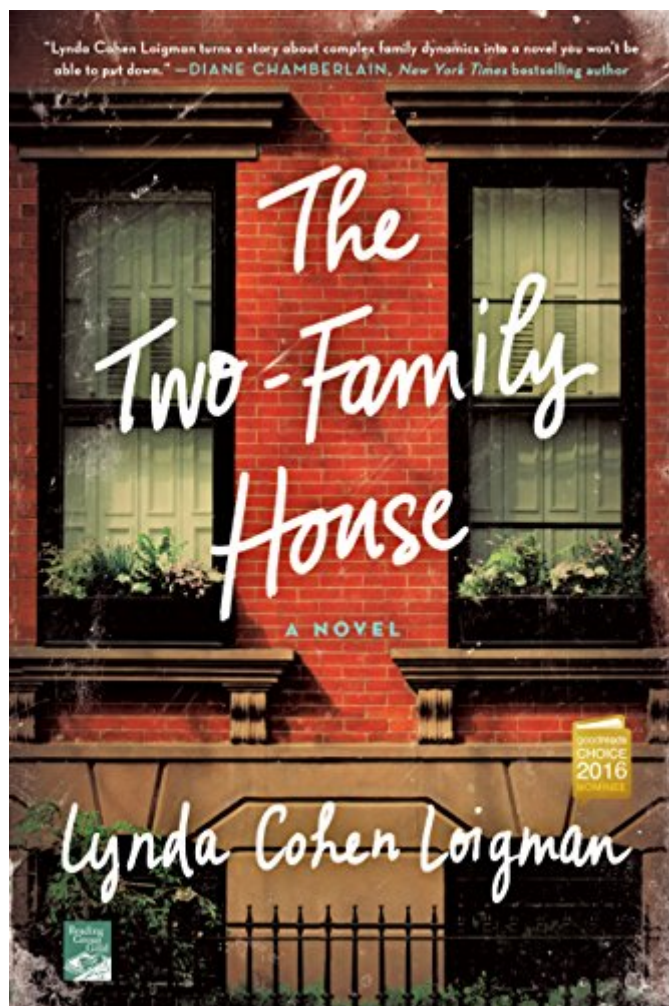


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# The Two-Family House: A Novel



## Synopsis

"An emotional but dreamy novel that...will transport you far, far away from your next dreary Monday morning. You may do a lot of sobbing, but don't worry, you'll be smiling by the end." —Bustle, "12 Spring Break Reads To Help You Escape Normal Life" —Buzzfeed, "14 Of The Most Buzzed-About Books" —Popsugar, "6 Books You Should Read" —"A novel you won't be able to put down." —Diane Chamberlain, New York Times bestselling author

Brooklyn, 1947: In the midst of a blizzard, in a two-family brownstone, two babies are born, minutes apart. The mothers are sisters by marriage: dutiful, quiet Rose, who wants nothing more than to please her difficult husband; and warm, generous Helen, the exhausted mother of four rambunctious boys who seem to need her less and less each day. Raising their families side by side, supporting one another, Rose and Helen share an impenetrable bond forged before and during that dramatic winter night. When the storm passes, life seems to return to normal; but as the years progress, small cracks start to appear and the once deep friendship between the two women begins to unravel. No one knows why, and no one can stop it. One misguided choice; one moment of tragedy. Heartbreak wars with happiness and almost, but not quite, wins. Moving and evocative, Lynda Cohen Loigman's debut novel *The Two-Family House* is a heart-wrenching, gripping multigenerational story, woven around the deepest of secrets.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book absolutely transported me back to the 1950s, when two brothers, Abe and Mort, share a two-family house with their own families. Their wives, Helen and Rose, are close friends until the night they both give birth to their youngest children. Helen had four sons and desperately wanted a daughter. Rose, with three daughters, hoped to give Mort the son he longed for. After they give birth at home in the midst of a blizzard, nothing is the same for them. Loigman is masterful in her character development, and those who initially appear unlikable truly develop into people for whom I have great affection and sympathy. I found my own allegiances shifting as I read, and I was surprised that who I was cheering for changed as I went. The chapters are told from various perspectives, the husbands and wives as well as a couple of the children, and with each new voice, a little more about the family is revealed. Each voice is distinct and well defined and I loved how everyone viewed the family so differently, creating a robust picture. A beautiful read that's both sad and up lifting. Definitely recommend.

