



Ivan Obolensky

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Suggested Interview Questions for Ivan Obolensky

1. You grew up as part of the 1%, and then went on to start from scratch on your own terms. How did this influence the novel?
2. What is the most common misperception of the 1% you have encountered?
3. How does this assumption stand up against your experience in the life you had growing up?
4. The novel focuses on conversation, and is set in the period before computers, smartphones and social media were part of the everyday foundation of society. Why is social conversation on an intimate level important?
5. You have mentioned this novel is American in that it deals with business, transactions, and trust, yet it pays homage to your Russian heritage of storytelling and superstition, with “realistic” magic and elements of the occult. How do you bring these two sets of themes together?
6. You mentioned that this novel was written without an outline, and now you are on your second novel. Has your approach to writing changed between the first and second novel?
7. What’s it like to meet famous people?
8. What’s the best thing about writing a novel?
9. Tell us about the dynamic of being the author and also an executive in the publishing company that launched your book.
10. You say that one of your objectives is to connect with others. Tell us more about that.
11. What about the ghosts?



Suggested Reading Group Discussion Questions

- Which character did you relate to or empathize with the most?
- Have you ever had a relationship like Percy and Johnny?
- Were you surprised to learn about the connection between Stanley and Alice?
- How did you feel the occult aspect of the book added to the story?
- This novel takes place in the 1970s, before the widespread use of cell phones and other electronics. How does this affect the story?
- How is the setting of that time different to our own now?
- How does the mood of the Rhinebeck estate set the tone for the book?
- Do you think Percy and Bruni's relationship would be possible if he had failed in his business negotiations? What do you think this says about their future?
- What do you think about the women's roles in the novel?
- Do you see Alice as a dedicated explorer and researcher or as someone who falls victim to obsession?
- Bonnie becomes an unexpected ally in the book. What do you think of her role in the story?
- At times it feels like the ties of friendship are stronger than that of family. Which relationships seem the strongest in the story?
- Do you think Maw's actions are forgivable? Can she be trusted?
- Do you think the Dodge family will be closer after this weekend? Or do you think this is only a temporary truce?
- How do you think Percy's experience with the demon helps him overcome his own demons with the Dodge family?
- What do you think the demon might represent?
- The style of this writing has been compared to many authors, ranging from Agatha Christie to F. Scott Fitzgerald. Did the novel remind you of any authors you enjoy?
- Were there any moments from your life that resonated with the various characters or situations?

For more questions, please view our [Reading Guide](#).

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