



FREQUENT FLIERS

NOUÉ KIRWAN



READING GROUP GUIDE

Questions for Discussion



- 1.** What are Lanie's first impressions of Ridley? How does that change over the course of their first flight together (and over the course of the book)?
- 2.** How would you have reacted if your cousin, who you also consider to be a close friend, ended up engaged to one of your best friends? Would you have had a similar or a different reaction than Lanie's?
- 3.** Do you think Lanie and Jonah were meant to be together? Why or why not?
- 4.** How do Ridley and Jonah differ? Who do you think Lanie should ultimately be with?
- 5.** Many of Lanie's core values revolve around her family. How does Lanie's family impact how she makes decisions in life and love? Do you think this is for the better or for the worse?
- 6.** How does Bea impact Ridley's life? How do you feel about Bea and Ridley's relationship? How does Ridley's past (and ex-wife) impact him when making decisions in life and love?
- 7.** How does Lanie's attitude towards Jonah and Gemma's engagement and marriage change over time? How did Lanie's attitude and past change her friendship with Jonah? How did it change her friendship with Gemma?
- 8.** Based on Lanie's interactions with Ridley, what do you think her love language is? What would you say Ridley's love language is?
- 9.** What is stopping Lanie from ultimately making decisions that could change her life? How does Lanie's past influence how she makes decisions in life and love?
- 10.** How do you think Ridley handled his and Bea's relationship with Gavin? Was it the right decision to question Gavin's intentions? Why or why not?
- 11.** Lanie and Ridley's relationship changes when they're stuck in Iceland overnight. What happens in Iceland that changes their relationship? How did you feel about how this scene went down? Did it make you change your mind about who Lanie is meant to end up with?
- 12.** Throughout the book, the narration and point-of-view alternates between Lanie and Ridley. How does this make you view their relationship and love story?

A Conversation with Noué Kirwan

Q: WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE A CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE THAT BEGINS WITH FLYING BACK AND FORTH INTERNATIONALLY?

A: Pre-COVID, I used to travel a decent amount, at one point I even had a job that required me to travel too. On those flights, I occasionally sat with really interesting people. Frequently, the forced proximity of those situations made for engaging conversations and a kind of temporary intimacy where we shared more about ourselves than we might normally with a complete stranger. It wasn't hard from there for me to imagine a situation where a couple could make an unexpected love connection too.

Q: DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN LANIE'S CHARACTER? WHY OR WHY NOT?

A: I do see some of myself in Lanie: the passion for travel, borne of having a passport young and a love of exploration, seeing and doing novel things. Also, Lanie and I are similar in that we've both got Caribbean roots with families that went in disparate directions based on circumstance. So, I also have aunts and uncles that settled in the UK, while my portion of our family immigrated to the United States.

Q: HOW WAS WRITING LANIE DIFFERENT FROM WRITING MIKAELA, THE PROTAGONIST FROM YOUR FIRST NOVEL LONG PAST SUMMER? HOW WAS WRITING FREQUENT FLIERS DIFFERENT FROM WRITING YOUR FIRST NOVEL?

A: Writing Mikaela required more research because her profession is a much more central part of her identity. Lanie is more divorced from that side of herself, because she sees herself as a bit of a failure. As a result, she's a little more insecure and thorny but also *more* vulnerable than Mikaela was. I think *that's* also a function of Lanie being younger and less self-assured than Mikaela is.

Writing *Long Past Summer* was also a bit easier than *Frequent Fliers* because I had less discipline and gave myself fewer rules. Really, I didn't know anything about writing or really what I was doing, so I did things I shouldn't and fixed it in the editing process. With *Frequent Fliers*, I think I was more cognizant of genre conventions and reader expectations

A Conversation with Noué Kirwan

CONTINUED

Q: WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE OUTING LANIE AND RIDLEY WENT ON IN THE BOOK, IN BOTH NEW YORK AND LONDON?

A: In London, I liked their visit to the Eye, for all it meant to both Ridley and Lanie. In New York, I enjoyed their pop into The Loews Paradise. It's a real theater in the Bronx that's like a local treasure.

Q: WHAT DO YOU HOPE READERS WILL TAKE AWAY FROM *FREQUENT FLIERS*?

A: That love can come when you least expect it, particularly if you're willing to work for it.

Q: ANYTHING IN THE WORKS IN TERMS OF YOUR NEXT BOOK?

A: I really can't say much. Except to say, it might be a slight departure for me. It might be trite, but expect something unexpected, lol!

White Chocolate Cake Recipe



Ingredients

RASPBERRY CAKE FILLING

- 3 cups of fresh or frozen raspberries
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp fresh lemon zest
- 1/4 cup + 2 Tbsp water, divided - first part added to raspberry mixture, second part used to make the cornstarch slurry
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch

WHITE CAKE RECIPE

- 1 cup unsalted butter, room temperature
- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup pasteurized egg whites from a carton or 7 egg whites, room temperature
- 3 cups cake flour
- 2 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 1 1/2 cups full-fat sour cream, room temperature
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp fresh lemon zest
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

WHITE CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

- 2 cups unsalted butter, room temperature
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp fresh lemon zest
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 7 cups powdered sugar
- 1/3 cup heavy cream or whipping cream
- 1 1/2 cups white chocolate chips, melted and cooled



