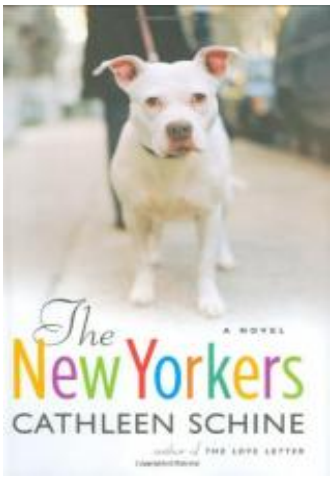
The New Yorkers

by Cathleen Schine



About the Book

Hailed by People magazine as ?a sophisticated and witty valentine of a novel? and by The New York Times as ?a perfect comedy,? Cathleen Schine?s **The Love Letter** was an instant classic. In **The New Yorkers**, she once again traverses the territory of the human heart, turning her imagination to a quiet little city block near Manhattan?s Central Park. In this community, we meet a music teacher named Jody who falls under the spell of her neighbor?s dazzling smile one fateful day while she is out walking her beloved dog, Beatrice. But the object of Jody?s newfound affection becomes smitten with a younger woman?whose youthful pup wins his heart as well. Not all of these New Yorkers are so captivated by canine companionship; cranky Doris is their nemesis, rallying support against dog owners in a comic frenzy. As these entwined storylines unfold, with surprising developments at every turn, **The New Yorkers** will enchant and delight every reader who loves New York, or dogs, or simply marvelous storytelling.

Discussion Guide

1. How does the novel?s neighborhood compare to your community? Does it remind you of any other fictional ?villages??

2. The novel?s title emphasizes the setting. In what way is it essential for these events to take place in New York? What makes the world of dog owners special among other populations inhabiting the city?

3. How were you affected by the various shifts in point of view? What does this cast of characters have in common, and in what ways do they each represent a unique aspect of communities in general?

4. How do you picture the novel?s narrator, whose distinctive storytelling voice provides an air of authenticity throughout? Which twists in these intricate storylines surprised you the most?

5. Discuss the many forms of unrequited love described in **The New Yorkers**. How do the characters react when their feelings of attraction aren?t mutual, such as the attraction Jody initially has for Everett, or Simon for Jody, or Everett for Polly, or Polly for Chris?

6. What humans were you reminded of while reading about the various personalities of the dogs in **The New Yorkers**?

7. How did your perception of Jody shift throughout the novel? To what degree is Beatrice responsible for her transformation? In your opinion, who (human or canine) is the novel?s main character?

8. Does Doris really hate dogs, or is her obsession simply a mask for some other, deeper frustration? What brings about her change of heart with Fredericka?

9. What makes George the ideal dog trainer? Do any of his techniques apply to life overall? Why is it so difficult for him to find his purpose before he begins seeing Alexandra?

10. Everett eventually becomes intensely attached to Howdy. Is dog love very different from the other kinds of love he has experienced? Why is he so resistant to pets at first? Do his feelings about his daughter and ex-wife change because of Howdy, or because of Polly?

11. If you were Jody, would you have married Simon? Does he lose interest because of Jody?s hesitation, or would he have lost interest anyway after they were married, due to his self-proclaimed affinity for the single life?

12. Is there any contradiction between Simon?s enthusiasm for hunting and the other characters? enthusiasm for their pets?

13. Is Jaime the most well-adjusted character in The New Yorkers? What enables him to create a sort of paradise for his numerous children and for everyone who visits his restaurant (except Doris), spending ?his whole life in the pursuit of other people?s happiness? (chapter twenty-three)?

14. How might the novel have unfolded if it had been written from Beatrice?s and Howdy?s points of view? What do they think of their neighborhood?s human drama?

Author Bio

Cathleen Schine is the author of KÜNSTLERS IN PARADISE, THE GRAMMARIANS, THE THREE WEISSMANNS OF WESTPORT and THE LOVE LETTER, among other novels. She has contributed to *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times Magazine* and *The New York Times Book Review*. She lives in Los Angeles.

Critical Praise

?Sprightly, romantic, occasionally sad but always diverting? **The New Yorkers** will inspire you to sit, stay, and beg for

more.?

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