

The Last Days of Disco, With Cocktails at Petrossian Afterwards

By Whit Stillman

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During the last months of the disco era, in the very early 1980s, a popular dance club becomes the centre of nightlife for a group of young people new to Manhattan - "boyfriendless social failure" Alice; her treacherous friend from Hampshire College, charlotte; their roommate, Holly; and the five Harvard guys the women meet in the city: Jimmy, the "Dancing Ad Man", who hangs on to his job by getting clients into the club; handsome corporate lawyer and part-time environmentalist Tom; Des, the club's allegedly bisexual underboss, who seems to specialise in women; Dan, an editorial assistant nostalgic for the intellectual ferment of the 1950s; and Josh, a neophyte prosecutor and disco enthusiast who suspects that the club is not being run according to conventionally accepted accounting principles.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Stillman, independent filmmaker (Metropolitan; Barcelona; The Last Days of Disco) and chronicler of the romantic trials of the upper-middle class, here adapts his own 1998 film, with poignant and hilarious results. The premise is preciously, playfully postmodern: chronically unemployed lounge-chair philosopher Jimmy Steinway is "commissioned" by Castle Rock Entertainment to do a novelization of the film, itself based on the activities of Steinway and his circle in the early 1980s. Steinway relates the events of the film from his own perspective, clueing readers in to the way things "really" happened. We are introduced to "the Club," an ultra-fashionable discotheque, and the characters who inhabit it, including Josh Neff, a clinically depressed, disco-mad assistant district attorney; Dan Powers, a publishing industry wonk whose fervent nightclubbing clashes with his avowed allegiance to the downtrodden; Charlotte Pingree, whose manipulative one-two punch of acidic "honesty" and Clintonian contrition places her at the center of the Club's social whirlwind; and Alice Kinnon, whose quiet intelligence and barely concealed vulnerability make her the focus of romantic attention. Tensions stir within the group when Alice appears to take up with noted womanizer Des McGrath. The growing general animosity is rendered beautifully; the feinting two-step of sexual competition is vividly represented in the halting, emotion-freighted rhythms of the dialogue. Stillman's characters are often praised for their wit and verbal agility, but to take their pronouncements at face value is to deny Stillman's undeniable mastery as a satirist. The most rewarding aspect of the novel is the psychological interplay between the smarmy, self-involved young Jimmy Steinway and the older, wiser, middle-aged Jimmy Steinway who narrates. In adapting The Last Days of Disco, Stillman can lampoon his characters' foibles from a perspective one step beyond, thus articulating a moral perspective while furthering his satire. (Aug.)
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From Library Journal
With his first novel, the director of Metropolitan and Barcelona proves that he is as talented a writer as he is a filmmaker. Based on his most recent movie, this is not your usual cheesy quicky film novelization but a fresh and witty comedy of manners that stands on its own literary merits. Almost 20 years after the events depicted in the film occurred, narrator Jimmy Steinway, The Dancing Adman, has been hired by Castle Rock Entertainment to write the novelization. Claiming that the real story started at a party in the Hamptons (not depicted in the movie) where he met the lovely Alice Kinnon, Jimmy recalls how the subtle charms of the boyfriendless social failure stirred a rivalry among Jimmy and four of his Harvard classmates"and the bitter jealousy of her roommate, Charlotte. Set in Manhattan in the early 1980s at the end of the disco era, Stillman!s tale is a wry, perspective portrait of urban young people and their mating rituals. Both fans of the film and sophisticated readers will enjoy.
-*"Wilda Williams, Library Journal*
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From Booklist
When the movie *The Last Days of Disco* was released in 1998, it met with much critical acclaim. Now Stillman has transformed his film about the lives and loves of a group of twentysomethings in the early 1980s into a witty and engaging novel. The story opens with several of the main characters, including the narrator, Jimmy, worrying about whether or not they will get into one of New York's exclusive nightspots, known only as "the Club," where the bouncers handpick those they will let in each night, so as to create a kind of artificial population of their own making. The young frequenters, awkward but much-adored Alice

and cruel but insecure Charlotte and their friends and lovers, try to adjust and thrive as their world shifts around them and one era jarringly gives way to the next. Stillman's characters are as alive on the page as they are on screen. Like the movie, this first novel is a small gem. *Kristine Huntley*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lisa Buffington:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be revise about what going on or details even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era that is always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe will certainly update themselves by reading through books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know which one you should start with. This The Last Days of Disco, With Cocktails at Petrossian Afterwards is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and need in this era.

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