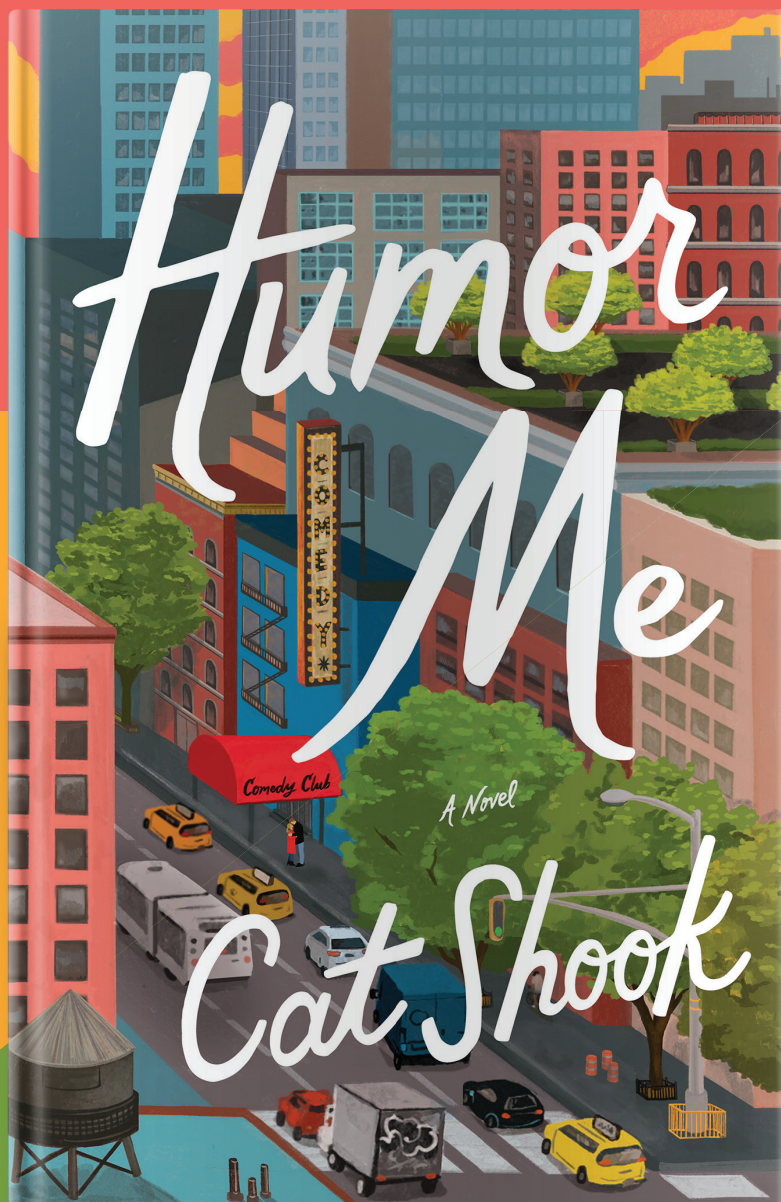


BOOK CLUB KIT



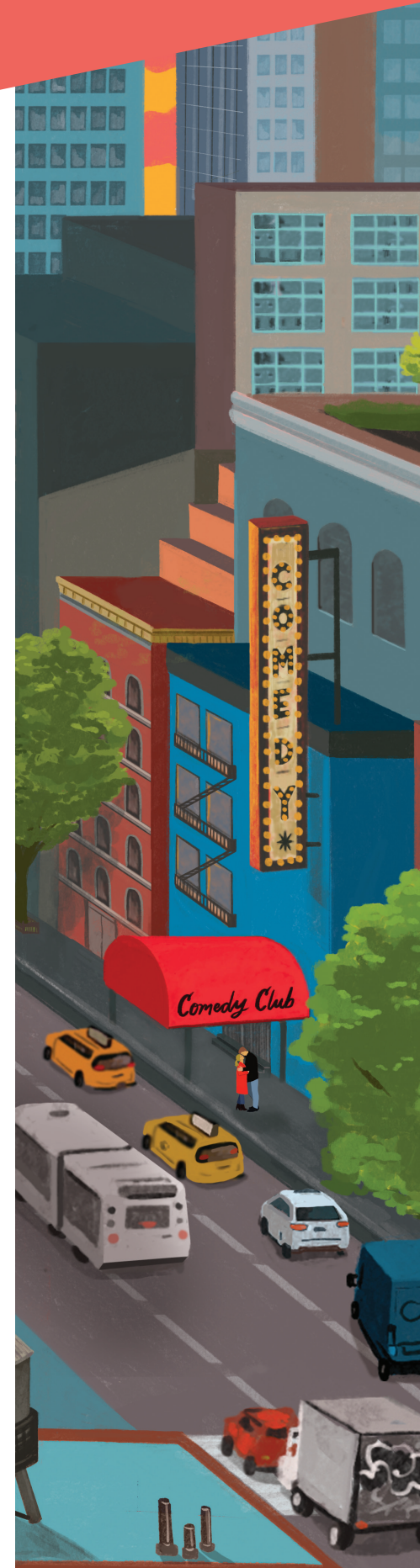
"Shook turns a lighthearted rom-com into a complicated exploration of romantic love—and, more importantly, friendship... Charming, optimistic escapism with a more serious undertone of feminist solidarity."

