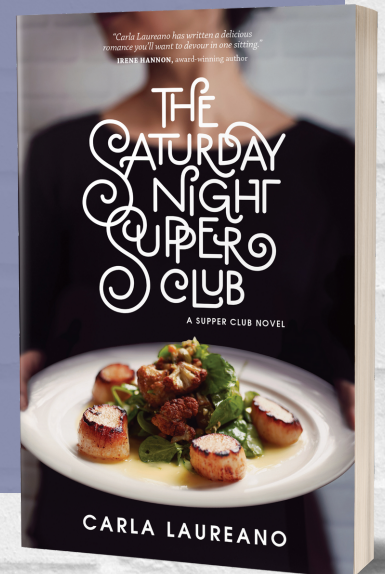


THE SATURDAY NIGHT SUPPER CLUB

A SUPPER CLUB NOVEL



A Note from Carla Laureano

It was this food nerd/writer's dream come true to set a book in the middle of Denver's thriving food scene—Rachel's restaurant and the supper club would feel right at home in the Mile High City. While Denver's real neighborhoods and landmarks set the backdrop for this story, all the restaurants mentioned are works of fiction. However, with so many inspiring chefs and restaurants in the city, I couldn't help but take my cue from real places.

Rachel's restaurant, Paisley, has no exact correlation in the real world, but I did borrow its Larimer Square location from Jennifer Jasinski's excellent Mediterranean restaurant, Rioja. If you're curious about the interior design, I loosely based the description off another of my favorites, Lon Symensma's ChoLon Bistro on Sixteenth and Blake.

Rhino Crash, the funky bar and food truck pod in the River North neighborhood, is a near-double for the quirky Finn's Manor, home to some of the city's best food trucks.

The girls' breakfast joint in the Ballpark neighborhood is an unabashed reference to the original location of Snooze, a retro-styled breakfast-brunch-cocktail spot that has now expanded to multiple locations in Colorado, Arizona, California, and Texas.

Lastly, The English Department was an excuse to pay homage to my very favorite spot in the city: Alex Seidel's Mercantile Dining & Provision at Union Station. If Rachel waxed a bit too eloquent when she visited, it's only because of my own barely restrained foodie glee.



Discussion Questions

1. Rachel's memories, good and bad, tend to be associated with food. What are your best and worst memories that are tied to food? Do you think they endure longer because of the association?

2. Alex criticizes the fact that public figures are treated as if their lives exist for public consumption. Do you feel that the media oversteps its boundaries, or is it merely a hazard that creatives and celebrities should expect to shoulder as the price of success? How would you feel if you were attempting to live in a similar spotlight?

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3. Rachel rejects the idea of being a spokesperson for women in the food service industry and resents having to put her personal life on display, citing the fact that men aren't required to talk about anything but their cooking. Do you think women who reach the highest levels of their professions are obligated to speak out? Is that an unfair burden? Why or why not?

4. Alex struggles with freedom in his faith journey, wishing for a rule book. Do you relate to that feeling? Why or why not?

Notes:

Discussion Questions

5. A single misrepresented comment of Rachel's goes viral, leading to the shattering of her career. What do you think that says about social media in particular and society in general? What responsibility do we as Christians have to investigate the truth and temper our response to what we hear and read?

6. Because of her difficult family background and feelings of betrayal, Rachel looks for alternative families in both her kitchen staff and her best friends. What does that say about our innate need for belonging? Is our biological family different from our chosen one? Contrast the way her colleagues react to her crisis versus how her friends react.

7. Alex possesses a deep need to fix things and take responsibility for his actions. How is this a good thing? How might it also be problematic?

8. Both Alex and Rachel have experienced the weight of not living up to their families' expectations. How are their reactions similar? How are they different, and why?

9. Rachel hides behind her title and the trappings of her profession. Why do you think this is? How does she change over the course of the book?

"[The Saturday Night Supper Club] is a sweet and lively love story."

Publishers Weekly,
starred review

Discussion Questions

10. Alex tells Rachel that he's learned "all the hustle in the world won't get me anywhere if it's not [God's] will." Later, Rachel has a similar realization about her work and striving over her career prospects. What does this say about the tension between hard work or diligence and faith? What have your personal experiences taught you about this balance?

