The Little Clan

by Iris Martin Cohen



About the Book

A love letter to classic literature and an illuminating look at newfound adulthood

Ava Gallanter is the librarian in residence at the Lazarus Club, an ancient, dwindling Manhattan arts club full of eccentric geriatric residents stuck in a long-gone era. Twenty-five-year-old Ava, however, feels right at home. She leads a quiet life, surrounded by her beloved books and sequestered away from her peers.

When Ava?s enigmatic friend, Stephanie, returns after an unplanned year abroad, the intoxicating opportunist vows to rescue Ava from a life of obscurity. Stephanie, on the hunt for fame and fortune, promises to make Ava?s dream of becoming a writer come true, and together they start a Victorian-inspired literary salon at the Lazarus Club. However, Ava?s romanticized idea of the salon quickly erodes as Stephanie?s ambitions take the women in an unexpected --- and precarious --- direction.

In this humorous yet keenly observant coming-of-age story, Cohen brings us into a boisterous literary world bathed in hubris and ambition. With eloquent prose and affecting storytelling, THE LITTLE CLAN is both a wickedly fun yet sharply insightful look at friendship, feminism and finding yourself in your 20s.

Discussion Guide

1. Ava is a unique character with unconventional interests and attitudes. While the text suggests ways to explain her, do you find these reasons convincing? In your opinion, what would make someone so interested in the past? Have you ever had a particular interest (books, movies, music, sports, hobbies, etc.) that made you feel different? What effect did this have on the way you saw yourself and the world around you?

2. Ava and Stephanie have a complicated, at times unlikely, friendship. What do you think holds the two of them

together? What are some of the ways that each benefit from their personality differences? What are some of the disadvantages?

3. In what ways do the dynamics of Ava and Stephanie?s relationship change over the course of the book? Is it realistic for two close friends to go into business together and not expect their friendship to change at all?

4. What do you think of Stephanie? What are her goals and motivations? Is she honest about her intentions? Is she a good friend to Ava? Do you find her sympathetic or admirable in any way? If so, why?

5. The novel takes place almost entirely inside the Lazarus Club, and it becomes a major symbol in the book. What do you think the Club represents? What do you think it means for Ava? How does the club impact her?

6. Books are very important to Ava. What are some of the ways books play a role in the novel? What are some of the ways reading has impacted your life?

7. Is it possible for a traditional literary salon to exist in our modern world? Is today?s society genuinely interested in literature and fostering the arts?

Author Bio

Iris Martin Cohen grew up in the French Quarter of New Orleans. She holds an MFA from Columbia University and studied Creative Nonfiction at the Graduate Center, CUNY. She is the author of THE LITTLE CLAN and LAST CALL ON DECATUR STREET. She lives in Brooklyn.

Critical Praise

?Like Edith Wharton in the East Village?THE LITTLE CLAN is a charming, captivating read, but it?s also a witty, fiercely intelligent look at the ways women are lost and saved by dangerous friendships and literary obsessions.?

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