Instructions

RASPBERRY CAKE FILLING

- If possible, make the raspberry filling in advance! The extra time will allow the filling to thicken and develop its flavor. Place 3 cups of frozen or fresh raspberries, 2/3 of a cup of granulated sugar, 2 tsp lemon juice, 2 tsp lemon zest, and 1/4 cup of water in a saucepan and heat over medium-high heat.
- Stir the mixture until it begins to boil. Lower the heat to medium-low and allow the filling to simmer for 10-15 minutes. Turn off the heat and remove the pot from the stove.
- Pour the filling into a metal strainer suspended over a medium-sized bowl and push the mixture through using a rubber spatula. Use a decent amount of pressure to really get all the liquid through the sieve. You should be left with about 1/2 cup of seedy pulp which can be discarded or composted. If you don't mind the seeds in your filling, skip this step and leave the filling in the pot.
- In a separate small bowl, make a slurry by combining the remaining 2 Tbsp of water with 2 Tbsp of cornstarch. Stir until the cornstarch has fully dissolved into the water.
- Add the cornstarch mixture to the strained raspberry filling and stir until incorporated.
- Rinse out the pot then pour the filling back into it. You don't want any residual seeds getting into the filling!
- Heat on a medium-high heat and stir constantly during this stage to prevent the filling from burning. Cook until the mixture begins to boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low. Continue to stir and cook for a few additional minutes to let the filling cook down and thicken.
- Turn off the heat and pour the raspberry filling into a separate bowl to let it cool. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the fridge for at least 1 hour, or preferably overnight.

WHITE CAKE LAYERS

- Next, make the fluffy white cake layers. Preheat oven to 340°F/163°C. Line and grease four, 7-inch pans or three, 8-inch cake pans with parchment rounds.
- Add 1 cup of unsalted butter and 3 cups of granulated sugar into the bowl of a stand mixer. Mix together on a high speed with a whisk attachment for 2-3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed with a rubber spatula. The mixture should become lighter in color as air is whipped into it.





- Add in 1 cup of egg whites and mix at a medium speed until they're incorporated.
- Whisk 3 cups of cake flour, 2 1/2 tsp of baking powder, and 1 tsp of salt together in a separate bowl.
- Add half of the dry ingredients into the butter/egg mixture and mix on medium speed until incorporated.
- Add 1 1/2 cups of sour cream, 1/4 cup of oil, 2 Tbsp lemon juice, 2 tsp lemon zest, and 1 tsp vanilla extract. Mix on a medium speed until combined. Scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed.
- Mix in the remaining dry ingredients at a medium speed.
- Divide the batter evenly between the prepared cake pans. I like to use a digital kitchen scale to weigh my pans to make sure my layers bake up to be the same height.
- Bake for 40-42 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out with a few moist crumbs. Rotate the pans halfway through to help them bake evenly.
- Allow the pans to cool for 10 minutes, then run an offset spatula around the perimeter of the pan to separate the cake from the pan.
- Place the cake layers into the freezer for 45 minutes to accelerate the cooling process. Once the layers are fully cooled, carefully flip the pans and remove the layers from the pans.
- Use a serrated knife to level the tops and trim the sides to remove any caramelization.

WHITE CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM FROSTING

- While the cake layers bake and cool, make the white chocolate buttercream frosting.
- Beat 2 cups of butter on a low speed for 30 seconds with a paddle or whisk attachment until smooth.
- Add in 2 Tbsp lemon juice, 2 tsp fresh lemon zest, 2 tsp vanilla extract, and 1 tsp fine salt and beat on low.
- Slowly mix in 7 cups of powdered sugar on a low speed. Add in 1/3 cup of heavy cream halfway through to make the frosting easier to mix.
- Mix in the melted (and cooled) white chocolate on a low speed and scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed.
- Continue to mix until the ingredients are fully incorporated and desired consistency is reached.





- If the frosting seems too thick, add in additional cream (1 tablespoon at a time). If the frosting is too thin, add in more powdered sugar (a quarter of a cup at a time).
- Stir by hand with a rubber spatula to make the frosting extra smooth. Place half of the frosting in a large piping bag. Cover the remaining frosting with plastic wrap and set aside.
- **Assembling This White Chocolate Raspberry Cake**
- Use a silicone brush to brush the top of the leveled cake layers with simple syrup. Then stack and frost the cake layers on a greaseproof cake board using a dab of frosting to help stick the first cake layer to the board.
- Spread an even layer of white chocolate buttercream on top of the first cake layer (using the frosting in the bag). Pipe a ring around the edge of the cake, then spread the raspberry filling inside the ring. Use half of the filling per layer if you make a cake with 3 layers, use 1/3 of the filling if you make a cake with 4 layers.
- Repeat with the remaining cake layers, then chill the cake in the fridge (30 minutes) or freezer (10 minutes) until the frosting between the layers is firm to the touch.
- Spread a thin coat of white chocolate frosting around the cake using the frosting in the piping bag to fully cover the cake layers. Smooth using a bench scraper, then chill the cake again in the fridge (30 minutes) or freezer (10 minutes) until the crumb coat is firm to the touch.
- Add a second, thicker layer of white chocolate frosting to the cake and smooth using a bench scraper.
- Decorate as desired.

ADDITIONAL READING: *LONG PAST SUMMER* BY NOUÉ KIRWAN

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH NOUÉ KIRWAN:



INSTAGRAM



PINTEREST



X/TWITTER



NOUEKIRWAN.COM

