

Book Club Kit

AUTHOR OF CLEOPATRA AND FRANKENSTEIN

Coco Mellors



A NOVEL

Blue Sisters

Letter from the author

Dear Reader,

Until you know my sisters, you don't know me. This was the comment, uttered casually by a friend several years ago when I was still writing *Cleopatra and Frankenstein*, desperately dreaming of finishing one (just one!) novel, that eventually planted the seed of *Blue Sisters*.

Was this true of me and my siblings, I wondered? Could you know me if you didn't know them? And, if it was true, who would I be if I lost one of them?

I imagined *Blue Sisters* as my take on sibling stories like *The Corrections*, *Little Women*, and *The Royal Tenenbaums*, in which siblings from the same family turn out wildly differently. It is, first and foremost, a family novel. It's about the ways sisters shape each other, how addiction manifests between generations, and how grief changes us. It's also (because I'm me, and I can't write the dark without the light) about glamour, sex, and the joy of living.

Emotionally, this novel took me deeper than I've ever gone before. It also pushed me far past my comfort zone in terms of research. Bonnie, the second eldest sister, is a professional boxer; in order to write her fight scenes with technical accuracy, I trained with a boxing coach in Venice, L.A. for over a year (and even proudly sported a black eye from sparring to prove it).

I also interviewed models from all over the world to better understand the youngest sister Lucky's career as a teen model in the fashion industry. For Avery, the eldest sister, who has an affair with a man she meets in AA ten years into sobriety, I had countless conversations with other addicts about how self-destructive impulses can shape-shift in long-term sobriety.

Finally, since I'm a city mouse through and through, one of my favorite parts of working on *Blue Sisters* was how, in addition to New York, I got to try my hand at portraying three of my other favorite cities: Paris, L.A., and London.

It is impossible for me to convey how indebted I am to booksellers for the success of *Cleopatra and Frankenstein*. Many of my happiest memories from the past two years are from visiting bookstores up and down the country meeting you, often chatting well past closing hours (for which I apologize!).

My wishes, as *Blue Sisters* makes its way into the world, are fairly simple: first, that you know how deeply thankful I am for your support, and second, that you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

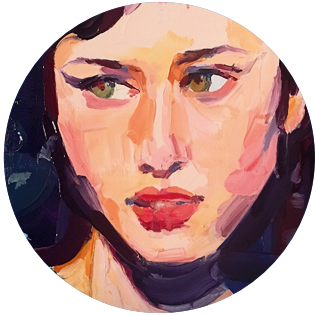
Love,
Coco
xx



Discussion questions

1. When the novel opens, the Blue sisters are all living different lives in disparate cities. How does the loss of Nicky impact each of the sisters differently?
2. Discuss the line: "A sister is not a friend." What do you think the author means by that? Do you have siblings? If so, would you consider your sibling a friend?
3. Discuss the role of addiction in the book. How does it shape the sisters' choices and actions? Have you ever struggled with addiction or been close to someone who has?
4. How does the author depict grief and the process of healing in the story? Which sister's journey resonated with you the most?
5. What do you think the New York City apartment meant to each sister? What do you think it symbolized for Nicky?
6. Each Blue sister has their own romantic encounters and frustrations. Whose romantic story line did you find the most frustrating, and which did you find the most satisfying?
7. When the sisters reunite, they realize that they had very different understandings of Nicky. What were you the most surprised to learn about Nicky and why?
8. The Blue sisters have a complicated relationship with their parents, and their mother plays a small but pivotal role in the novel. How do the sisters' parental relationships affect their own feelings about motherhood?
9. Discuss the ending of the book. Were you satisfied with how the sisters' stories were resolved? What were you hoping for each sister?
10. Which sister did you identify with the most? Explain why.

Which Blue Sister are you?



Avery

Avery would like to be all backbone, but she is tender flesh too.

Eldest daughter

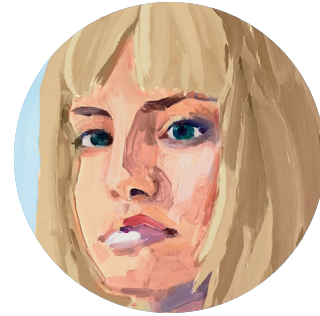
Graduated high school at 16 then completed Columbia University in three years

Ran away to join a commune

Addictive personality

Former heroin addict, now sober

Dutiful daughter



Bonnie

Her language is the language of the body.

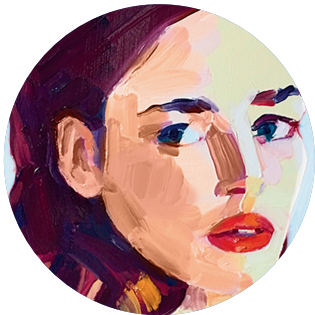
Two years younger than Avery

Soft-spoken and strong-willed

Started boxing at fifteen but quit at 31 after a devastating defeat

Fled to Venice, Los Angeles where she took a job as the bouncer of a dive bar

Found Nicky after her overdose



Nicky

She was a carnival of feelings she never tried to hide.

Born after their parents experienced two pregnancy losses

Desperately wanted to be a mother

A tenth-grade English teacher at a charter school

Struggled with chronic pain associated with endometriosis



Lucky

No matter how old Lucky gets, she will always be the baby.

The youngest child

5'11" and strikingly beautiful

Became a model at 14 and has worked all over the world

Loves any form of mental or emotional escape

Living alone in Paris

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