

SURPRISE

He suggests pancakes at the local diner, followed by a walk in search of mayflowers, while friends convene at the house bearing casseroles and a cake, their cars pulled close along the sandy shoulders of the road, where tender ferns unfurl in the ditches, and this year's budding leaves push last year's spectral leaves from the tips of the twigs of the ash trees. The gathering itself is not what astounds her, but the casual accomplishment with which he has lied.