

---

# THE BOHEMIANS

## BOOK CLUB KIT

Jasmin Darznik

---





---

## Dear reader,

First off, thank you so much for choosing to read *The Bohemians*!

This is the story of Dorothea Lange, one of the greatest photographers of all time. It tells the little-known tale of her early years in San Francisco and the remarkable artistic community she encountered when she came to the city in 1918. It's also the story of Ah-yee, the Chinese American woman who worked at Dorothea's first studio on 540 Sutter Street.

Ah-yee, whom I call Caroline in *The Bohemians*, has been little more than a footnote in Dorothea's story. *The Bohemians* brings the relationship between the two women to the forefront of the narrative. It also challenges us to see Dorothea Lange, and the photographs she took, as we've never seen them before.

Writing *The Bohemians* taught me a great deal about the relationship between history and storytelling—about how gaps in the historical record can suggest a new story about the past, about how perceptions change over time, and about how a fresh look at a well-known figure or historical era can teach us something new about the legacy we inherit from those who came before.

More than anything, I've learned that women artists are too often depicted as solitary geniuses. Dorothea Lange and her work should not be considered in a vacuum. Her photographs are about so much more than "Migrant Mother," the one picture that has come to stand for her. Looking at her early years shows us that even those we think of now as icons grappled with the same doubts, fears, and trepidations that we face in our own lives,—and genius cannot fully emerge without community and connection. At its heart, *The Bohemians* is a story about relationships, whether it's the relationship between an artist and her times or the relationships between individuals—including the deep relationships that nourish and sustain women through hard times. Most of us will never know what it's like to take a photograph that will change how people perceive the world, but we all know what it's like to feel invisible, as well as the ways friendships can help us see ourselves and the world anew.

I hope you enjoy reading the story of Dorothea, Caroline, and their fellow San Francisco Bohemians.

With gratitude and appreciation,

Jasmin Darznik

---

---

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Were you familiar with Dorothea Lange before reading *The Bohemians*? What were you surprised to learn about her?
  2. How does Dorothea and Caroline's relationship evolve? How do they complement each other as characters? How do they learn from and change each other? Do you have a similar friendship in your life?
  3. Even though the story takes place more than 100 years ago, there are many current events that mirror Dorothea's life—from the Spanish Flu pandemic to racist political campaigns to violence against women. What did you think when reading about these events?
  4. The 1920s and the Bohemian lifestyle have been widely romanticized, inspiring fashion and serving as party themes during our own times. Did the novel's treatment of this time match your vision of the 1920s? Do you see it differently now?
  5. Who was the most interesting historical person you met in the novel? Was there someone you felt you'd like to know better?
  6. Why do you think so many artists were drawn to San Francisco at this time?
  7. Despite the presence of many progressive artists, there were still places in the city that Caroline was not welcome because of her race (but she confidently strode past many of the signs that forbade her from entering). How do you think this built her resolve and defined her character? Were you surprised to read about the racist ordinances around the city? How have things changed? Or not?
  8. Marriage was difficult for Dorothea and Maynard. Why do you think they couldn't make it work? Were they doomed from the start? What red flags did she ignore?
  9. Why do you think Dorothea was drawn to photography? Have you ever felt something similar in your life?
  10. Was Dorothea a woman ahead of her time? Look up some of her photographs to look at together, including the famous Migrant Mother image and discuss why you believe it resonated so deeply with so many people and still remains one of the most recognizable images in the history of photography.
  11. Style and sewing are such important parts of Caroline's identity. What do her clothes say about her? Have you ever felt transformed by something you wore?
  12. Have you ever lost touch with a friend and sought her out later in life, like Dorothea and Caroline did? What happened?
-

# SAN FRANCISCO CLAM CHOWDER



Credit: © The Gourmet Gourmand

## Ingredients

Makes 12 quarts

Total time: 45 minutes

- 10 oz. canned clams, chopped
- 3 cups of bottled clam juice
- 2–3 slices of bacon, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 medium-sized yukon gold potatoes (about 1 lb.), peeled, and diced into 1 inch cubes
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1 cup half-and-half
- ¼ cup cooking sherry
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves (½ teaspoon dried)
- 1 bay leaf
- ½–1 teaspoon salt (to taste)
- Black pepper, to taste
- A few dashes of Worcestershire sauce, to taste
- A few dashes of tabasco, to taste
- 4 sourdough bread bowls

