

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# Brenda Novak

## the Seaside Library

BOOK CLUB KIT



A NOVEL



# Dear Reader,

Six years ago, I started my own book club on Facebook. It's a warm, welcoming community that has since grown to over 26,000 of the nicest booklovers you could ever meet. We enjoy reading, but we're also friends who get together in person when we can and enjoy many other things online--like the holidays. In the months that I don't have a release, I feature a guest author. Kristen Hannah, Elin Hilderbrand, James Patterson, Sandra Brown, Robyn Carr, Susan Wiggs, Heather Gudenkauf, Erica Spindler, Peter James and Debbie Macomber have all joined us, along with so many more. We read the same book each month, then I interview the author for our monthly meeting. Sometimes I do this via a split-screen Facebook Live, but often I travel and broadcast right from the author's home to give readers an up-close and personal glimpse into his or her life. For instance, I'll never forget going to Jersey, one of the Channel Islands of Great Britain, to visit with Peter James. The entire group was treated to an inside look at his gorgeous home and the island, which a great many of them had never seen. (And he has since written about an exciting royal visit he had for my magazine, *Reading with Brenda Novak*.)

As the leader of the group, I traveled to Nantucket in 2021 to visit with Nancy Thayer and fell in love with the island. There's simply something inspiring about Nantucket. I immediately wanted to set my next book there, but so many other authors were already writing about Nantucket I decided to create my own island in the same general geographic location. That way, I could recreate some of the magic of Nantucket but also have the artistic freedom to give readers a new place to visit. *Mariners* is where Nantucket and my imagination come together.

I once attended a writing workshop where Susan Elizabeth Phillips, one of my favorite authors, gave some sage advice. She said that every writer has a "core story" and encouraged us to find ours. Before that, I'd never really thought in terms of having a core story, but I've considered her words many times since. What is it I'm really trying to say in my stories? What matters most to me and how can finding it make my stories deeper and more meaningful?

At that time, I decided my core story was a simple one: Love conquers all. I still believe that's essentially what I'm trying to convey, but I often use redemption themes to do it. Flawed characters, those who are challenged by more than just forces beyond their control, feel more real to me. I don't know anyone who has lived a perfect life; regret is something we all have to cope with, which is why characters who are pitted against themselves are often the most complex and interesting.

*THE SEASIDE LIBRARY* contains what I believe to be complex and interesting characters. It explores themes of friendship and loyalty, right and wrong, and examines what it means to truly believe in someone. Ariana, Cam and Ivy have been friends almost their entire lives. In a perfect world, that friendship would never be called into question. But an incident that happened in high school causes insidious doubt to creep between them, threatening to destroy the very fabric of their friendship...

I hope you enjoy your visit to *Mariners*. If you select *THE SEASIDE LIBRARY* for your own book club, be sure to let me know. I'll send the leader of your group a bookmark for each member, as well as a FREE digital download of a fabulous summer drinks booklet my daughter Alexa created. I've included a couple of sample pages from that with this packet.

## Happy Reading!

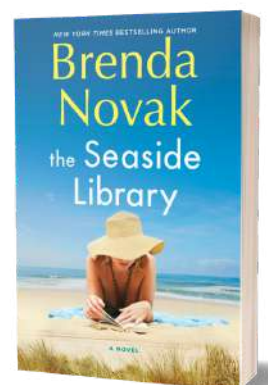
*Brenda Novak*





# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did you have a favorite character in *The Seaside Library*? If so, who, and why?
2. Ivy, Ariana and Cam all had very different home lives growing up. How do you think their families shaped their friendship with one another?
3. What did you think of Ivy and Ariana's choice to lie to protect Cam? Did you understand why they did it? How do you think you would have acted if you'd been in their situation?
4. Did you doubt Cam throughout the story, or did you feel sure he had nothing to do with Emily's disappearance?
5. What did you think of the dynamic between the three friends? How did you feel about Ivy's role within the threesome, given the charged relationship between Cam and Ariana?
6. What were your feelings about Jewel Hutchins? Could you empathize with her? How did your impression of her change over the course of the story?
7. Mariners Island is a fictional setting. How did it come to life for you on the page? Can you think of a real-life place that has the same feel to it?
8. How did you feel about the ending? Did you agree with how each character's story wrapped up?
9. Did you have a favorite scene? If so, why was it your favorite?
10. If there was a movie based on *The Seaside Library*, which actors would you cast as each of the characters?



# WHITE LINEN

## Ingredients

1.5 oz gin

.75 oz fresh lime juice

.5 oz Elderflower liqueur

.25 oz simple syrup

3-4 cucumber slices

2 oz soda water

Garnish: cucumber slice

## Directions

1. Muddle cucumber slices in a shaker.
2. Add lime juice, gin, liqueur and simple syrup with ice and shake.
3. Strain mixture into a collins glass filled with ice.
4. Add soda water and the garnish.



# BLACKBERRY GIMLET

## Ingredients

2 oz vodka

.5 oz fresh lime juice

1 oz blackberry simple syrup

Top with soda water

Garnish: blackberries

## Directions

1. Add all ingredients in a shaker with ice and shake.
2. Strain into a chilled lowball glass.
3. Add the garnish.





# BRAZILIAN LIMEADE

## Ingredients

- 1 cup of cold water
- 2 limes
- 2 tsp of sweetened condensed milk
- 2 tsp sugar
- Garnish: lime wedge

## Directions

1. Wash limes with soap and water and then cut them into eighths.
2. Place limes in a blender with water and pulse.
3. Strain into a highball glass.
4. Stir in sweetened condensed milk and sugar until sugar dissolves.
5. Add ice and the garnish.





*New York Times* bestselling author Brenda Novak has written over 60 novels. An eight-time Rita nominee, she's won The National Reader's Choice, The Bookseller's Best and other awards. She runs Brenda Novak for the Cure, a charity that has raised more than \$2.5 million for diabetes research (her youngest son has this disease). She considers herself lucky to be a mother of five and married to the love of her life.

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