

Sex and Vanity

by Kevin Kwan



About the Book

The iconic author of the bestselling phenomenon *CRAZY RICH ASIANS* returns with the glittering tale of a young woman who finds herself torn between two men: the WASPy fiancé of her family's dreams and George Zao, the man she is desperately trying to avoid falling in love with.

On her very first morning on the jewel-like island of Capri, Lucie Churchill sets eyes on George Zao and instantly can't stand him. She can't stand it when he gallantly offers to trade hotel rooms with her so that she can have a view of the Tyrrhenian Sea, she can't stand that he knows more about Casa Malaparte than she does, and she really can't stand it when he kisses her in the darkness of the ancient ruins of a Roman villa and they are caught by her snobbish, disapproving cousin Charlotte. "Your mother is Chinese so it's no surprise you'd be attracted to someone like him," Charlotte teases.

The daughter of an American-born Chinese mother and a blue-blooded New York father, Lucie has always sublimated the Asian side of herself in favor of the white side, and she adamantly denies having feelings for George. But several years later, when George unexpectedly appears in East Hampton, where Lucie is weekendending with her new fiancé, Lucie finds herself drawn to George again. Soon, Lucie is spinning a web of deceit that involves her family, her fiancé, the co-op board of her Fifth Avenue apartment building, and ultimately herself as she tries mightily to deny George entry into her world --- and her heart.

Moving between summer playgrounds of privilege, peppered with decadent food and extravagant fashion, *SEX AND VANITY* is a truly modern love story, a daring homage to *A ROOM WITH A VIEW* and a brilliantly funny comedy of manners set between two cultures.

Discussion Guide

1. Charlotte interprets Rosemary Zao's offer of her hotel rooms as showing off her wealth, but Lucie has a different take on it as a reflection of Chinese culture and attitudes toward wealth and generosity. Who do you think is right?
2. What did you think of Lucie's scrutiny of George's social media profiles? Would you have done the same thing?
3. Discuss Lucie's attitude toward her mixed-race ethnicity and how it informs her ill-fated engagement to Cecil.
4. Speaking of Lucie and Cecil's engagement, what did you think of his dramatic proposal? Creative or too over the top?
5. What did you think of Lucie's grandmother referring to Lucie as her "precious China doll"? Later in the novel, Charlotte says "she's not a racist, just a snob." Do you agree?
6. Discuss the connection between Lucie denying herself the opportunity to embrace her own talent as an artist and her efforts to resist her attraction to George.
7. Lucie's cousin, Charlotte, reveals her true self in surprising ways as the novel unfolds. What were your first impressions of her, and how did they change?
8. Discuss the symmetry and significance of uber-WASP Cornelia Guest and Rosemary Zao as the two women who help Lucie to finally embrace her truth.
9. Casting call: Who would play Lucie, George and Cecil in the movie?
10. The author creates memorable characters in all of his novels. Who are your favorite characters in this novel, and why?
11. Discuss the ending of the novel. Did you find it satisfying, or did you want to see Lucie and George tie the knot?
12. *SEX AND VANITY* was written as an homage to *A ROOM WITH A VIEW*. If you're familiar with E.M. Forster's classic novel, did this connection come to mind? And if you haven't read *A ROOM WITH A VIEW*, are you inspired to read it now?

Author Bio

Kevin Kwan is the author of *CRAZY RICH ASIANS*, the internationally bestselling novel that has been translated into 40 languages. Its sequel, *CHINA RICH GIRLFRIEND*, was released in 2015, and *RICH PEOPLE PROBLEMS*, the final book in the trilogy, followed in 2017.

For several weeks in 2018, the *Crazy Rich Asians* trilogy commanded the top three positions of the *New York Times* bestseller list --- an almost unprecedented single-author trifecta, and the film adaptation of *CRAZY RICH ASIANS* became Hollywood's highest grossing romantic comedy in over a decade.

His novel SEX AND VANITY hit the *New York Times* bestseller list in its first week of release and is being adapted into a feature film by Sony Pictures. Kevin has been named by *Time* Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World.

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Publication Date: May 25, 2021

Genres: Fiction, Women's Fiction

Paperback: 386 pages

Publisher: Anchor

ISBN-10: 0593081935

ISBN-13: 9780593081938