

## Synopsis (Kirkus Reviews) of *What We Set In Motion*:

A South Carolina woman dreams of moving to New York City in this debut novel. Edwards' (Some Favors, 2011) story introduces readers to the heroine, Nadine Carter Barnwell, born to a good family in South Carolina's Lowcountry, where all is not well. Her autocratic father, Sam, has become even more so since Nadine's mother died. Close to college graduation, Nadine is determined to head to New York and fulfill her dream of becoming a successful modern dancer. This is bad enough in Sam's practical view, but she plans to arrive there with her boyfriend, Frank Prescott, an aspiring actor. Thankfully, Nadine's Aunt Amelia, a wise earth-mother type, runs interference and counsels Nadine to follow her heart. Then Frank gets a small movie role, his big break, and leaves, promising to return. Meanwhile, Nadine has become pregnant with Frank's child, but the baby is stillborn and only Nadine, Aunt Amelia, and Uncle Hamp know of this chapter in her life. Nadine finally moves to New York, accompanied by her dancer friend Deni Hansen. Babes in the woods, they escape many unsavory and even dangerous characters but eventually life improves. One of Nadine's guides is Father Benjamin Vincent Dunlap, a paraplegic gay priest-she is never

without wise counsel. She winds up in the world of the theater and meets, and marries, Colin Bennett, a successful director. They have a loft in SoHo. Life is good. Then comes a letter that threatens to smash their comfortable existence to smithereens. There follows an audacious plot resolution, but the reader should be spellbound as it unfolds. Then the expected denouement wraps things up nicely, or almost. Edwards writes superbly and the plot moves briskly. The narrative offers evocative descriptions of both the historic Lowcountry ("From the marsh, an egret fluttered its wings in slow motion and lifted into the air. The smaller birds, smartly tucked in the shade of the palmettos, called out to whoever listened") and glamorous New York ("Sometimes the city just popped out of the darkness like a 3-D movie. From this vantage point, Manhattan looked like a fairyland, the place Dorothy and her friends were searching for"). And there are juicy subplots, such as Deni's fall and redemption. What starts out as chick lit turns delightfully surprising. A bit heavy on wish fulfillment, this vivid novel is still a satisfying read.

