

## DEAR READER,

I'm thrilled to introduce you to my fourth novel, *June*. While not strictly a follow-up to my *New York Times* bestseller *Bittersweet*, *June* feels like that book's bosom friend, sharing so many themes—family secrets, an elite family (in this case, two generations of Hollywood stars), illicit love, girlhood friendship, and even, yes, murder—and the twists and turns are, I hope, as surprising as they are satisfying. *June* was so much fun to write, and I kept you in mind at every turn. The book takes place in a Midwestern town, both in 1955 and sixty years later. I hope you'll enjoy seeing it transformed by old Hollywood at the peak of its prime, when small-town America was still booming, and revisiting it today, when it has fallen into a lonely slumber.

Here you'll find a snack menu inspired by my grandmother's Ohioan family, a tabloid inspired by characters in *June*, and a discussion guide. I'd love to meet with your book club either in person or via Skype—reach out at [\*\*mirandabeverlywhitemore@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:mirandabeverlywhitemore@gmail.com)!

Yours truly,

MIRANDA BEVERLY-WHITEMORE



## DO YOU HAVE A BOOK GROUP?

I'd love to speak with them about these and other ideas central to *June*, in person or via Skype; check out [MirandaBW.com](http://MirandaBW.com) for details. As for the Reader's Guide below, in order to provide you with the most thought-provoking questions possible, I found it necessary to reveal some of the plot's secrets. If you haven't finished reading *June*, I hope you'll resist peeking at this guide! Thanks for reading!

MIRANDA BEVERLY-WHITTEMORE

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## QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what ways is Lindie's love for June the driving force in both of June's story lines (1955 and 2015)? Do you think June loved Lindie in return?
2. Two Oaks is its own dynamic character in this book; have you ever lived or visited somewhere that felt "alive" in this way?
3. In what ways does Lindie buck convention, and how do the other characters respond to her moments of bravery and daring?
4. In 1955, when June and Jack met, he was a world-class movie star in his thirties, and she was an eighteen-year-old from a conservative small town. Can a relationship succeed with that kind of power dynamic in play? Do you think Jack and June were truly in love?
5. Was Diane a sympathetic character? Why did she cling so tightly to Jack? Do you believe Jack loved her? Why did he agree to marry her?
6. Did June do the right thing by taking Diane's deal (chapter sixty)? Was this a sacrifice of love?
7. In your opinion, did Clyde deserve to die? Why or why not?
8. What were the consequences—both positive and negative—of Apatha and Lemon keeping their marriage a secret? How do you imagine the revelation of their status changed Eben and Lindie's relationship to Apatha once they moved to Chicago and she moved to Louisiana (see chapter sixty-seven)?
9. Why did June stay with Artie even after Diane died, when she might have gone back to Jack without any repercussions for Lindie? Did June love Artie, as Lindie claims she did? Once June reconnected with Jack in their old age, why did she go to such great lengths to keep that love affair hidden, even from Cassie?
10. Let's talk about bloodlines. In what ways does Tate resemble Diane, Elda resemble Jack, and Cassie resemble June? In what ways are these descendants different from their forbears, for better or worse?
11. How has the experience of being a movie star changed from 1955 to today? What are the consequences of celebrity? Would you want to be one?
12. Did Jack do the right thing by leaving everything to Cassie (and cutting Tate and Elda out of his will)? Why do you think he did so?
13. Will Nick and Cassie make their relationship work? Was Cassie right to forgive him for doubting her multiple times?
14. How will Cassie's and Tate's relationship develop beyond the confines of the book? Is it possible to cement familial ties even with those whose bloodline you do not share? Do you think Tate and Elda will be able to be "sisters" again?

AS A LITTLE GIRL, I LOVED GOING TO OHIO TO VISIT MY GRANDMOTHER, WHO'D FEED ME ALL KINDS OF MIDWESTERN DELICACIES. HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAMILY FAVORITES, PERFECT FOR A BOOK CLUB THEMED TO JUNE'S SMALL-TOWN 1950S AESTHETIC. SERVE THEM WITH LEMONADE, GIN & TONICS, OR SOME CHILLED WHITE WINE!

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## VELVEETA FUDGE

My great-aunt Marion was famous for her fudge, which was made with a guarded family recipe. When my mother came of age, she was shocked to discover the secret ingredient was Velveeta.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup Velveeta, cut into cubes	8 cups sugar
1 cup butter or margarine	1 teaspoon vanilla
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened baker's chocolate, in pieces	nuts (optional)
2 tablespoons light corn syrup	

Melt together Velveeta, butter, chocolate, and corn syrup on the stove top until blended (you can also do this in the microwave, but make sure to stop and stir it).

Add this mixture to the sugar in a large bowl, beating on medium until well blended. Beat in vanilla. Stir in nuts.

Pour into a 13 x 9 inch well-oiled (or well-sprayed) pan, smoothing top with spatula. Let cool in refrigerator until firm. Cut into small squares. Serve.

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## PUB CHEESE ON RITZ CRACKERS

This is basically an elaborate Ritz-delivery system, delicious at every turn.