I really like this novel. It seems I have read several debut novels, recently, and am excited about how good they have been. This is a story of two brothers, who live with their families in a double flat. They are all very close, until the birth of two babies, during a huge blizzard. That night changes their lives forever. Although, I had an inkling what was coming, I was just drawn into the dynamics of this family. The characters were very likable, although the brother Mort was a little neurotic and wound too tight. His poor suffering wife, wilted under his criticism, but the kids were cute. His brother Sol was the exact opposite, open, honest and everyone's friend. His wife was the caregiver of the family. It's a wonderful story and I was sad when I turned the last page.

This novel revolves around the families of two brothers in 1950's Brooklyn. Primarily a character study, it examines the toxicity created by thwarted ambition and self-sacrifice, along with love, family, and the bond between parent and child. While I immediately suspected the pivotal event in the novel, Loigman subverted tropes in other ways and thus kept the storyline unpredictable. But at the heart of this novel is the characters, who I would love to read about again.

Lynda Cohen Loigman's engrossing debut novel "The Two-Family House" is a breathtakingly rich and deeply textured saga of two families living in one home in Brooklyn. The author takes us back to the 1950s—a time where men work, women cook and raise the children. Everyone knows his and her place—or do they? Loigman's descriptions and detailed setting are authentic and seem to shift time, so that one feels right there in the house, amid the kids, the chaos, and the seductive aroma of baked bread and goodies wafting from one floor to the other. What compels the reader most deeply is the intensity in which the author interweaves the tragically flawed yet familiar characters. This book excels in its raw emotion. Love and lies, dependency, jealousy, Jewish guilt and passion, contribute to the page-turning tension. The four main characters—two brothers and their wives—revolve knowingly (and unknowingly) around one pivotal secret; a silent pact guarded to the end by the two sisters-in-law. The secret grows and festers, destroying the warmth and love in the house, forcing each character to change with the magnitude of its dark repercussions. This novel is exquisite and unforgettable, resonating intense feelings from beginning to the end.

Absolutely gripping story. I truly was feeling as if these characters came to life for me. Helen was like a supermom with so much to give. Abe such a likeable man. Mort really got on my nerves. Rose was almost pathetic to me at one point. I found myself so heartbroken at times. I was so involved in the book, I needed to put it down at one point to catch my breath. This author can really tell a story. A story about consequences of a decision made too rashly and the people that are affected. Well done.

All families have secrets and the only question about the secrets is if the family can keep them from being exposed. In Lynda Cohen Loigman's debut novel, "The Two Family House", it seems that the Berman family of first Brooklyn and later Long Island, there's one act that sisters-in-law commit that carry consequences on through the family into the second generation. Abe and Mort Berman have built a box manufacturing business into a successful family business. Both brothers have unique talents that have blended to make the business work, and they share a house with their wives and children in Brooklyn. One brother has four sons, and the other brother has three daughters. Their wives, Helen and Rose, are close but both are aware that their husbands - in particular Mort - would love to have another child that would be of the opposite sex of their existing children. Both women fall pregnant at the same time and their children are born at home during a raging blizzard. I think

most readers can guess what the secret the two women hold close til it simply cannot be kept secret any longer. Lynda Cohen Loigman's strength as a writer lies in the depiction of her characters, rather than in her plotting. Loigman's characters are well-drawn. No "unreliable characters" for Loigman; her people act pretty close to how they're depicted. As a reader, I don't like "unreliable characters" I cannot "trust" to be who they are. (You might know I read a lot of non-fiction!) Loigman's setting are the post-WW2 years, when mores and social conduct change fairly rapidly. Her Berman family is shown as coming to grips with such changes in both subtle and obvious ways. I found Lynda Cohen Loigman's novel quite enjoyable and even a bit thought-provoking.

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