11. Rachel misunderstands the meaning of the e-mail and notes she sees in Alex's home and jumps to the worst conclusion. How is this similar to what happened to her on social media? What does this say about our natural tendencies as humans?

12. Near the story's end, Rachel prays for direction, hoping for "a dramatic, unmistakable answer," but receives only "a still, small conviction." Was it enough for her? How do you discern God's guidance—and what form does it usually take?

13. How does the evolution of the supper club format mirror Rachel's own personal journey? How is this a significant change from the beginning of the book?

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How to Prep Easy Book Club Snacks

Tips from Carla Laureano

So you've decided to start a book club—or maybe you already belong to one, but it's your turn to host. What happens when your biggest culinary skill is calling for takeout? Never fear, these easy snacks will make you look like a hostess extraordinaire and no one will ever know about that time you burned water.

1.) Charcuterie Board

I recommend this every single time I talk about book club snacks because it's filling and easy to put together. Just try to pick mild, medium, and bold selections in every category. When in doubt, ask your deli manager for ideas!

- Cured meats like mortadella, a good Genoa salami, and prosciutto (3+)
- Cheeses like fresh mozzarella balls, goat cheese, Stilton, or Gorgonzola (3+)

- Sweet options such as fruit chutney and fresh whole honeycomb (1-2)
- Tart condiments like whole grain mustard (1-2)
- Savory add-ons like smoked or roasted almonds and cured green olives (1-2)
- Fresh fruit such as grapes, sliced apples, blueberries, or segmented mandarin oranges (1-2)
- Something to eat the condiments on like toast points, baguette rounds, water crackers, or seeded crackers—don't forget the gluten-free options! (3-4)

Arrange it on a pretty marble cheese board or wooden cutting board, add a couple of cheese knives and spoons, and you've got an impressive spread that looks far more difficult than it actually is.

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2.) Bakery Buffet

Bigger grocery and natural foods stores provide an amazing bounty of petite sweets, and they tend to be good quality as well! Try five or six varieties of pastries like bite-size brownies, two-bite scones, mini cinnamon rolls, mini sugar cookies, tiny Danishes, rugelach, small éclairs, and cream puffs. Display on pretty plates and serve with coffee and a variety of teas and you've got an instant book club/tea party.

3.) Coffee and Chocolate Pairing

What two flavors go together better than chocolate and coffee? Make your book club meeting into an impromptu tasting by selecting a variety of different chocolates and coffees.

One idea would be to choose by region: chocolates from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana along with Ethiopian Yirgacheffe and Kenya AA. Another would be to select coffees and chocolate from mild to bold: white, milk, dark, and extra dark chocolates along with blonde, medium, and dark roast coffee. If you need a little variety, you can also add in a selection of nuts and dried fruit.

When in doubt, think variety over time in the kitchen. After all, the point of a book club is to enjoy fellowship and discuss literature; the food just makes the time together all that much sweeter.

Kitchen Conversions Chart

If you want to host your own supper club like Rachel in *The Saturday Night Supper Club* or prepare a delicious meal for your book club, keep this kitchen conversions chart nearby for easy reference for those times when you need a quick guide to help you determine how much of an ingredient to include in a dish.



Kitchen Conversions

Cup	Oz	Tbs.	Tsp.
1	8	16	48
$\frac{3}{4}$	6	12	36
$\frac{2}{3}$	5 + 2 tsp	10 + 2 tsp	32
$\frac{1}{2}$	4	8	24
$\frac{1}{3}$	2 + 4 tsp	5 + 1 tsp	16
$\frac{1}{4}$	2	4	12

HERBS

1 Tbs fresh = 1 tsp dry

60 drops = 1 tsp

3 tsp = 1 Tbs

4 Tbs = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup

2 Tbs = 1 oz

1 cup = 8 oz

MEAT TEMPERATURES

Beef - 140 (rare)

Beef - 160 (medium)

Beef - 170 (well)

Pork - 165

Lamb - 145

Ham - 140

Poultry - 180

2 cup = 1 pint 2 pint = 1 quart 4 quart = 1 gallon

Saturday Night Supper Club / CARLA LAUREANO

