

## **PRAISE FOR THE NOVELS OF LAUREN BELFER**

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### **PRAISE FOR *AND AFTER THE FIRE***

“Provocative ... In Belfer’s hands, fictitious characters blend uncannily with historical ones.”  
— *The New Yorker*

“Her virtuoso novel blends historical fiction, literary thriller, love story, and musicology ... The novel swells with life’s great themes — love and death, family and faith — and the insistent, dark music of loss.”  
— *USA Today*\*\*\*\*

“A different species of suspense tale. ... Evocative, deeply researched. ... dazzle[s] while delving into dark places.”  
— *National Public Radio, “Fresh Air”*

“This is finely written historical fiction layered with richly detailed characters and moral complexity.”  
— *BBC.com, Ten Books To Read In May*

“A graceful, spellbinding tale pondering important questions.”  
— *Library Journal, \*Starred Review\**

“A compulsively readable novel, *And After the Fire* holds nothing back in its pursuit of truth.”  
— *BookBub*

“Powerfully and emotionally written, the tale resonates because of its fast pace and Belfer’s ability to bring the large theme of ‘doing the right thing’ to readers. A fascinating, compelling read.”  
— *RT Book Reviews*

“Spanning centuries, this latest novel from Belfer (*A Fierce Radiance*, *City of Light*) is her most compelling yet. ... A dazzling, transformative novel. Highly recommended.”

— *Historical Novel Society*

“An invaluable piece of music poses ethical questions in this compelling blend of fact and fiction ... Based on impressive research, this remarkable novel spans centuries and continents, touching finally on the Holocaust and serving as a paean to Bach’s music. ... Absorbing historical fiction.”

— *Booklist*, *\*Starred Review\**

“A ‘what if’ novel that begins in the glittering salons of Enlightenment-era Berlin where, beneath the surface, are sentiments too sinister to be named and culminating in New York present day, *And After the Fire* is an intellectual thriller and a beautiful love story. What if you came into possession of an historical artifact with the power to alter history and change the world? Sure to establish Belfer as a fearless, provocative writer. Impossible to put down.”

— **Sara Gruen**, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *At the Water’s Edge* and *Water for Elephants*

“Can any mortal adjective convey my adoration for this brilliant and mesmerizing story? Ask my friends: Since reading *And After the Fire*, I’ve been trumpeting it as the best novel I’ve had the pleasure of reading in years. Brava, Lauren Belfer. I thank you for this fascinating, virtuoso, unforgettable book.”

— **Elinor Lipman**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Then She Found Me*

### PRAISE FOR *A FIERCE RADIANCE*

*All Things Considered/NPR Radio, Interview:*

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128444970>

“... the star attraction here is Belfer’s detailed depiction of wartime New York City as well as her evocation of the everyday terrors posed by pneumonia, scarlet fever and scraped elbows — now vastly diminished thanks to penicillin and other antibiotics.”

— **NPR.org**

“Belfer’s first novel, ‘City of Light,’ delineated the social and political tension of Buffalo, N.Y., at the beginning of the age of electricity. ‘A Fierce Radiance’ is similarly ambitious, combining medical and military history with commercial rivalry, espionage and thwarted love. Belfer clearly knows her scientific material. She also knows how to turn esoteric information into an adventure story, and how to tell that story very well.”

— ***The New York Times Book Review***

“A genre-blending historical novel, is love story and murder mystery rolled into panoramic family saga and industrial-espionage thriller. ... Belfer fuses fiction and history cleverly and seamlessly. ... She also has a gift for rejuvenating spirit of place — turn-of-the-20th-century Buffalo in *City of Light* and wartime New York here. The city is as much a character in the novel as James Stanton, the scientist who falls for Shipley, or Edward Rutherford, her estranged industrialist father. *A Fierce Radiance* resonates precisely because the characters Belfer creates, and the ones she borrows from history, feel real — as organic and natural as the molds from which these miracle drugs come.”

— ***USA Today***

“As she demonstrated in her best-selling first novel, ‘City of Light’ (1999), Belfer is adept at writing historical fiction that sizzles. Sex, spies, murder, big money, family betrayals, doomed romance and exotic travel are smoothly braided into her main narrative about the wartime race to make large quantities of penicillin. ... How quickly the home-front anxieties during World War II have been forgotten. How quickly, also, that the everyday terrors posed by pneumonia, scarlet fever and scraped knees were diminished, thanks to penicillin and other antibiotics. ‘A Fierce Radiance’ vividly brings back that time of both terror and eventual triumph.”

— ***Maureen Corrigan for The Washington Post***

“A sweeping historical novel ... both novels reveal Belfer’s keen sense of dramatic pacing and her gift for recreating historic times.”

— ***The Daily Beast***

“Bursting with period detail, moving from tony Fifth Avenue townhouses to Greenwich Village cobblestones to late-night laboratory sessions at the Rockefeller Institute in World War II-era New York City ... ‘A Fierce Radiance’ is a feast of storytelling wonders, mixing corporate greed, murder, espionage, fraying family ties and irresistible descriptions of old New York (not to mention a deliciously catty walk-on by playwright and congresswoman Clare Booth Luce) in a morality tale about one drug’s power to save lives — and how ordinary humans aren’t necessarily equal to that daunting task.”

