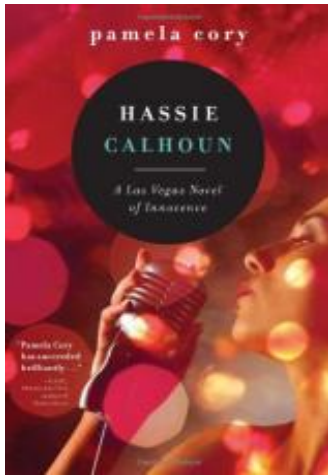


# Hassie Calhoun: A Las Vegas Novel of Innocence

by Pamela Cory

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## About the Book

In this first book of a trilogy, lovely and talented Hassie Calhoun arrives in Las Vegas to make it as a singer. Her beauty immediately opens doors at the Sands Hotel, but that same beauty draws her into a dangerous relationship with her brooding lover, Jake, and attracts the attention of the powerful Frank Sinatra. Like the goddess Persephone, Hassie finds herself torn between the darkness and the light the two men offer. Jake is her personal Hades, whose love borders on obsession, and Hassie's innocence keeps her from recognizing the dangers that she invites.

With her innocence and identity on the line, the road to stardom puts Hassie in several compromising situations. Cory offers a deceptively sophisticated look into the life of an ambitious young woman during the era of the Rat Pack, whose very passions impede her dreams in a way that many women could secretly relate to.

2011 International Book Awards Finalist for Literary Fiction

2011 National Indie Excellence Awards Finalist for New Fiction

## Discussion Guide

1. How badly do you want to slap Hassie? She is of course very young, but the reader expects a lot of her at the beginning of the book. She has some guidance in her life coming from Barbara back in her hometown, but she largely ignores this. How do you explain the destructive behavior of a girl who is fundamentally good-natured?
2. Because of the era depicted in the book, we tend to think of the characters as older, but they are in fact quite young, and often immature. Are they any different from people of the same age today?

3. How did Henry influence Hassie's behavior from the night she arrived at the Sands? And how does Jake's attitude toward Henry affect Hassie? Is she influenced more by men, or they by her? Who is most in control?
4. Would Hassie's relationship with her mother have been any better if Bobby had not come into the picture? How does the death of her father play into her ambitions and actions?
5. What really attracted Hassie to Frank --- his fame, her "star-struck" immaturity or an underlying desire to get back at Jake for cheating on her with Natalie?
6. Do you think that Hassie really believed that Jake forgave her for her indiscretion with Frank? Are there differences in the way men and women judge this love triangle?
7. Hassie didn't smoke at all in Part One. Why did she decide to start smoking when she went to Reno, and why did she smoke and drink so much?
8. Do you think that Hassie changed significantly after she went to Reno? Was her evening with Mr. Satan responsible for her rather loose behavior from that point on?
9. Is it possible that Henry and Julio's relationship was the only "true love" relationship that Hassie has ever known?
10. Who do you think had the greater influence on Hassie's life as a child --- her father or Barbara? Who do you think has the greater influence on her life as an adult --- Henry, Jake or Barbara?
11. How does Clay really feel about Hassie? How does she really feel about him? Does he have ulterior motives in taking her back to Reno or does he genuinely want to help her?
12. Do you think that Hassie is talented? Do you think that she will eventually become a successful singer/songwriter?
13. Hassie made a lot of bad decisions in the four years of her life in Nevada. What was her biggest mistake and how could a different decision have affected the outcome of her life by the end of the book?
14. What do you think is the greatest message in the story? Do you recognize any universal themes or subtexts operating in the book?

## Author Bio

Pamela Cory, born in Charlotte, NC, graduated college with a Bachelor of Music degree, and spent 15 years as a cabaret singer, model and voice coach in the Southeastern United States. An interest in interior design led her to establish a business in London to source interior furnishings and artifacts around the world. **Hassie** is deeply rooted in the author's own struggles and ultimately reflects her love of music and her strong ties to the entertainment industry. She is married to architect Steven Miller and divides her time between New York City and Dubai, UAE.

## Critical Praise

"Pamela Cory has succeeded brilliantly...with her simultaneously maddening and you-just-can't-help-but-like-her character, Hassie Calhoun. Read this book and be transported to Las Vegas, circa 1959, along with one of the more engaging characters I've encountered in fiction."

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**Publication Date:** June 7, 2011

**Paperback:** 368 pages

**Publisher:** Scarletta Press

**ISBN-10:** 0982458479

**ISBN-13:** 9780982458471