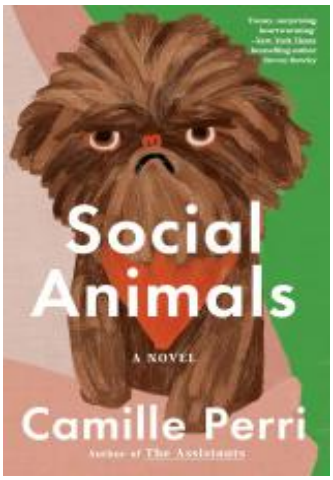
Social Animals

by Camille Perri



About the Book

Three women. One dog park. Things are about to get messy.

Val Caruso, Alex Reed and June Kennerson come from completely different worlds. Val is a tough-talking private investigator; Alex is reticent, nervous and on the run from her past; and June is an athlete turned housewife whose true love is her pup.

When Val is hired by June?s husband to find out if June is cheating on him, it sets these three women on a collision course. Amid a colorful cast of characters who spend time at the shabby but beloved Hamilton Dog Park, they find they have more in common than they thought. Soon June is brave enough to aim for what she wants, Alex finds excitement she never expected, and Val is reluctantly opening her heart to the most high-maintenance dog she?s ever met.

But when their secrets catch up with them, will their newfound friendships be able to withstand the pressure? Or will they find themselves in the doghouse?

SOCIAL ANIMALS is a funny and sharp social commentary on community, privilege, dog ownership, and the ultimate power of finding your people (and your pets).

Discussion Guide

1. Val, Alex and June all come from very different backgrounds, and all converge at a dog park for very different reasons. In what ways are dogs the perfect decoy for Val and Alex to infiltrate June?s inner circle?

2. As Val, June and Alex get to work on making a case for the dog park?s renovation, they slowly begin to see one another clearly. What is it about a shared project that has the capacity to bring people together?

3. Now in her 30s, June feels as if she?s forgotten how to socialize. We see her anxiety about this slip through every now and then, especially as it pertains to her growing friendship with Alex. What is it about this period in life that prompts a reevaluation of our ability to connect with others?

4. Val, Alex and June are all lonely in some way. How do they cope with loneliness differently?

5. Particularly through Val?s character, the novel explores the concept of nature versus nurture, questioning why we are the way we are and if we have the power to change if we want to. Do you think human beings truly have the capacity to change?

6. Val, Alex and June have vastly different relationships to money. In what ways does social class and economic privilege play a role in this novel?

7. On the forefront, this novel explores the idea of dog ownership and all the various duties that entails. But as we glimpse deeper into the lives of Val, Alex and June, the theme of ownership takes on a more layered meaning. Discuss the ways in which we see our protagonists take charge of their own lives.

8. How do you feel about the character Silas Kennerson? Do you consider him to be a villain? Are you satisfied with his ending?

9. The title SOCIAL ANIMALS speaks to the ways in which we all need and seek out connection. To what extent does author Camille Perri illustrate both the ease and complexity of finding community in this day and age? If it weren?t for each character?s ulterior motives, do you think any of them would have ever crossed paths?

10. Which was your favorite comedic scene and why? To what extent do you think humor is vital to telling this story?

11. If SOCIAL ANIMALS were a movie or TV show, who do you imagine would play the starring roles?

12. The book?s jacket features a dog based on the author?s own. In celebration of pets everywhere, share what your pet means or meant to you.

13. What do you see next for Val, Alex and June?

Author Bio

Camille Perri is the author of THE ASSISTANTS, WHEN KATIE MET CASSIDY and SOCIAL ANIMALS. She has worked as a books editor for *Cosmopolitan* and *Esquire*. She has also been a ghostwriter of young adult novels and a reference librarian. She holds a bachelor of arts degree from New York University and a master of library science degree from Queens College.

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