## Instructions

1. Sauté diced bacon in a heavy bottom stock pot or dutch oven, stirring often, until browned.
2. Add diced onion to the bacon and sauté until onions become translucent.
3. Add flour to onion and bacon mixture and mix until well-coated.
4. Add clam juice to mixture and stir to dissolve flour. Allow mixture to come to a boil for approximately 5 minutes. The mixture should become slightly thickened, approximately the same thickness as cream. If it is too thick, add additional water.
5. Add thyme and bay leaf to stock.
6. Add chopped potatoes and simmer, covered, for approximately 15 minutes or until potatoes are fork-tender.
7. Meanwhile, in a saucepan, bring cream and half-and-half to a simmer. Add clams and cook for about 5–8 minutes.
8. Once potatoes are fully cooked, combine with cream and clam mixture.
9. Bring entire soup to a simmer for about 1–2 minutes.
10. Add sherry, salt, pepper, Worcestershire, and tabasco to taste.
11. Ladle into heated sourdough bread bowls.
12. Serve with a light green salad.

Recipe from The Gourmet Gourmand blog adapted adapted from Epicurious.  
[thegourmetgourmand.com/san-francisco-clam-chowder-in-sourdough-bread-bowls/](http://thegourmetgourmand.com/san-francisco-clam-chowder-in-sourdough-bread-bowls/)



# PISCO PUNCH

Pisco Punch was invented at the Bank Exchange, the saloon at Monkey Block.



## Ingredients

Makes 12 servings

- 1 4-lb. pineapple, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 750-ml bottle pisco
- 2 cups simple syrup
- 1 ½ teaspoons grated white grapefruit peel
- 1 ½ teaspoons grated white grapefruit peel
- ⅔ cup fresh lemon juice
- Ice cubes
- 12 pineapple leaves (optional)

## Instructions

1. Place pineapple pieces in large jar. Pour pisco over. Cover and refrigerate 3 days, shaking occasionally. Divide simple syrup between 2 bowls. Mix grated lime peel into 1 bowl and grated grapefruit peel into the other. Cover and refrigerate both syrups overnight.
2. Strain pisco into pitcher; discard pineapple.
3. Strain both syrups into pisco. Add lemon juice; stir to blend. Fill 12 small glasses with ice, then add punch. Garnish with pineapple leaves, if desired.

Recipe from *Bon Appétit*.

[bonappetit.com/recipe/pisco-punch](https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/pisco-punch)



Hats were an essential part of the flapper's wardrobe and there were many styles to choose from.

© Sears, Roebuck & Co. Catalogue.





*The Romantic Lure  
of Shadowy Eyes*

*revealing — concealing,  
two mystic pools of loveliness . . .*

veiled by heavy, dark-fringed lashes. Like jewels in exquisite settings they enthrall and fascinate. The most commonplace coloring or features are soon forgotten in the lure of shadowy, mysterious eyes. Darken your lashes with WINX and your eyes instantly take on romantic mystery and allure — the most potent of feminine charms. Touch them up ever so lightly with the brush attached to stopper of the bottle and at once they appear much longer, darker and heavier. Your eyes will then reveal the haunting depths that you admire so much in the eyes of the screen stars.

WINX is a harmless, waterproof liquid that will not run or smear. It dries immediately. At drug or department stores or direct by mail. Black or Brown, 75c. U. S. or Canada.

WINKETTE (cake form), Black or Brown, 50c.

LASHLUX, for promoting the growth of luxuriant lashes, Black or Brown, also colorless, 50c.

Mail 12c. for a generous sample of WINX.

ROSS COMPANY  
342-D West 17th Street  
New York

WINX  
Waterproof

Mail this coupon today:  
☐ WINX ☐ WINKETTE ☐ LASHLUX  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City & State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please print

The 1920s were the first decade that women  
began to wear cosmetics.

Ross Company "Winx" Liquid Mascara Ad, ca. 1925

# What It Costs to Be a Well-Dressed Flapper

By SCOTT PIERCE

AMONG the many things that the male of the species can never understand about feminine wearing apparel is the fact that simplicity is one of the most expensive effects a designer can achieve.

