother does love her, just not in the same way as Leah, who has special needs. But, remember too, that even those we think are strong, who don't need us a much, often do need us and one should never presume such a thing. But, this summer will mend fences in some ways and help to heal resentments and past hurts.

Cooper Woods... well, I think I had crush on Cooper. I really, really liked him, and I think he is so good for our Iris. He knows exactly what Iris is going through right now and knows all about the ups and downs she is about to face, the uncertainty, the doubts, the many tears to come, and he has an intimate knowledge of her family's struggles, so there too he is a big help. I think all Iris needs now is time and some patience from Cooper and all will be well between them.

Ultimately, this is a story of love, forgiveness, family, friends, and personal growth. I believe Iris will become a better person, friend, parent, sister, daughter, and maybe even a happy wife someday. But for now, it's Iris's time to shine on her own and shine she will.

5 stars

Mary says

I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for my honest opinion.

I really enjoyed this book! To me it was the perfect summer read. Our heroine "Iris" is at times hysterically funny, at others pensive and thought provoking. The lake house setting made me long to own one, or at least know somebody who had a lake house and invite me for the summer! I laughed out loud many times. At least once I wanted to slap some sense into her, but that's good, right? I have to admit, the story was just a bit predictable, but the characters were well developed, the story well written, and it was just a very satisfying "chick lit" adventure.

Laurence R. says

This is your perfect summer novel. If you're going anywhere near a lake or any kind of beach, this novel is what you need.

I liked how this novel made me feel. Going to her parents' house is a way to take a break from her life for Iris, and I felt like I was on a break, too. This novel made me escape from my life and if that doesn't mean it's a good novel, then I don't know what does.

I found it hard to like all of the characters in this novel, first because I didn't feel very invested in the story

(but that might be because the main character is my mother's age, so it's not exactly a book for someone my age), but also because I found some characters pretty annoying. Sometimes, I wished I could shake some of the characters, because I hated what they were doing. Also, since the novel starts when Paul has just told Iris that he wants them to get a divorce, I didn't understand what she could see in him, because I felt like I didn't know a thing about their relationship, except from their fallout. It made it hard for me to understand her feelings. However, I really liked many other characters, like Trish, Iris's best friend, Bill, Iris's father, Cooper and Iris's children. I loved the relationships between all of those characters, because their love is clear and deep.

I really liked how selfless Iris is. It also bugged me a little, because I wished she would do something for herself, but mostly, I was impressed. I thought it was very brave of her and I wished I could be more like that. I was really happy to see her grow and to realize how much of a difference this summer has on her, because there is a lot of character development in this book, as well as relationship development.

I read this book outside, on my patio on sunbathing, and it was exactly what I needed. I recommend it.

(Thank you NetGalley for providing me with a digital copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.)

Eileen says

Oh dear! This one falls very short in my estimation! I couldn't wait to begin, as all the inducements pulled me right in – a beach book, Cape Cod, family turbulence, and so forth! Contrary to the many enthusiastic reviews, though, I found the writing flat and totally lackluster. Two dimensional characters did little to enrich the predictable plot. The author's attempt to convey the superciliousness of parental cliques was unconvincing – a feat so effectively rendered by Lianne Moriarty in *Big Little Lies*. Disappointing.
