



The After Party: A Novel

By Anton DiSclafani

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"A vintage version of 'Gossip Girl' meets bigger hair." —*The Skimm*

"DiSclafani's story sparkles like the jumbo diamonds her characters wear to one-up each other. Historical fiction lovers will linger over every lush detail." —*People*

One of the Best New Books for Summer 2016 – *Good Housekeeping*

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From the bestselling author of *The Yonahlossee Riding Camp for Girls* comes a story of lifelong female friendship – in all its intimate agony and joy – set within a world of wealth, beauty, and expectation.

Joan Fortier is the epitome of Texas glamour and the center of the 1950s Houston social scene. Tall, blonde, beautiful, and strong, she dominates the room and the gossip columns. Every man wants her; every woman wants to be her. Devoted to Joan since childhood, Cece Buchanan is either her chaperone or her partner in crime, depending on whom you ask. But when Joan's radical behavior escalates the summer they are twenty-five, Cece considers it her responsibility to bring her back to the fold, ultimately forcing one provocative choice to appear the only one there is.

A thrilling glimpse into the sphere of the rich and beautiful at a memorable moment in history, *The After Party* unfurls a story of friendship as obsessive, euphoric, consuming, and complicated as any romance.

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Editorial Review

Review

DiSclafani excels at building suspense and has a gift for revealing private worlds through unexpected, telling details. . .Dramatic. . . Left me holding my breath. *The New York Times Book Review*

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The After Party explores female desire that threatens the status quo. . .Joan, much-loved and much-criticized by Cece, emerges as a spectacularly tragic figure. *The After Party* reads like a postmortem of more than just two women s lives. *The Washington Post*

A tale of lavish balls, garden clubs, and enduring female friendship. *O, The Oprah Magazine*
Glamorous. Good Housekeeping

"[*The After Party*] offers total immersion into gaudy, glamorous midcentury Houston. . .The story plunges us deep into a dazzling, decadent time and place a world in which a Texas wildcatter could spend his millions to build a towering hotel and decorate it in 63 shades of green, and the city's elite would come to bask in its gaudy splendor." *The Houston Chronicle*

"DiSclafani gorgeously evokes*Party's* mid-century setting." --*Entertainment Weekly*

This hot read goes down just as easy [as a daiquiri]. *Cosmopolitan*

Painting the landscape of Texas in exquisite detail, the acclaimed author of *The Yonahlossee Riding Camp for Girls* returns with a thoughtful reflection on female friendship and learning to let go of the one you love. *Real Simple*

Two women take on the Texas social scene in the 1950s and all its attendant glamor and scandals. You ll just have to imagine the accents for yourself. *Boston Magazine*

A smart, thoughtful must read. *PopSugar*

Gripping and glamorous. . .Consider it the perfect escapist read for your next poolside afternoon. (With or without a martini in hand.) *PureWow*

[Houston] makes the perfect backdrop for the tale, which is rich with sex, lies, side-eyes and cocktail parties. *Houstonia Magazine*

Nestled inside this gilded egg is a story about life, love and friendship. *Houston Press*

A clear and frightening look at life for Texas socialites in the 1950s. . .as beautiful and generous as Joan is, she s also a rebel who questions the confining rules of her socialite life. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

Anton DiSclafani is such a bewitching creator of character and mood, it s easy to follow her beckoning lead. *Dallas Morning News*

A little Mad Men, a little Carol and a lot of steamy atmosphere. *Tampa Bay Times*

A deft examination of the intricacies, imbalances and often confusing complications of friendships between young girls and also a compelling romp into Texas society. *Fort Worth Star Telegram*

DiSclafani repaints sepia-toned historical periods in vivid, sultry colors. Departures Magazine
DiSclafani writes the hell out of the interior lives of women and the sticky trap of their friendships, like a less self-serious Elena Ferrante. . . I enjoyed every minute of it. The Frisky
The After Party is a puzzle with carefully modulated tension. . . Characterization, strong sense of place and the painful riddle of friendship form a novel that is vibrant, sensitive and suspenseful. *Shelf Awareness*

The After Party is a literary gin and tonic, brisk, intense and delicious. Anton DiSclafani paints the landscape of 1950's Texas in glorious detail. You feel the heat, hear the rustle of the party dresses as you tumble headfirst into the complex friendship of Joan and Cece. The author takes you full gallop into the world of two women as they navigate their dreams, hide their secrets and struggle to survive in a world where their roles are inescapable. This is a novel with a heart and a secret as big as Texas. Adriana Trigiani, author of *The Shoemaker's Wife*

In her tale of a fraught lifelong friendship, DiSclafani again investigates the power and perils of female sexuality. . . DiSclafani paints a rich portrait of a cloistered society and its damaged inhabitants in a consistently absorbing narrative. . . this talented newcomer's gifts for characterization and atmosphere are as sharp as ever. *Kirkus*

Praise for *The Yonahlossee Riding Camp for Girls*

Emotionally engaging . . . this summer's first romantic page-turner. Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*
Complex and provocative. *The Washington Post*

DiSclafani is an insanely talented writer . . . spellbinding. *Entertainment Weekly*

Sparkling . . . DiSclafani's transporting prose recalls that uneasy time at the brink of adulthood, and reminds us that even the most protective parents can't keep the world at bay. *O, The Oprah Magazine*

A captivating story of shame, blame, and family secrets. *USA Today*

Amazing . . . A sexy, suspenseful, gorgeously written book. Curtis Sittenfeld, author of *Prep*

From the Hardcover edition."