— ***Salon.com***

“Engrossing page-turner heralds Belfer’s return after an 11-year absence. The talent she first displayed writing historical fiction with her first novel is in full bloom, as she evokes a time when the stakes for the nation were high and medicine from green mold was about to change the world. ... The story’s focus on the development of antibiotics in wartime — complete with espionage, industrial and otherwise — is fascinating.”

— *Buffalo News*

“The story drew me in immediately. Soon, by virtue of the fictional tale, I absorbed all kinds of details about the struggle between the government, anxious to get penicillin to the front lines, and the pharmaceutical companies, bound and determined to make a profit, if not off penicillin, then off the ‘cousins,’ or related antibiotics discovered in dirt and mold. It’s a fascinating story.”

— **Blog of the Nation/NPR.org’s Talk of the Nation Blog**

“This fulsome tale of a modern marvel, and what life was like before it became ubiquitous, crackles with twists and turns . . . It’s also a beautiful valentine to 1940s New York City and its neighborhoods, painted with great affection. ... *A Fierce Radiance*’s life, humanity, and crack mystery was worth the wait. Highly recommended.”

— *Historical Novels Review, Editor’s Choice Review*

“Belfer’s writing shines most clearly when she places regular people going about their regular business against a momentous historical backdrop. That well-known and mostly deplored pharmaceutical companies are characters in the novel lends some modern-day relevance, in light of America’s new health care bill. Depictions of New York during the aftermath of Pearl Harbor are well done, as is the romance plot.”

— *RT Book Reviews*

“All these story lines are tied up to the reader’s satisfaction and in every one of them there is a common thread: there are shades of gray everywhere in judging the morality of human actions.

All of Belfer’s characters must come to terms with this truth, in themselves and in others. Belfer exempts no one, and in so doing creates a believable story and recreates a forgotten time in our history.”

— **Shelf Awareness**

“With an exquisite artist’s eye for detail that puts readers right in the middle of New York City and the World War II fronts and incorporating all the elements of a hot, sprawling, page-turning romance — not to mention espionage, murder, crime-scene deceptions, big business intrigue, and family estrangements — Belfer (*City of Light*) once again blends fiction and facts with riveting results.”

— *Library Journal, \*Starred Review\**

“Lauren Belfer’s panoramic new novel is a love story wrapped around a spy story with a pivotal medical breakthrough at its center.”

— *O, the Oprah Magazine*

“Belfer (*City of Light*) combines life-and-death scenarios, romance, murder, and wartime reality at home and abroad, while taking a stab at industrialists who profit by dubious means and salve their consciences through philanthropy; and she warns that resistance to antibiotics could return us ‘to the era when otherwise healthy adults died from a scratch on the knee.’ An engrossing and ambitious novel that vividly portrays a critical time in American history.”

— *Booklist*, **\*Starred Review\***

“Lauren Belfer’s story of love in the time of penicillin is enthralling. A FIERCE RADIANCE shines with fascinating detail about a moment in American history we have mostly forgotten, when penicillin was new, miraculous, and in short supply. Belfer’s powerful portrayal of how people are changed in pursuit of a miracle makes this book an especially compelling read.”

— **Nancy Horan, author of *Loving Frank***

### **PRAISE FOR *CITY OF LIGHT***

“A stereopticon of a novel, sepia-tinged at the edges, yet bursting with color at its center. ... [A] vivid sense of the time and place. ... [A] powerfully atmospheric book.”

— *New York Times*

“An ingenious first novel. ... Alive with historical figures who mingle seamlessly with the fictional characters. ... A huge, sprawling portrait of the United States at the turn of the last century.”

— *New York Times Book Review*

“Like Niagara Falls itself, it’s breathtaking in its achievement. Lauren Belfer’s first novel is a remarkable blend of murder mystery, love story, political intrigue, and tragedy of manners. ... Belfer handles it all — large cast, big themes — with uncommon assurance.”

— *USA Today*

“Ambitious, original, and timely. ... A complicated and imaginative story with many daring subplots and colorful secondary characters.”

— *Washington Post Book World*

“A full-to-the-brim first novel. ... A straight-through, sleepless read.”

— *Time magazine*

“Vibrant characters and a riveting plot will keep your eyes glued to the pages.”

— *Glamour*

“Suspenseful. ... A historical novel of high intrigue.”

— *People*

“Delicious melodrama. ... Belfer shows off a masterful ability to keep pages turning. ... Brilliant skill.”

— *San Francisco Chronicle Book Review*

“Belfer’s microscopic attention to details of the period ... give[s] the book’s fabric the dense quality of tapestry.”

— *Chicago Tribune*

“A gift for social nuance ... shapes this compelling debut. ... [A] rich mix of fictional and historical figures. ... With the assurance of an established writer, Belfer delivers a work of depth and polish. ... Irresistible to the last page.”

— *Publishers Weekly*

“Swift and graceful reading. ... Exceptionally well-crafted.”

— *Library Journal*

“An ambitious, vividly detailed, and stirring debut novel offering a panorama of American life at the beginning of the 20th century. ... Very gripping. A remarkably assured and satisfying first novel.”

— *Kirkus Reviews*

“Quite simply electrifying. ... [A] rich novel. ... [Belfer] creates a fascinating, disquieting world in which nothing is what it seems. ... To Lauren Belfer’s endless credit, *City of Light* is panoramic, subtle, and very physical.”

— **Amazon.com**