



# The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club

*Duncan Whitehead*

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**The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club** Duncan Whitehead

2013 Readers' Favorite International Book Awards Winner and Gold Medalist.

Something is not quite right in the leafy Savannah neighborhood of Gordonston.

As the friends and fellow members of her afternoon cocktail club gather to mourn the death and lament the life of their neighbor, Thelma Miller, not all is what it seems.

When old friends vie for the attention of widower, Alderman and mayoral candidate Elliott, jealousies surface and friendships are strained. An old woman with a dark secret and an infamous uncle plots her revenge for a perceived wrong done over thirty years before, a once successful children's writer with his own secret is haunted by memories of the past and aspiring model Kelly Hudd has just won the trip of a lifetime.

As secrets are revealed and history, both old and recent unravel, and an intertwined web of deceptions and lies surfaces in the middle class neighborhood, a killer lurks and is anyone really who they seem to be?

An enigmatic European gentleman in South America, a young Italian count parading the streets of Paris and a charitable and kindhearted nephew recently arrived from India add to the remarkable assortment of characters in this story of intrigue, deceit and revenge.

What is the secret a recently retired accountant is trying to hide and just why did the former showgirl and attractive sixty two year old widow Carla Zipp really have plastic surgery?

A mysterious organization with links to organized crime, a handsome fire fighter who can do no wrong and a trio of widows with deep hidden agendas compound a story of simplistic complexity. As twists and turns lead the reader to a conclusion that they will not see coming and a sucker punch ending that will leave you breathless, the Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club's top priority remains the need to chastise the culprit who refuses to 'scoop' after his dog walking sessions in their treasured park.

FINALIST IN THE 2013 READER'S FAVORITE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL AWARD CONTEST IN THE HUMOR CATEGORY - WINNER ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 2013.

## The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club Details

Date : Published November 14th 2012 by Dog Ear

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Author : Duncan Whitehead

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# **From Reader Review The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club for online ebook**

## **Sally Wolf says**

Take the afternoon and read, this Southern Noir style with a twist. The members of the Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club meets in the park every afternoon to let their dogs romp, drink an afternoon cocktail, and most importantly gossip about the neighbors. It seems like a typical southern style community with the young and the old alike living their normal lives, but behind closed doors each has their own dirty little secrets. The question is: who gets theirs aired first? This is a fast-paced novel that will keep you guessing right up to the very last page. I would recommend it to anyone who likes revenge, mystery, and whodunnit novels.

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## **Amy Ridenour says**

I enjoyed this book.

The plot twists were inventive and unsuspected. The setting was refreshing and felt authentic; including the two overseas forays the novel takes.

There should be a part two: lots of room for character development that could follow along the already well drawn lines. A little tweaking with the writing style could develop a novel that loses all trace of the authors hand and lets readers get fully engrossed in the story.

I don't read a lot of mysteries so I'm not aware of the different techniques generally used by mystery writers to create suspense, but sometimes I felt as though I was told (instead of showed) too much, and other times I felt as though the author wasn't giving me enough, or was holding back details like a cruel puppet master instead of giving me a little to let me make some of my own conclusions (maybe early Nancy Drew isn't a good basis for comparison, but it may be all my brain is going on when it comes to mystery novels).

Regardless, it was an entertaining read, and I was left feeling satisfied and wanting more, which maybe all we need to judge it upon.

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## **Chantelle Atkins says**

This book has so many good things going for it; an interesting plot, devious characters, a glamorous setting, and towards the end a very fast paced climax. I would have enjoyed it more if the beginning had also been faster paced. I didn't like or empathize with any of the characters, which also put me off a bit to start with, however it becomes obvious that you are not meant to; they are all pretty dark and vile people one way or another! I did really enjoy the end, in fact I was turning the pages faster and faster. So I would implore people to stick with it if they find the beginning a bit slow. There are a lot of characters, with a lot of back stories, but they do all tie in together towards the end. The story is about a group of bitchy women who sit in the park while their dogs play, and they gossip about their neighbours. I loved the first chapter where a contract killer is preparing a shallow grave. It certainly sucked me in to begin with. We soon find out the neighbours in Gordonston are not exactly who they pretend to be. They all have secrets, and as the story develops, they begin to take out contracts on their enemies. Towards the end you are left wondering who is going to get killed first. We find out who the mysterious 'director' is and that was a shock to me. As I said,

slow to start, a bit too much telling rather than showing for me, but then I am a huge fan of dialogue, so that might just be me. But as it goes on it does pull you in and I really enjoyed the ending.

