



"You will laugh out loud at the antics of two delightfully dysfunctional families as they fight, share secrets, and fall in love in the once-prosperous Catskills hotel that they own."—New York Times bestselling author FIONA DAVIS



ELYSSA FRIEDLAND

Author of *The Floating Feldmans*

LAST
SUMMER
AT THE
Golden
HOTEL



A NOVEL

BOOK CLUB KIT

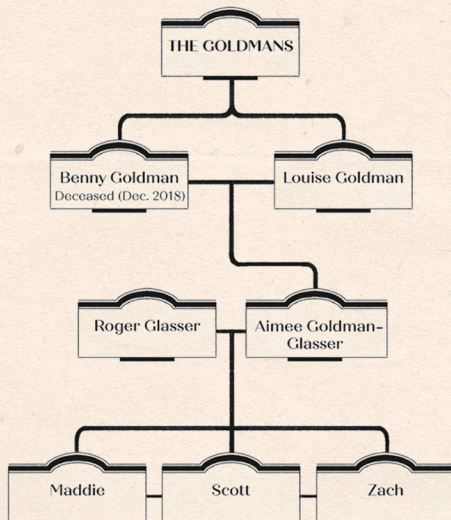


MAP

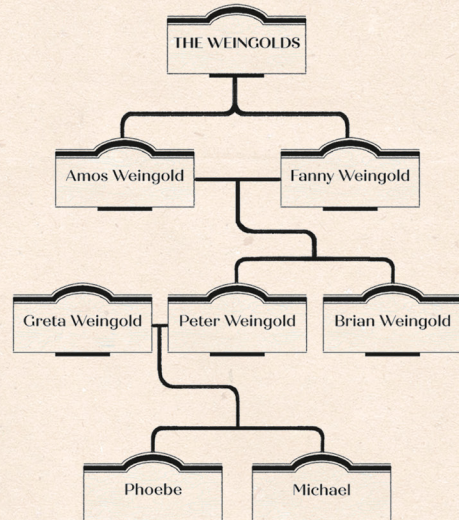
The Golden Hotel



Goldman FAMILY TREE



Weingold FAMILY TREE



Borscht Recipe

INGREDIENTS

3 medium beets
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
8 cups vegetable broth
3 medium yukon potatoes, peeled and sliced into bite-size pieces
2 carrots, peeled and thinly sliced
2 celery ribs, trimmed and finely chopped
1 small red bell pepper, finely chopped, optional
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 large garlic clove, pressed
3 tablespoons tomato sauce
2 bay leaves
2-3 tablespoons white vinegar or to taste
1 teaspoon sea salt or to taste
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Dollop of sour cream
3 tablespoons chopped dill



DIRECTIONS

1. Wearing rubber gloves, trim ends off beets and peel with a potato peeler. Chop beets into chunks and place in a food processor with a grater attachment. Pulse until grated. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat, and sauté beets, about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Once beets have softened, add broth, sliced potatoes, and sliced carrots to the soup pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce temperature and allow veggies to cook until easily pierced with a fork, about 15 minutes.
3. While beets, potatoes, and carrots cook, put remaining oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add chopped celery, bell pepper, onion, and garlic. Sauté until onion is translucent and vegetables have softened then, add tomato sauce and allow to caramelize for 30 seconds.
4. Transfer contents of skillet to soup pot and add bay leaves, white vinegar, salt, and pepper.
5. Simmer until veggies are at desired softness and adjust salt, pepper, and vinegar to your liking.
6. Serve hot with a dollop of sour cream and a generous sprinkle of fresh dill. Makes about 10 servings.

ENJOY!

[Click here to see Elyssa make borscht!](#)

INSPIRATION BOARD

SCHITT'S CREEK

This show was a major inspiration. I love the idea of a family growing closer as they tackle making over an ailing motel. It's very Golden.

BORSCHT

I learned to make borscht, traditional and modern. Find my recipe for borscht in the reading guide. To make it "hip," use parsnips instead of potatoes and greek yogurt instead of sour cream.

THE CATSKILLS COMEBACK

Hadassah Magazine had a big article about the revival of the Catskills as a hip destination that was very useful.

THE MARVELOUS MRS. MAISEL

Of course season 2 of *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* was perfect inspiration. I'm Midge-obsessed.

DIRTY DANCING

I watched *Dirty Dancing* five times while writing this book. I found a new detail to inspire me every time.

THE BORSCHT BELT

I went to a talk about the Borscht Belt at Central Synagogue. I was the youngest attendee by about fifty years. Lots of people wanted to set me up with their grandsons.

GOAT YOGA

In September 2019, I took my husband and three small children to try out Goat Yoga in Red Bank, New Jersey. They were not thrilled.



Catskills Packing List

- Wi-Fi booster
- hiking boots
- Polaroid
- sunscreen
- elastic-waist shorts
- retro sunglasses
- mini bottles of Manischewitz
- high-waisted bikini
- mah-jongg card
- golf clubs



CLICK HERE FOR
THE GOLDEN HOTEL
PLAYLIST



Discussion Questions

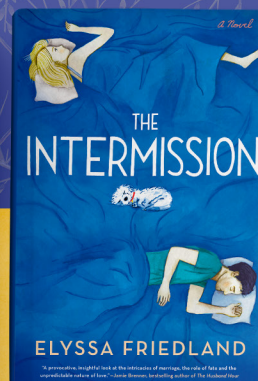
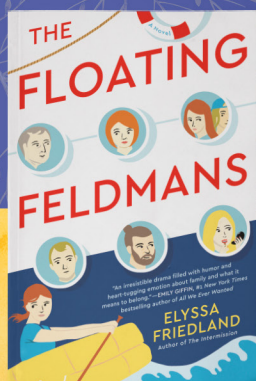
1. Many characters in the novel are struggling with feelings of aimlessness or a lack of direction. What do you think is at the core of these feelings for each of them? Is there a character that deals with these feelings better than the others? Does anyone deal with these feelings particularly badly?
2. At many points during the novel, children learn that their parents are imperfect humans. Do you think the generations are sufficiently forgiving of one another? Are they able to learn from one another's mistakes, or are they stuck thinking about their differences?
3. The secrets uncovered during the novel often structured the characters' lives before they knew about them. Have you ever learned something about your own life you were not aware of? How did you react, and do you think the characters at the Golden Hotel reacted productively?
4. How does age/generation play a role in the relationships formed and kept at the Golden Hotel?

5. What does the hotel represent to the owners? To the middle generation? To the younger generation?
6. What do you think about family businesses? What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with family and friends?
7. While reading, did you find yourself wanting the Goldmans and Weingolds to keep the hotel? Why or why not?
8. Where does the tension between Louise and Fanny stem from?
9. How does the sibling dynamic between Brian and Peter growing up shape who they become as adults?
10. Why does Brian manage the Golden Hotel? Where does his attachment and commitment to the hotel come from?
11. What do you think the Golden Hotel says about tradition versus change? How are we to balance these values/realities in our own lives?
12. What is lost when the Goldmans and Weingolds reach a decision about the future of the hotel? What is gained?



ELYSSA FRIEDLAND is the acclaimed author of *Last Summer at the Golden Hotel*, *The Floating Feldmans*, *The Intermission*, and *Love and Miss Communication*. Elyssa is a graduate of Yale University and Columbia Law School and currently teaches novel writing at Yale. She lives with her husband and three children in New York City, the best place on earth.

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