

“Delinsky delves deeper into the human heart and spirit with each new novel.”

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“Provocative . . . Delinsky is interested in how the lies we tell for love can destroy us instead – and she lays out this particular deception so painstakingly that even the most honest reader will sympathize.”

-- *People Magazine*

“Relationships are brought to the limit in Delinsky’s splendid latest exploration of family dynamics. The author seamlessly resolves relationship issues... with absorbing unpredictable storytelling— a winning combination.”

-- *Publisher’s Weekly*, starred review

“Delinsky offers a polished drama... creating sympathetic characters with personal problems. Well-crafted and satisfying.”

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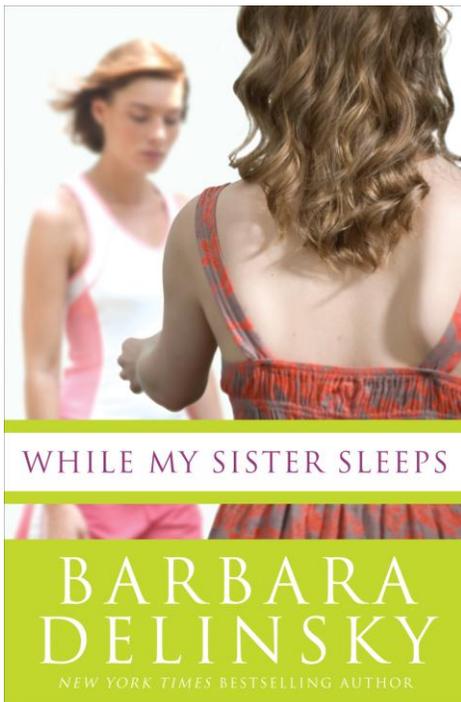
“...thought-provoking and memorable... Delinsky will be ‘discovered’ by a new generation of reader.”

-- *Bookpage*

WHILE MY SISTER SLEEPS

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

BARBARA DELINSKY



Barbara Delinsky is available for interviews in the following cities:

KANSAS CITY – Tuesday, 2/17

ST. LOUIS – Wednesday, 2/18

MILWAUKEE, WI – Thursday, 2/19

ATLANTA – Monday, 2/23

MEMPHIS – Tuesday, 2/24

DALLAS/FT.WORTH –
Wednesday, 2/25

VERO BEACH, FL – Thursday, 2/26

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WHILE MY SISTER SLEEPS

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BARBARA DELINSKY

New York Times bestselling author Barbara Delinsky has captivated millions of readers with her emotionally powerful novels. In **WHILE MY SISTER SLEEPS (Doubleday; 2/17/09; \$25.95)**, Delinsky offers a moving and deeply satisfying novel about the unique and emotionally complex territory shared by sisters.

Molly and Robin Snow share a deep bond that sustains them through good times and bad. At 27, Molly is the youngest of the three siblings. Feisty but hard-working, she has always been overshadowed by Robin, an elite marathoner who is favored to place at the upcoming Olympic trials until tragedy strikes. While training for an upcoming race, Robin suffers a massive heart attack. At the hospital, the Snow family receives a grim prognosis: Robin is brain-dead. Machines keep her heart beating, but doctors hold no hope for recovery.

As Robin's parents and siblings struggle to cope, the complex nature of their relationship is put to the ultimate test. Molly has always lived in Robin's shadow and her feelings for her have run the gamut, from love to resentment and everything in between. The last time they spoke, they argued. As Molly's parents fold under the devastating circumstances and her brother retreats into the cool reserve that is threatening his marriage, it's up to Molly to guide them through the tough decisions that lie ahead.

By default, Molly is thrust into the role of family spokesperson, not only with friends and the media, but at Snow Hill, the family's hugely successful tree and plant nursery. For the first time Molly finds herself in the spotlight, not only representing her family but speaking for Robin as well. As Molly tries to keep her family from falling apart while they remain in denial of Robin's fate, the discovery of Robin's hidden journal forces her to confront reality – and the lifetime of secrets that kept the Snows from truly connecting as a family.

WHILE MY SISTER SLEEPS is a masterful family portrait, filled with thought-provoking ideas about the nature of life itself, how emotions affect the decisions we make, and how letting go can be the hardest thing to do.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Barbara Delinsky is a *New York Times* bestselling author with more than thirty million copies of her books in print. She lives with her family in New England.

WHILE MY SISTER SLEEPS

Barbara Delinsky

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A CONVERSATION WITH BARBARA DELINSKY

Q&A created by Jill Marr

Question: With much of the backdrop of the novel *Snow Hill*, you go into expert detail about horticulture. Is this an interest for you or did you have to do a ton of research on the topic?

Answer: Creating *Snow Hill* was great fun! I love plant nurseries. When my kids were little and I was into houseplants, I used to push their stroller up and down the aisles of my local plant place. When I describe the pleasure Molly feels in her greenhouse, I'm describing the serenity I found in the ones I visited. That said, I did a lot of research. Loving plant nurseries is far different from knowing how commercial ones are run. I worked with Russell's Garden Center, here in Massachusetts, to learn the nuts and bolts of greenhouse management, and my imagination took it from there. The greenhouse in *While My Sister Sleeps* is state-of-the-art, but it still captures the sight and smell and overall earthiness of what I so vividly remember.

Q: Both Robin and Alexis have health issues but are active and would normally be considered healthy. They also pushed themselves too hard. Do you think it can be dangerous to be an overachiever? When do you think it becomes a problem?

