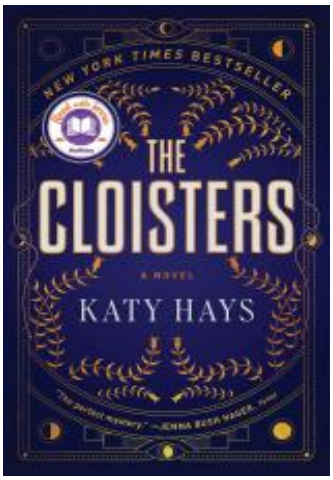
The Cloisters

by Katy Hays



About the Book

In this ?sinister, jaw-dropping? (Sarah Penner, author of THE LOST APOTHECARY) debut novel, a circle of researchers uncover a mysterious deck of tarot cards and shocking secrets in New York?s famed Met Cloisters.

When Ann Stilwell arrives in New York City, she expects to spend her summer working as a curatorial associate at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Instead, she finds herself assigned to The Cloisters, a gothic museum and garden renowned for its medieval art collection and its group of enigmatic researchers studying the history of divination.

Desperate to escape her painful past, Ann is happy to indulge the researchers? more outlandish theories about the history of fortune telling. But what begins as academic curiosity quickly turns into obsession when Ann discovers a hidden 15th-century deck of tarot cards that might hold the key to predicting the future. When the dangerous game of power, seduction and ambition at The Cloisters turns deadly, Ann becomes locked in a race for answers as the line between the arcane and the modern blurs.

A haunting and magical blend of genres, THE CLOISTERS is a gripping debut that will keep you on the edge of your seat.

Discussion Guide

1. The events of THE CLOISTERS take place over one summer. How does the season and summer weather reflect Ann?s emotions and evolution throughout the novel?

2. Patrick and Rachel are first introduced in Chapter 2. What were your first impressions of each of them? Discuss the events that resulted in Ann working at The Cloisters?

3. Patrick is Rachel?s mentor, but he is also her lover. How does this dynamic complicate the situation at The Cloisters? Who do you think had more power in their relationship, and what form did that power take?

4. Early on, Rachel steals a cookie from the café, and later we see her play pranks on Moira, in addition to taking the tiles to identify plants in the garden and stealing a boat. What do these incidents tell us about Rachel? How do all of these ?games? foreshadow the dark and dangerous choices she has made over the years?

5. What do you think Ann?s motivations were to not share all of Lingraf?s writings with Rachel and to hide the false-fronted card from Patrick? How might the story have been different if she had shared this information with the team?

6. Loss is central to both Ann?s and Rachel?s stories. Discuss some of their major (and minor) losses throughout the book and how these may have shaped them as characters.

7. Laure warns Ann about Rachel?s past. Why do you think Ann becomes so defensive of Rachel? At this point, do you think their friendship is a healthy one?

8. Discuss how Lingraf becomes central to the mystery and uncovering the truth.

9. Ann and Rachel come from very different backgrounds, but at the end of the novel, Rachel insists that they are the same. What personality traits do each of them share? How are they different? Ultimately, do you think Rachel is right?

10. In Chapter 4, Ann expresses how ?Walla Walla would always feel like death to me? (p. 33). Do you think the same can be said for The Cloisters after her summer there?

11. In the end, was it fate that decided what happened to these characters or the choices they made?

12. During the prologue, Ann talks about how she missed ?the omens that haunted The Cloisters that summer.? Having finished the novel, what were the omens? How did the prologue foreshadow the importance (or not) of Fate?

13. Both tarot and astrology play a significant role in today?s discourse. These days, it seems as if everyone knows their rising sign or has tarot deck. How do those contemporary practices relate to the historic practices outlined in THE CLOISTERS? Are they different? Similar? Do you use either device, and if so, why?

Author Bio

Katy Hays is the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE CLOISTERS and SALTWATER. She is an art history adjunct professor and holds an MA in art history from Williams College and pursued her PhD at UC Berkeley. Having previously worked at major art institutions, including the Clark Art Institute and SFMOMA, she now lives with her husband and their dog in Olympic Valley, California.

The Cloisters

by Katy Hays

Publication Date: July 11, 2023

Genres: Fiction, Literary, Suspense, Thriller

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Atria Books

ISBN-10: 1668004410

ISBN-13: 9781668004418