## Stephanie Austin Edwards



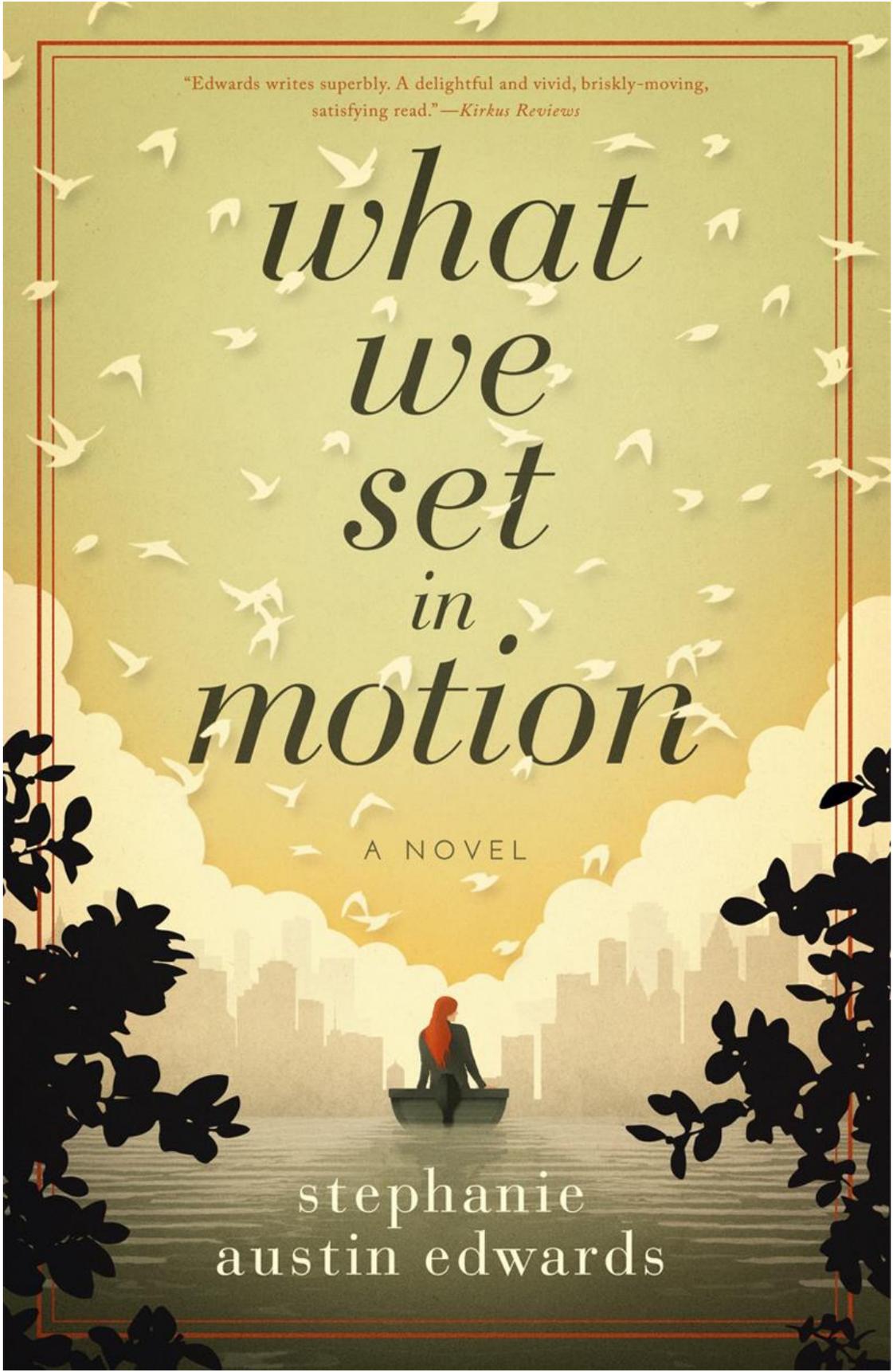
Stephanie Austin Edwards is the author of *What We Set In Motion* (2016), which won the Best Submission Award at the Atlanta Writer's Club Conference in 2013. Her recent publications include a short story in the University of Texas literary journal, *riverSedge*, and an essay in the book *Beaufort Through the Ages*. In a past life, Stephanie was a costume supervisor on Broadway for productions of *Dreamgirls*, *Grind*, *The Rink* (Liza Minelli) and *Woman of the Year* (Lauren Bacall), among others. She also has numerous film and television credits to her name, including work on *The Cosby Show*, the Woody Allen films *Hannah and Her Sisters* and *Radio Days*, and Michael Jackson's *BAD* music video. After giving up the bustle of New York City life, Stephanie has returned to her roots in the South Carolina Lowcountry, teaching writing workshops at the college level and working for the Beaufort School District as a grant consultant.

"Edwards writes superbly. A delightful and vivid, briskly-moving, satisfying read." —*Kirkus Reviews*

*what  
we  
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motion*

A NOVEL

stephanie  
austin edwards



*Atlanta Writers Club Conference*  
BEST SUBMISSION AWARD WINNER

“This passionate and engrossing novel explores the human struggle for independence — particularly for women, particularly for southern women from very traditional families. Each page shimmers with a boundless energy. The author has created a world that is real, which means there are profound lessons here about life and love that you will carry away. It’s a book I’m thrilled to recommend.”

— JUDY GOLDMAN, author of *LOSING MY SISTER*

“With masterful narrative control, Stephanie Austin Edwards has crafted a coming-of-age novel that will appeal to anyone who has ever risked everything to pursue a dream, or wondered what their life would have been like if only they had. Nadine Barnwell is a spunky heroine who learns that no matter how far we travel, or how many obstacles we face on the way, the search for our true selves is always the longest and most difficult journey. *What We Set in Motion* is an impressive debut by an exciting new voice in Southern fiction!”

— Best selling author CASSANDRA KING, author of *THE SUNDAY WIFE*

“Stephanie Austin Edwards’ debut novel, *What We Set In Motion*, beautifully explores the tension between a young woman’s need for freedom and her longing for connection. Filled with a rich cast of characters—starting with the wonderful protagonist, Nadine, whose love of dance takes her far from her childhood home—this is a deeply compelling novel of loss and redemption, secrets and revelations, connections severed and restored.”

— ABIGAIL DEWITT, author of *LILI* and *DOGS*

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