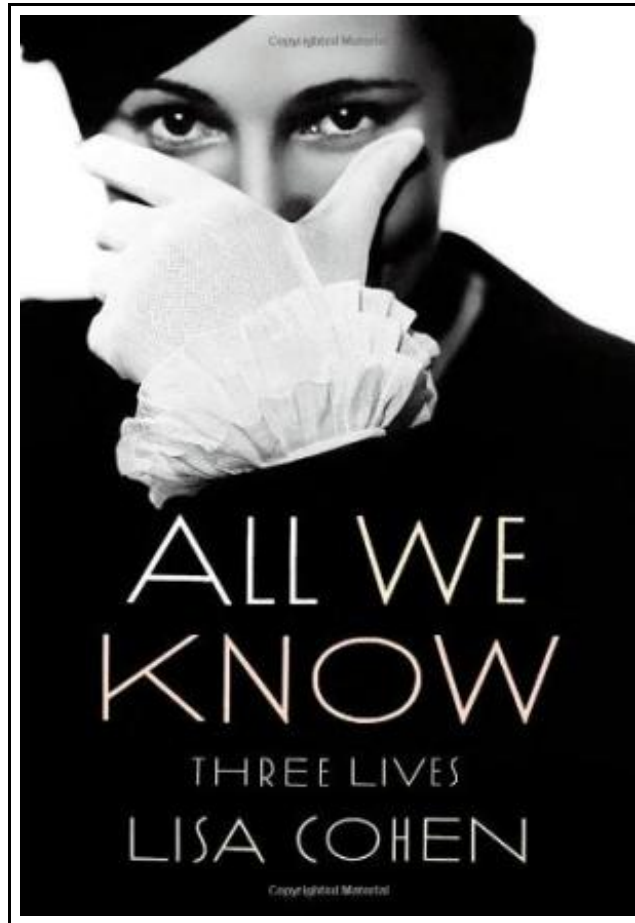


All We Know: Three Lives



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Reviews

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ALL WE KNOW: THREE LIVES

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FSG. 1 Cloth(s), 2012. hard. Book Condition: New. (A Publishers Weekly Best Book of 2012) Esther Murphy was a brilliant New York intellectual who dazzled friends and strangers with an unstoppable flow of conversation. But she never finished the books she was contracted to write a painful failure and yet a kind of achievement. The quintessential fan, Mercedes de Acosta had intimate friendships with the legendary actresses and dancers of the twentieth century. Her ephemeral legacy lies in the thousands of objects she collected to preserve the memory of those performers and to honor the feelings they inspired. An icon of haute couture and a fashion editor of British Vogue, Madge Garland held bracing views on dress that drew on her feminism, her ideas about modernity, and her love of women. Existing both vividly and invisibly at the center of cultural life, she like Murphy and de Acosta is now almost completely forgotten. In this book, Lisa Cohen describes these women's glamorous choices, complicated failures, and controversial personal lives with lyricism and empathy. Both a series of biographical portraits and an investigation into style, celebrity, sexuality, and the genre of biography itself, Cohen's book explores a hidden history of modernism and pays tribute to three compelling lives. "In her deeply researched, incisive, and scintillating first book, Cohen presents a triptych of brief lives portraying now forgotten but nonetheless singular women whose intelligence, passion, creativity, daring, and charisma were shaping forces in modern culture. Cohen's astute, graceful, and far-reaching profiles not only acquaint us with three extraordinary, innovative, and influential women who rejected gender expectations but also illuminate the essential visions and voices 20th-century lesbians and gays brought to evolving modernity." Booklist (starred review) "Meticulously researched and compulsively readable. [Cohen's] treatment of these larger-than-life and, often, destructive figures is coolly appreciative; though unflinching in her analysis..."

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