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About the Author

Anton DiSclafani is the author of the nationally bestselling novel, *The Yonahlossee Riding Camp for Girls*. She was raised in northern Florida.

From the Hardcover edition.

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The Shamrock Hotel was wildcatter Glenn McCarthy's green baby. Sixty-three shades to be exact: green

carpet, green chairs, green tablecloths, green curtains. Green uniforms. The hotel sat next to the Texas Medical Center, which Monroe Dunaway Anderson had founded and bequeathed nineteen million dollars to in his will. It was like that, in Houston: there was money everywhere, and some people did very good things with it, like Mr. Anderson, and some people built glamorous, foolish structures, like Mr. McCarthy. Mr. Anderson *helped* more people than Mr. McCarthy, certainly, but where did we have more fun?

The rest of the country was worried about the Russians, worried about the Commies in our midst, worried about the Koreans. But Houston's oil had washed its worries away. This was the place where a wealthy bachelor had bought himself a cheetah and let it live on his patio, swim in his pool; where a crazy widower flew in caviar and flavored vodka once a month for wild soirees where everyone had to speak in a Russian accent; where Silver Dollar Jim West had thrown silver coins from his chauffeur-driven limo, then pulled over to watch the crowds' mad scramble. The bathroom fixtures at the Petroleum Club were all plated in twenty-four-karat gold. There was a limited supply of gold in the world; it would not regenerate. And Houston had most of it, I was convinced.

We valeted our car and headed straight to the Shamrock's Cork Club; Louis, our Irish, gray-haired bartender, was there, and he handed me a daiquiri, Joan a gin martini, up, and Ray a gin and tonic.

"Thank you, doll," Joan said, and Ray slid a folded-up packet of money across the bar.

That night we were all in attendance: the aforementioned Darlene, dressed in a lavender dress with, I had to admit, a beautiful sweetheart neckline; Kenna, Darlene's best friend, who was very nice and very boring; and Graciela, who went by Ciela. Ciela had been a scandal when she was born, the product of her father's affair with a beautiful Mexican girl he'd met while working in the oil refineries down in Tampico. His ex-wife had been rewarded for his sin—she'd received the biggest divorce settlement in Texas history. All of this was old news, though. There had been bigger divorce settlements since then, much bigger. It was Texas: everything bigger, all the time.

Ciela's father had married the señorita, was still married to the señorita, which perhaps would have been the greater scandal, if he weren't already so powerful. We all had that in common, save me: powerful fathers. And husbands who would become powerful. And we were going to go there with them.

Darlene kissed Joan on both cheeks and then turned to me, "Long time no see, Cece," and then laughed uproariously at the repetition. She was already loaded. "You look like Leslie Lynnton herself," she said, and even though I looked nothing like Liz Taylor, aside from the dark hair, I was pleased. We'd all seen *Giant* at least three times, were titillated by the fact the James Dean character was based on Glenn McCarthy himself, even though we publicly hated Edna Ferber and her portrayal of Texas.

Ciela, whose hair was now so blond and coiffed she looked as Mexican as Marilyn Monroe, was on the arm of her husband, and Darlene and Kenna's husbands were across the room, smoking. My own husband was at my side; Ray was quiet, a little bit reserved, most comfortable near me. He wasn't shy, exactly, but he didn't feel the need to be the center of anything, a rarity in our crowd.

The night wasn't full of possibility for us wives, like it used to be, like it still must have been for Joan. Yet the champagne was crisp and cheerful, the men were handsome and strong, and the music buoyed our spirits. I was wearing a beautiful silver dress, strapless, cinched at the waist. (Ray made a good living at Shell but my mother had left her small fortune to me, and because of it I wore astonishing clothes. My one extravagance. My mother had always refused to touch the money, thought my father should earn more. And so it was mine, granted to me in a legacy of bitterness, in lieu of parental attention. I was determined to spend it all.) My wrist was encircled by my fourteenth-birthday present, a delicate diamond watch I only took out when I was feeling hopeful. Later tonight we might venture outside, to the Shamrock's pool, which

happened to be the biggest outdoor pool in the world, built to accommodate waterskiing exhibitions. Joan loved to dive from their high board, said it felt like flying. Or maybe we'd make our way to the Emerald Room, the Shamrock's nightclub.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jocelyn Welch:

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