That is why a really well-dressed flapper presents such a shock to the average man's mind when he reads the price tags on the *chic* and deceptively simple garments that make up the flapper ensemble.

As a matter of fact, it costs about as much to dress a modern girl in a genuinely modish flapper outfit as it does to equip completely a reasonably well-furnished three-room flat.

The jaunty costume illustrated by Clara Bow is an excellent example of what it costs to be a well-dressed flapper.

The total cost of this outfit comes to the very interesting figure of \$346.50. The various items cost as follows:

White chiffon velvet tam, trimmed with silver band, \$25

Black silk faille coat, lined with white crêpe, and trimmed with ermine fur collar and cuffs, \$150

White silk faille blouse, trimmed with tailored pipings of black faille, \$25

Black silk faille skirt, box-pleated, \$30

Lizard-skin hand-bag, black and white, \$30

Rose beige chiffon stockings, \$4.50

Large white gardenia, \$5

Pearls, three strands, \$10

Doeskin gloves, with turn-back cuffs embroidered in varicolored yarns, \$8.50

Rose beige shoes trimmed with darker tan leather in appliquéd designs, \$18.50



This illustration showed women what it cost to copy "It Girl" Clara Bow's look.

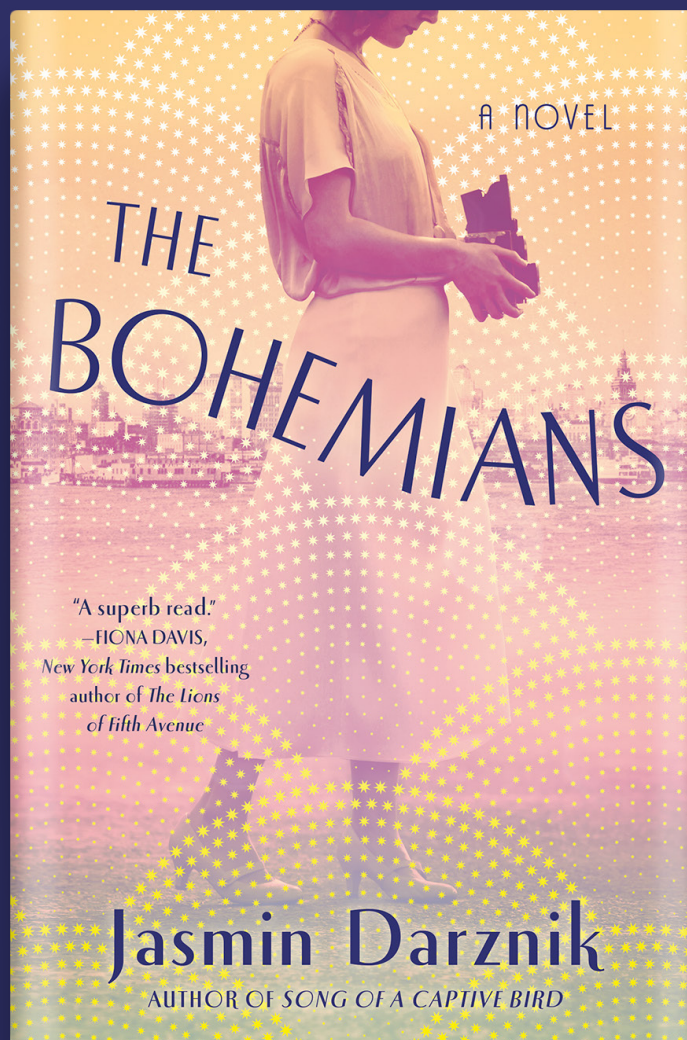
Written by Scott Pierce, ca. 1920s.





A helpful guide to the many  
different hairstyles for stylish young  
women of the 1920s.

Courtesy of the *American Hairdresser*, official organ of the National  
Hairdressers' Association. Copyright 1924.



A NOVEL

# THE BOHEMIANS

"A superb read."  
—FIONA DAVIS,  
*New York Times* bestselling  
author of *The Lions*  
of Fifth Avenue

Jasmin Darznik

AUTHOR OF *SONG OF A CAPTIVE BIRD*