1 cup flat beer (leave open in the fridge for a few hours)	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground pepper
1 pound extra-sharp cheddar cheese, shredded	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
2 cloves garlic, minced	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon dry mustard powder (or Dijon mustard)	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper (if you like spice)
	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon Tabasco (if you like spice)

Put flat beer, shredded cheese, garlic, mustard powder (or mustard), black pepper, salt, and Worcestershire sauce into food processor (also add in cayenne pepper and Tabasco if you want it to be spicy). Process until smooth.

Put cheese into a bowl and refrigerate overnight to blend flavors (but can be served immediately if need be).

## RAW VEGGIES WITH ONION DIP (AND POTATO CHIPS)

Whenever I went to visit my grandmother, our first outing was to the grocery store. I loved that she let me choose raw scallions to dip in the “fancy” onion dip she’d whip up in a cut-glass bowl.

Iceberg lettuce cut into wedges	Scallions (if you like them raw, as I did, apparently)	<b>For Dip:</b>
Carrot sticks	Grape tomatoes	16-ounce container sour cream
Celery sticks	Ruffles potato chips	1 envelope Onion Soup Mix
Cucumber disks		

Mix onion dip in a pretty bowl and arrange on a melamine tray with veggies around it. Empty a bag of Ruffles into another pretty bowl on the side. Serve!

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## POPCORN

My grandmother made popcorn in an air-popper, but if you don’t have one of those, here’s an easy and delicious way to do it on the stove top.

1/3 cup popping corn	1/2 stick of butter, melted
1 tablespoon olive oil	Salt to taste
1 tablespoon vegetable oil	

Heat the oils together on medium-high heat in a heavy-bottomed large saucepan.

As oil heats, add five kernels to saucepan. You’ll know the oil is the right temperature when all five kernels have popped.

Add the rest of the popcorn to the pot and immediately remove from heat. Count to thirty (this will ensure that all kernels will pop).

Place pot back on stove and listen.

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## DEVEILED EGGS

I’m not a big fan of mayonnaise, so I’ve modified the family recipe to use olive oil instead.

Hard-boiled eggs	Salt to taste
Olive oil	Paprika
Mustard	Chives (preferably fresh)
Lemon Juice	

Peel and divide the eggs in half length-wise.

Pop out halved yolks into a bowl.

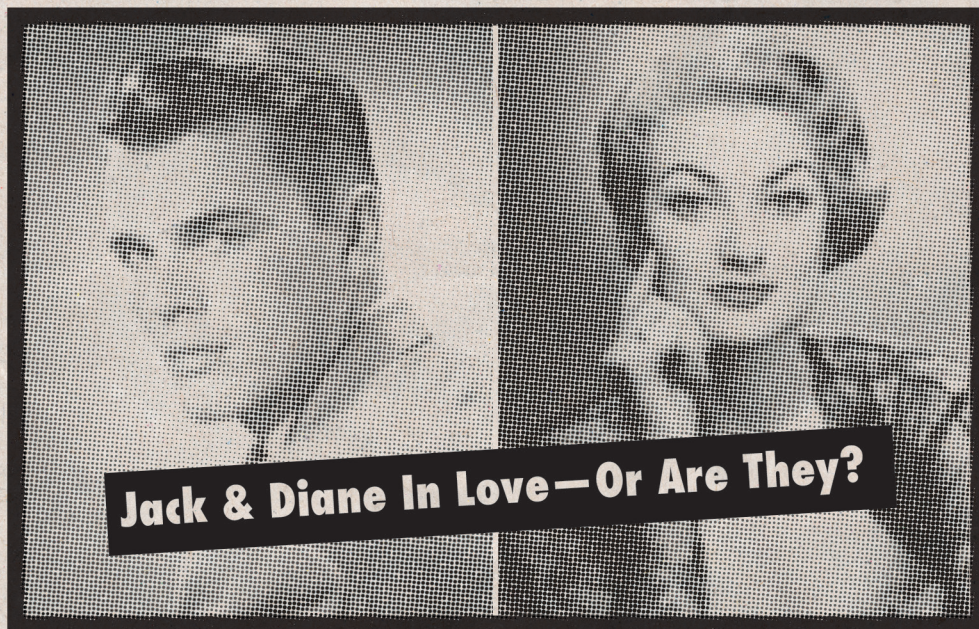
Add to yolks: olive oil, mustard, and lemon juice, a little at a time, to taste. Mix until the yolks are smooth and spreadable. Add salt to taste.

Using a teaspoon, deposit yolk mixture into halved whites. Add paprika and snipped chives on top and serve.



# STAR GAZER

JUNE 25¢



Psssst. A little birdie on the set of *Erie Canal*—the new MGM picture starring Jack Montgomery and newcomer Diane DeSoto, filming right now in small-town St. Jude, Ohio—has told me Jack and Diane are positively gooey over each other, whispering sweet nothings both on and off set. The affair reportedly began in May while they were shooting on the MGM lot in Los Angeles, and continued as they journeyed into the

heart of the Midwest for location shooting. It's the stuff of Hollywood legend: boy and girl are cast in a movie together, then find love in each other's arms after the director yells "cut."