—KIRKUS



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

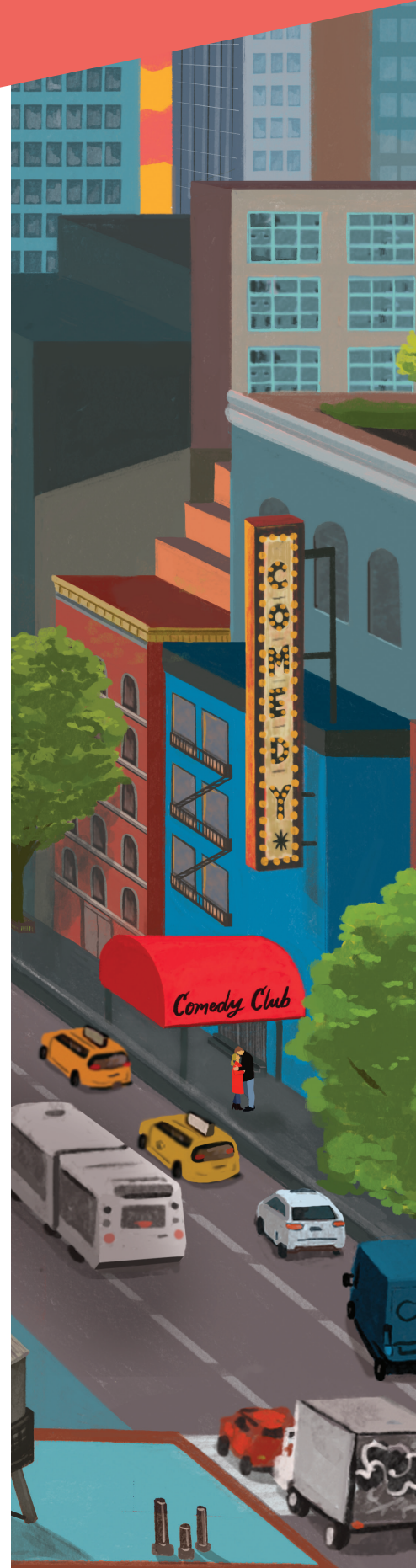
- 1 Presley develops and strengthens two strong female friendships throughout the book. How are those two friendships similar? How do they differ? Are there certain aspects of female friendship that transcend generations?
- 2 Presley struggles to accept how a romantic relationship can change a friendship. How do you believe Presley feels about this idea by the end of the novel? How do you imagine Presley, Isabelle, Julia, and Clark coexist after the book ends?
- 3 Were you expecting Presley and Adam to get together? Do you think she ends up with the right guy?
- 4 Humor plays different roles in the book: it's a source of joy, a sense of comfort, a coping mechanism, a vocation, and more. What do you think humor meant to each character? What does it mean to you?
- 5 Presley has a consistent support system in her grandparents and Isabelle, but she still struggles with her grief. When did you notice a shift in her mourning? Was there anything specific that you feel helped her make this transition?
- 6 Presley has difficulty expressing emotional vulnerability, not only with others but also to herself. How do Isabelle, Susan, and Clark each encourage her to open up about her emotions?
- 7 Were you expecting the story Susan shared about how Patty saved her life? What was the impact of this moment between Presley and Susan on their shared grief, their memory of Patty, or their sense of closure?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 8 This novel takes place during the height of the #MeToo reckoning, particularly in the entertainment industry. How does Presley's job in late-night TV impact how she views the #MeToo movement? How does she deal with the news about Thomas, and how does that change as she gets close to people who know him well? Suggested by The Ugly Sweater Book Club (Wauwatosa, WI)
- 9 How did you feel about Susan's decision about Thomas at the end of the book? Did you expect her to make that choice?
- 10 Roger, Susan's doorman, has many ideas about people he thinks Presley resembles. Who would you cast in a movie adaptation of *Humor Me*?