A: I don't think it's dangerous to be an overachiever, per se. Some of our most brilliant minds (and, in athletes, most talented bodies) belong to overachievers. Pushing the envelope is human; competitors always try to do more. But I do believe that some people take overachieving to the extreme. It definitely becomes a problem when the overachiever begins to ignore health problems, in which case overachieving becomes self-destructive. Such was the case with both Robin and Alexis.

Q: Molly always considered herself second to Robin. Who do you think was the most to blame for that?

A: Kathryn. I'm sorry to say that, because I feel that, often unjustly, the mother takes the blame for things she can't control. Indeed, Robin's personality and skill as a runner catapulted her to center stage, while Molly's personality lent itself to the shadows. But Kathryn was an enabler of both, and as the girls' mother – as the one who saw them day in, day out – she should have known how Molly felt. In fairness, Charlie has to share a touch of the blame. He saw what was happening and could have – *should* have – spoken up.

Q: You switch points of view from time-to-time in the novel. What was your motivation behind that?

A: My books have multiple layers. While there is always a central theme, different characters experience it in different ways. In *While My Sister Sleeps*, Robin's condition is the fulcrum around which the action turns, but her mother and her sister experience great emotional trauma, each in her own way. How better to explore these two characters' mindsets, than to use their points of view to show how they feel? Likewise, Robin's brother Chris. His dilemma is communication, or the lack thereof, and, indeed, the need for and ability to communicate is a major theme in *While My Sister Sleeps*. Exploring Chris's growth through his point of view sheds additional light on this theme.

Q: I am a runner so the part about Robin bonding with her running friends because running together almost becomes therapy really hit home. Do you run?

A: No, I don't run. But I see running as I see any group activity. Take knitting, which I do. The Monday night meetings that I attend offer the same bonding, the same therapy. Women value group behavior. When together, they discuss books and movies, but they also discuss substantive matters – crises they may be having, emotional dilemmas, relationship issues. I try to inject a setting for this “community of women,” if you will, in each of my books. Runners have it in *While My Sister Sleeps*. The bakery offers it in *The Secret Between Us*. The yarn store offers it in *Family Tree*.

Q: Do you think that Molly was intentionally being disloyal to Robin by continuing her friendship with Nick?

A: Absolutely not. She was not romantically involved with Nick, so what was the harm?

Q: Why is it that Liz had such a hold over Chris? Is it something he did to himself?

A: Chris allowed himself to get involved with Liz, but the crux of the problem – the crux of Liz's hold over Chris – is Chris's inability to tell his wife about it. Once he does that, Liz becomes a non-issue. There are many “secrets” discovered in *While My Sister Sleeps*. Chris's relationship with Liz is only one of them. My message, of course, is that lack of communication causes the problem – whether it is Chris failing to tell his wife about Liz, Kathryn failing to tell her family about Peter, or Robin failing to tell her family about her heart.

Q: I was adopted and my birthmother found me when I was around Robin's age (another part of the novel that really hit home!). How did you put yourself into Robin's head, getting that call from Peter Santorum? And how did you put yourself into his head?

A: I could say that my background in psychology enabled me to do that, but the truth is that I went into psychology *because* people are my thing. If I have a “gift” as writer, it is the ability to imagine what people are feeling. I have written many books about many different types of people facing many different circumstances. And hey, I won't kid you. It's sometimes hard getting into a character's mind, particularly one who is experiencing something I never have. It took me a while (and many nights of broken sleep) before I could get a handle on Robin's feelings, and a while longer before I could understand Peter. But the satisfaction of having it all make sense on an emotional level is what pleases me most as a writer.

Q: You mention the work of sprites quite a bit in the novel. Do you believe in sprites?

A: I do.

Q: In her journal, Robin asks “Who am I?” Do any of us ever really know who we are or are most people just living the lives that others think they should?

A: I actually believe that most of us do know who we are. And it isn't that the rest are living the lives that *others* think they should, but rather that they are living the lives *they* think they should without understanding the why of it. Often it does take a personal crisis to make us look at ourselves. Such is the case in *While My Sister Sleeps*. I see this as a coming of age story for Molly, in particular, who emerges from the shadows and begins to express herself more than she ever has before.

Q: Some of the story deals with men and their feelings, especially expressing their feelings. Why do you think that men avoid emotional issues?

A: If I knew the answer to that, women would be knocking down my door to get it! The single greatest frustration we women face is that the men in our lives have trouble discussing feelings. Is it cultural? Educational? Biological? A little of each, me thinks. I do believe that there are basic physical differences between women and men, perhaps making women better at emotional issues than men are. That said, men can learn. I'm always hopeful of that.

Q: The similarities between Nana and Robin are striking. They are both caught between life and death in a way. Which situation do you think would be the hardest for loved ones to deal with?

A: This may be a spoiler, but here goes. I think Robin's situation would be harder for a family to handle. Illness is expected as we age, and while it is painful and sad, the rationale of a long life well led brings solace. A 32-year-old facing a health crisis is something else entirely – painful and sad, tragic in the loss of hope for that long life well led.

Q: And lastly, what is next for you? Do you have another novel in the works?

A: I certainly do! This one is set in Maine and deals with another family crisis – that of a seventeen-year-old girl who becomes pregnant. Her mother, pregnant herself at seventeen and now a high school principal in a responsible and visible position, is horrified. Her daughter's pregnancy is only the first of many plot twists and turns, and as fingers start pointing and questions abound, one rises above the rest. What does it take – at what age – to be a good mother?