



The Five Towns: A Novel

Leslie Tonner

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Set against the backdrop of post–World War II America, this sweeping novel follows three very different families as they search for love and fulfillment in Long Island’s fabled gilded ghetto, the Five Towns

In 1950, the Five Towns are a burgeoning suburban destination for those in search of a better life. Arthur Freundlich is one of those pioneers. With the recent influx of Jews to Long Island, the former GI has relocated his mother, pregnant wife, and three-year-old daughter from a tiny apartment in Queens to a split-level house in Cedarhurst—a world apart from the cramped quarters of Brooklyn and Queens that Arthur knew.

In his wealthy, insulated corner of this formerly WASP-y small-town community, Harvard-educated John Dodge lives with his wife and their son Christopher, who causes a scandal when he falls in love with beautiful, Jewish Melanie Miller.

A black woman struggling to raise her family in turbulent times, Lulu Pearce leaves blue-collar Inwood every morning to work as a maid in middle-class homes in Woodmere. But an unwanted pregnancy could forever alter the course of her future.

As America comes of age, these three families battle bigotry, racism, and dramatically changing mores in one of Long Island’s most famous suburban enclaves.

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