If you decide to adopt ***Humor Me*** for your book club, we would love to hear about it! Please let us know by emailing us at reader@celadonbooks.com or post on social media using the hashtags #CeladonBookClub and #HumorMeBook.



AN INTERVIEW

WITH CAT SHOOK



CAT SHOOK graduated from the University of Georgia in 2016 with degrees in Creative Writing and Mass Media Arts. Born and raised in Georgia, she now lives in Brooklyn. She is the author of *If We're Being Honest*, a GMA Buzz Pick, and *Humor Me*.

***Humor Me* is told from the perspective of one main character—New York City-based TV show assistant Presley Fry—in contrast to the ensemble cast of characters in your first novel, *If We're Being Honest*. Why did you decide to write this book from a single point of view?**

The simple answer is that I wanted to try something different... plus, I liked Presley's 'tude and wanted to write the whole book with her voice for my own fun. The more boring, technical reason is that despite my outlining this book before I started writing it, I didn't know until I got to the very end whether or not Susan, one of the main characters, was going to forgive her husband, who had been caught in a "Me Too"-like scandal. Even though the characters in *If We're Being Honest* are going through something I haven't been through, I never struggled to understand what any of them might be feeling in any given moment. Susan remained a mystery to me until the end, so I figured her out from Presley's perspective as I went along, instead of strongarming a narrator's way into her perspective too early.

Presley is deeply involved in New York's comedy scene, scouting up-and-coming stand-up comedians for a late-night show. What is your personal experience with comedy? And what was your research process like for this aspect of the book?

I have been a lifelong lover of comedy. I remember exactly where I was when I read that Nora Ephron quote about how when you slip and fall on a banana peel, you're the victim, but when you tell a story about slipping and falling on a banana peel and make it funny, you're the hero. In an instant, I felt like my entire life made sense.

When I first moved to New York, I had an internship at *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, so that was where I got a lot of the inspiration for Presley's job. I was also really into going to comedy clubs and seeing standup at that time, and I love following my favorite comedians on social media and going to see their gigs now. I sometimes get to check out comedians for my day job (working in development at a TV/ film studio). If I ever have downtime, one of my first instincts is to watch comedy specials or clips of comedy specials, and I love hearing people like Judd Apatow talk about what comedy means to them. *Sick in the Head* was really big for me. I have no stand-up aspirations of my own, but I'm endlessly fascinated by it as an art form, so in a way I've been researching this book for my whole life!

While messy romantic relationships propel Presley's story forward, friendships are the glue that holds it together. Why did you choose to explore this theme so deeply?

Looking at my life as a whole, my friendships (especially the female ones) have been my most consistent, rock-solid relationships. I think the same is true for my mother, who is an amazing friend and who has nurtured her female friendships for decades. I think about my friends, and I think about my mother and her friends, all the time. I have trouble articulating just how important they are to me, so this book is my attempt at an ode to them.

How was your writing process similar to or different from writing your debut novel, *If We're Being Honest*?

The process was similar in the way the characters just appeared to me and started making themselves known to me. But pretty much everything else was different. I wrote *If We're Being Honest* in lockdown, unsure that anyone would ever see it. I wrote most of *Humor Me* under contract, so I knew it would be a book as I was writing it, which was both glorious and paralyzing. Glorious in that I was living my dream, plus money is cool; paralyzing in that I would write a bad sentence — as is one's right for several early drafts — and I would stare at it and beat myself up over it and think about the fact that people were going to see this and how dare I put such garbage on a page to go out into the world. But then I got over it. And it was really nice to be able to check in with Randrianna (Randi Kramer, my editor, and Andrianna deLone, my agent) as I was drafting it — a luxury I didn't have with the first.

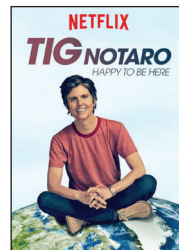


5 COMEDY SPECIALS

CAT SHOOK RECOMMENDS

HAPPY TO BE HERE

TIG NOTARO, (NETFLIX 2018)



NANETTE

HANNAH GADSBY, (NETFLIX 2018)



THE COMEDY LINEUP

MICHELLE BUTEAU, (NETFLIX 2018)



THE PLANET IS BURNING

ILANA GLAZER, (AMAZON 2018)



THOUGHT PROVOKING

MARY BETH BARONE, (YOUTUBE 2024)

