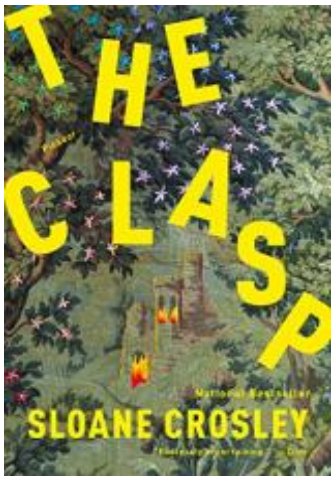
The Clasp

by Sloane Crosley



About the Book

A rollicking, modern twist on ?The Necklace,? Guy de Maupassant?s classic tale of a 19th-century material girl, THE CLASP opens on a private island in Florida, as three hapless 20somethings gather for their friends? wedding. For Kezia, the trip fails to deliver a break from her boss from hell, a jewelry designer in Manhattan. Nathaniel was a literary cool kid but now struggles to get Hollywood backing for his brainchild: a television show called ?The Pretenders.? Victor was just fired from his job at a mediocre search engine, but his fortune --- and the fate of his friends --- changes dramatically when he begins snooping around and, in a drunken stupor, passes out in the groom?s mother?s bed. She slaps him awake, but instead of scolding him, she tells him an enticing secret about a valuable necklace that disappeared during the Nazi occupation of France.

Embarking on a madcap treasure hunt that leads from New York to Paris, with an excursion to the chateau where Maupassant was born, the trio struggles to interpret cryptic clues while separating fakes from the real thing --- not only in the world of gems, but also in life and love.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the Yeats and Maupassant epigraphs. Which of the novel?s characters do they capture the best?

2. What first impressions did you get of Kezia, Victor and Nathaniel as they gathered in Florida for the wedding? As the scenes shifted in points of view, who were you rooting for the most?

3. In chapter seven, Victor and Nathaniel?s English professor delivers her passionate rendering of ?The Necklace.? How would you have responded to her request for a one-word summary of the story? Do any of the characters in THE CLASP share traits with Mathilde Loisel, the woman who loses the borrowed necklace in Maupassant?s story?

4. Johanna tells Victor that she doesn?t want Felix to know about the necklace because ?he?s very sensitive about anything having to do with Nazi heritage? and because it might not still be where the soldier hid it. Do you think it?s that simple, or was Johanna up to something else when she decided to entrust a stranger with her secret?

5. What were your theories about the drawing? What results did you predict for the treasure hunt? Make a virtual visit to Chateau Miromesnil and imagine what other hidden surprises such a place could hold.

6. What does THE CLASP say about the nature of friendship? What has kept Victor, Nathaniel and Kezia from achieving success in their careers as they approach age 30? What do you predict for the next decade of their lives?

7. Johanna tells Victor that jewelry is ?a blank canvas that gets filled by the person who wears it.? Is there a piece of jewelry in your life that has special significance for you? Do you care whether jewelry is made from precious gems, or is all jewelry ?real? in your eyes? Would you value fake jewelry inspired by fictional stories?

8. Discuss the idea of a clasp, which is meant to provide security. What does Claude teach Kezia about the practical aspects of his craft? What do all of the characters discover about weak links and ways of strengthening them?

9. If you had been Victor, would you have been able to hide the truth?

10. What took Nathaniel and Kezia so long to acknowledge their attraction to each other? What makes them simultaneously an unlikely couple and a great match? How are they different from Caroline and Felix, and Grey and Paul?

11. In the closing scene, on the flight home, have the characters been transformed, or are they simply able to be themselves at last?

12. As you read about the life of Guy de Maupassant, how did you react? Why don?t short stories have as much mainstream cultural impact as they did in the 19th century? Are writers like Nathaniel (pitching shows like ?The Pretenders? to executives like Lauren) our modern-day Maupassants?

13. What is unique about Sloane Crosley?s sense of humor? How does THE CLASP enhance your experience of her two nonfiction bestsellers?

Author Bio

Sloane Crosleyis the author of the *New York Times* bestselling books GRIEF IS FOR PEOPLE, HOW DID YOU GET THIS NUMBER, and I WAS TOLD THERE'D BE CAKE (a 2009 finalist for The Thurber Prize for American Humor). She is also the author of LOOK ALIVE OUT THERE (a 2019 finalist for The Thurber Prize for American Humor) and the novels, CULT CLASSIC and THE CLASP, both of which she has adapted for film. Her work has been translated into 10 languages.

Critical Praise

?I took so much pleasure in every sentence of THE CLASP, fell so completely under the spell of its narrative tone --- equal parts bite and tenderness, a dash of rue --- and became so caught up in the charmingly dented protagonists and their off-kilter caper that the book?s emotional power, building steadily and quietly, caught me off guard, and left me with a lump in my throat.?

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