But is there more than meets the eye? One anonymous source claims all the lovey-dovey is for show, just movie stars playing at movie stars in love. Could it be that MGM is planting rumors to try to save a film already plagued

with disaster? When the film lost its original location in upstate New York, the studio scrambled to find a new town to film in, and lost precious days. Perhaps Jack and Diane aren't truly in love, just better actors than we knew. We've even heard one outrageous claim that Jack's got his eye on a local girl (or two?).

But it's hard to believe any Ohio girl could hold a candle to Diane's platinum tresses or rosebud lips. And rumor has

it Jack and Diane are staying in close quarters—very close quarters! I don't know about you, but I could use another perfect couple to root for. I hope Jack makes his choice in Diane's favor and brings her home to his Beverly Hills retreat. Are those church bells I hear ringing?

FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF BITTERSWEET  
A STORY OF LOVE, MURDER, SCANDAL, AND HOLLYWOOD

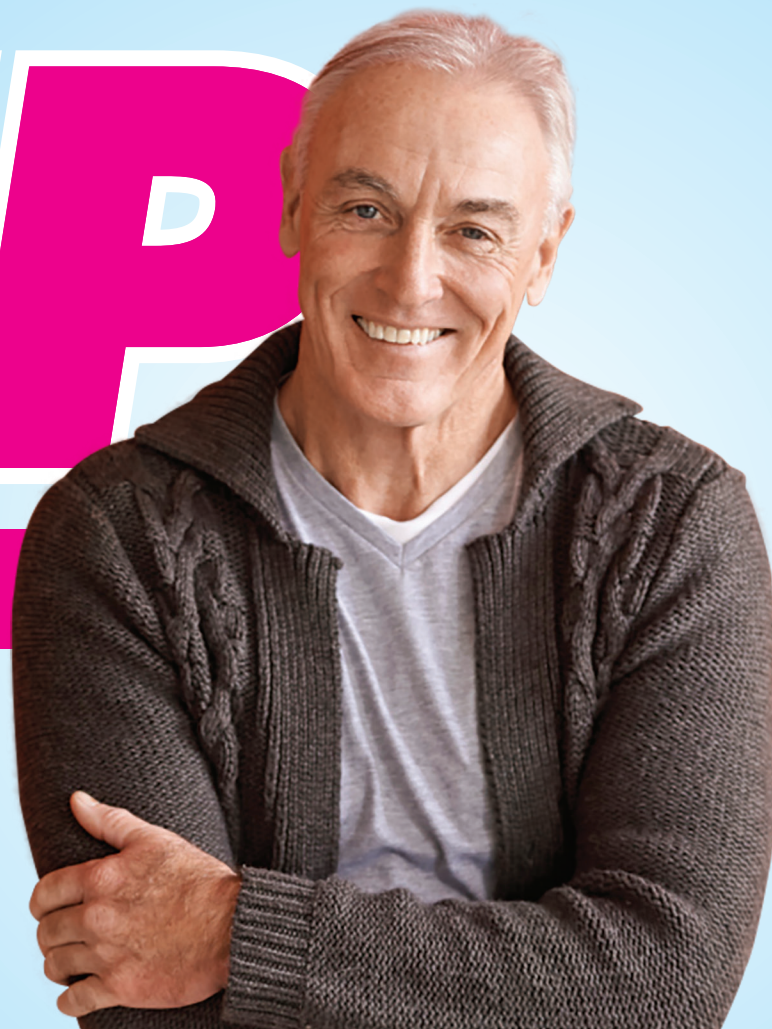
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# VIP



## EXCLUSIVE

### MATINEE IDOL MONTGOMERY DIES, LEAVES FORTUNE TO ???

**L**egendary actor **Jack Montgomery**, ninety-four years old, passed away on Wednesday morning at his home in Malibu. You'd think he'd have left his vast fortune—rumored to stand at over forty million dollars, and including multiple luxury homes across the world—to his children, daughters “**Elda**” **Esmerelda Hernandez**—best known for starring in the 1970s TV show *Purple Planet*—and A-list **Tate Montgomery**, married to Aloysius front-man (and “Sexiest Man Alive”) **Max Hall**. But rumor has it Jack had other plans, and that Tate and Elda are “beside themselves” at the discovery, during the deposition of

his will, that Montgomery’s entire estate has been left to a “mystery person, someone totally random.”

“Tate will get to the bottom of this,” our insider source tells us. “She’s sure this is a big mistake. Mostly, she’s worried that someone might have taken advantage of her elderly father and tricked him into giving every cent away.”

Elda, infamous for her outrageous opinions on topics as diverse as the legalization of marijuana to the benefits of alien abduction, was uncharacteristically mum on the topic of her father’s mystery heir, saying only, “The truth will come out.”

Our source contends that “both girls had fairy-tale childhoods,” and there was no reason to suspect that Montgomery, a reportedly loving father, would cut his devoted daughters from his will. “They were all very close, especially at the end of his life. This has been an absolute shock, made even worse, of course, by the loss of a remarkable father and man.”

No immediate details were available about Montgomery’s mystery heir, or of his or her whereabouts.

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