



The Scent of Pine: A Novel (First Simon & Schuster Hardcover Edition)

Lara Vapnyar

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“A compelling tale of cultural displacement and yearning” (*The Boston Globe*), from award-winning author Lara Vapnyar: a “sly and seductive” (*The New York Times Book Review*) new novel about sexual awakening and the relentless search for love.

Though only thirty-eight, Lena finds herself in the grips of a midlife crisis. She feels lost in her adoptive country, her career is at a dead end, and her marriage has spiraled into apathy and distrust—it seems impossible she will ever find happiness again. But then she strikes up a precarious friendship with Ben, a failed artist turned reluctant academic, who is just as lost as she is.

They soon surprise themselves by embarking on an impulsive weekend adventure, uncharacteristically leaving their responsibilities behind. On the way to Ben’s remote cabin in Maine, Lena begins to talk, for the first time in her life, about the tumultuous summer she spent as a counselor in a Soviet children’s camp twenty years earlier, when she was just discovering romance and her own sexuality. As Lena opens up to Ben about secrets she has long kept hidden, they begin to discover together not only the striking truths buried in her puzzling past, but also more immediate, passionate ones about the urgency of this short, stolen time they have together.

“Enchanting...vivid and rich” (*The New York Times*), filled with Lara Vapnyar’s characteristic empathy, deadpan humor, and striking honesty, *The Scent of Pine* weaves themes of ambition, loneliness, longing, and the fickle nature of desire into a “book of elegant writing and propulsive storytelling” (*Chicago Tribune*).

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