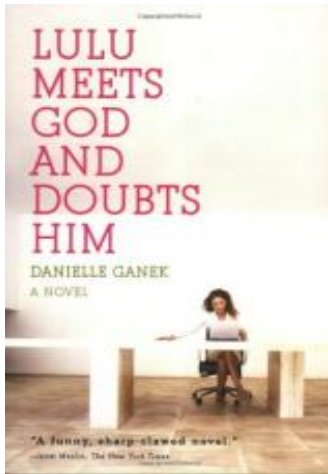


# Lulu Meets God and Doubts Him

by Danielle Ganek

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## About the Book

A gallery girl's cannily observed and whimsically acerbic romp through the glamorous Chelsea art scene

When figurative painter Jeffrey Finelli is run over by a cab in front of the Simon Pryce Gallery on the night of his first opening, the art world falls all over itself for a piece of the instantly in-demand work by the late "emerging artist." At the center of the show is an enormous painting called *Lulu Meets God and Doubts Him* that becomes the object of most desire. As the artist philosophically muses before meeting his untimely end, "It represents the creative endeavor."

After Finelli's death, the gallery receptionist, aspiring artist and protagonist Mia McMurray, finds herself at the center of the art world's most sensational story. For suddenly everyone wants *Lulu*. Mia, in her clever, clear-headed voice tells the ensuing tale, the details of which she finds endlessly amusing and unavoidably alluring. While she watches a Birkin-toting wannabe collector, a well-muscled Irish artist, a real estate baron, and niece/muse of the artist, Lulu Finelli, duke it out over the oversized piece, Mia, à la Holly Golightly, finds her own creative outlet and artistic identity, not to mention love.

As **The Devil Wears Prada** demystified the world of high fashion, Danielle Ganek's delightfully funny and insightful first novel paints the oddly captivating New York City art scene as it exists today.

## Discussion Guide

1. What do you think about Jeffrey Finelli's promise to Lulu that she could have the painting? Do you think he meant for her to own the actual painting? To whom do you think the painting rightfully belongs and why?

2. Discuss the topic of Simon's panel talk, "the role of the muse in contemporary art," in relationship to Lulu. What is her role as Finelli's muse?
3. Why do you think Lulu slept with Pierre LaReine? Was she using him as much as he seemed to be using her? Who do you think had the advantage and why?
4. Consider Zach's assertion that "collectors only borrow works of art. They can never really own them" (p. 193). Do you feel that a work of art is above personal ownership? Why or why not?
5. Discuss Connie Cantor and Martin Better's respective passions for art collecting. Is one more valid than the other? What is the role of the art collector in today's world? What do you think would happen to art if there were no market for it?
6. Mia stumbles across her passion for writing almost by chance. Do you think she ever would have discovered her true creative medium if it hadn't been for Lulu?
7. Simon sells *Lulu* to the unnamed Hollywood celebrity for \$275,000. Four months later, Martin Better purchases the painting for \$675,000. Five months after that, it sells at auction for \$4.3 million. Is this exponential increase in value legitimate? Why or why not?
8. LaReine is one of the world's preeminent gallery owners, yet he mistakes Lulu's unfinished self-portrait for an early Jeffrey Finelli. Do you believe that artistic talent and sensibilities can be inherited?
9. Simon is an enigma to Mia --- from his nationality to his sexuality to his spirituality. He is often quite bossy and brusque to her, yet she stays with him for more than five years. What role does he play in Mia's life?
10. After Lulu quits her Wall Street job, she tells Mia, "I was miscast in my old life . . . It didn't fit me, the job, the apartment, the fear. Not to get too evangelical about it, but everyone should know what this feels like, to live the life you really want to be living. To be the person you believe yourself to be" (p. 191). It's a sentiment that just about everyone can relate to at some point. Discuss an instance in your own life when you felt this way.

## Author Bio

## Critical Praise

"Its author has a savvy, satirical eye, a terrific title and an insider's knowledge of the New York art gallery world."

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# **Lulu Meets God and Doubts Him**

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