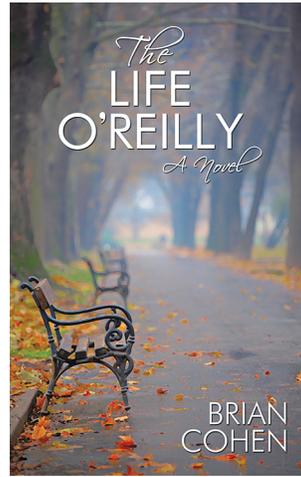


The Life O'Reilly

Written by Brian Cohen

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Reading Group Guide

I would be honored if readers selected *The Life O'Reilly* for their book clubs. To enhance your group's experience, I offer the following questions and discussion topics to spark conversation. Enjoy! - Brian

Please note that these questions cover the entire story and should not be read until after you have finished the novel.

1. *The Life O'Reilly* features a diverse cast of characters. Which character do you identify with most and why? Which character do you find the least likeable and why?
2. What are the major themes of the novel? What can we take away from Nick's journey?
3. How did you react to the ending? What do you think happens to Nick, Dawn, Jordan, and Nicole after the end of the novel?
4. When we meet Nick and Dawn, what parallels exist between their respective worlds?
5. Dawn is a strong and intelligent woman who was physically and emotionally abused by her husband, Jimmy. How did the novel's portrayal of domestic violence resonate with you?
6. When we meet Nick, he is trapped in the corporate "rat race." Can you relate to Nick and/or his career issues? How?
7. In the novel, what is the symbolic importance of Central Park, particularly Nick's close proximity to it? Why is it a significant setting?
8. Do you think Nick and Dawn make a good couple? What do you think attracted Nick and Dawn to each other, and how did that attraction intensify throughout the novel? What impact did Nick's illness have on their relationship? Can you relate to what they endured from either Nick or Dawn's perspective?
9. During the course of his representation of Dawn, Nick was defending Advanced Technology Resources and its CEO, Duncan Shaw, in a securities fraud class action. This case is a fictional example of the kind of corporate greed and malfeasance that has grabbed countless headlines over the last couple of years. What does this subplot add to the story?

10. At the end of Chapter 13, in the wake of Nick's fallout with the firm, we find him reflecting on his time with Dawn ("I couldn't stop myself from developing feelings for her. And for that, I was guilty as charged."). According to N.Y. Professional Disciplinary Rule 1200.29-a, in domestic relations matters, a lawyer may not enter into "sexual relations" (as defined on page 165) with a client during the course of the lawyer's representation of the client. Do you think that Nick and Dawn engaged in "sexual relations" during the course of their attorney-client relationship? However you feel, do you think that Nick crossed the line? In the end, was his punishment appropriate?
11. What is the turning point in the novel? Is there more than one?
12. How do you feel about Evan's decision to leave Williams Gardner & Schmidt to follow his dream of starting his own entertainment law firm? Do you applaud him for risking what he had to take control of his own destiny and achieve success on his terms? Why or why not?
13. How would you describe the parent-child relationship between Nick and his mother, Charlotte O'Reilly? How did Nick's upbringing and his relationship with his parents influence his choices? When was it for the better and when was it for the worse?
14. *The final question is offered not for discussion with your book club, but for private thought.* At the end of the novel, Nick leaves us with thoughts on his life and legacy. What do you want your legacy to be? What do you want to be known for? On page 261, Nick tells us that if his journey was about to end, he could take solace in the fact that he was exactly where he wanted to be in life. If you were to suddenly find yourself in Nick's shoes, could you draw the same conclusion?

About the Author

Brian Cohen earned his Bachelor of Accountancy from George Washington University and his Juris Doctor from St. John's University School of Law. He has been practicing law for twelve years. Brian lives with his wife and their daughters in the suburbs of New York City. He is at work on his second novel.