



Frances and Bernard

Carlene Bauer

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In the summer of 1957, Frances and Bernard meet at an artists' colony. She finds him faintly ridiculous, but talented. He sees her as aloof, but intriguing. Afterward, he writes her a letter. Soon they are immersed in the kind of fast, deep friendship that can take over—and change the course of—our lives. From points afar, they find their way to New York and, for a few whirling years, each other. The city is a wonderland for young people with dreams: cramped West Village kitchens, rowdy cocktail parties stocked with the sharp-witted and glamorous, taxis that can take you anywhere at all, long talks along the Hudson River as the lights of the Empire State Building blink on above.

Inspired by the lives of Flannery O'Connor and Robert Lowell, *Frances and Bernard* imagines, through new characters with charms entirely their own, what else might have happened. It explores the limits of faith, passion, sanity, what it means to be a true friend, and the nature of acceptable sacrifice. In the grandness of the fall, can we love another person so completely that we lose ourselves? How much should we give up for those we love? How do we honor the gifts our loved ones bring and still keep true to our dreams?

In witness to all the wonder of kindred spirits and bittersweet romance, *Frances and Bernard* is a tribute to the power of friendship and the people who help us discover who we are.

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