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### **Kate Schoedinger says**

Twisty turny with great appeal. Sexy, sassy and sinister all cloaked under the auspices of an innocent dog walking club. Loved this fast paced tale ( tail?!) and it is a quick read. The intersections of characters lives is exquisite. Loved this book!!

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### **Sherri says**

Having been to Savannah several times, I was hoping that this book would be somewhat akin to Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, highlighting some of the quirky characters of the city, while still showcasing its history and beauty. The book is amusing, with an incredibly twisted ending. But it is all too improbable and requires a total willingness to put aside the reader's general commonsense. But this is the part that almost had me put the book down with revulsion. Anyone who thinks to portray Adolph Hitler, the epitome of evil, as a "kindly old man" who had escaped to South America, or as a beloved uncle, is seriously disregarding the monster that this man was! I cannot respect anyone who would twist the character of Hitler to reflect a loving person as a responsible writer. Shame on you Mr. Whitehead for portraying him as such.

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### **Jeannie Walker says**

I can see why this novel is a Finalist in the 2013 Reader's Favorite Annual International Awards Contest. I love small towns, I guess it's because I came from a small town. Although small towns usually go at a slow pace - the same cannot be said for jealous feeling and gossip of small towns. This novel is about some unconventional and slightly strange women whose activities involve walking their dogs, among other things. Although they are friends and share some of the same interests - they still have things they do and indulge in secretly. Savannah, Georgia is a delightful place for this kind of mystery. Almost reminds me of Gone With The Wind in a peculiar kind of way. I believe this author is adept at spicing up the stories with humor and accommodates the reading audience with a desire to keep turning pages. You might do as I did by trying to read between the lines, only to be surprised. I think you will like this mixture - it is a curious and different kind of variety that will make for a beautiful day indeed. It surely won't be a thorn in your side.

Jeannie Walker - Award Winning Author

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## **Jeremy Poole says**

I'm not sure what genre this book is, a comedy, a murder mystery or a desperate housewives type of soap book. It doesn't really fit into any fixed genre. What it is, is funny, not laugh out loud, side holding silliness, but a knowing inner laugh, that plasters a wide grin on your chops. The story of widows, Nazis, assassins and models cover everything in suburbia and all through the women's dog walking club.

Yes, an all-round good fun book, at times the characters confused me, and I had to check back as to which person had the German shepherd dog and which the boob job, also the introduction, that was repeated, in total, near the end of the book was a tad too long.

Jeremy Poole (writer) [www.jeremypoole.net](http://www.jeremypoole.net)

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## **Jovon Tucker says**

The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club (yes, it's a mouthful, LOL) was funny, intriguing, and a little dark at times and I loved it! If you're a fan of Desperate Housewives, I think you will find this a great read as well! It's set in a kind of a ritzy suburban neighborhood where everyone is talking about everyone and no secret stays hidden for long.

From the very beginning, Duncan Whitehead's style of writing keeps you inches from all the untold truths and just when you are about to say "OMG, I didn't see that coming", he lets out a titillating piece of story and then your left thinking, "OMG, I didn't see THAT coming!" Whitehead had my emotions in the grips of his hands the whole time! I found myself sympathizing with certain characters (Tom), wanting to beat certain characters to a pulp (Kelly), wanting to call some of them out (Elliot), and wanting to hide under the table and peek through the curtains while the crap hit the fan!

Literally the whole time I was reading The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club, I was filling my husband in on what just happened next (and he usually isn't a fan of reading...I know right?) and he was laughing right along with me at what came next!

Shock, Shock, Shock! That is what you experience throughout this book!

On top of all this, you have a killer picking off residents of this beautiful on the outside, dysfunctional on the inside neighborhood and let me just say.....your jaw will be left hanging and you'll be scratching your head when the final and most shocking twist comes in the end!

I am definitely anticipating the sequel to The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club because while the book ended with a bang, I can't wait to see what happens next!

I would highly suggest The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club to all of my book loving friends! You will have a hard time putting it down, NOT laughing out loud, and you most certainly will not be disappointed!

For more great and honest book reviews, please visit my blog @ [www.book2buzz.blogspot.com](http://www.book2buzz.blogspot.com)

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### **Fiona Black says**

Not fair! Arrghhh! I want to know what happens next.....I loved the characters in this book; some dumb, some evil, some nasty, some devious, some just plain crazy.

Brilliant plot very cleverly done and what a surprise ending that left me shaking my head and wondering when there will be a part two...I WANT TO KNOW MORE MR WHITEHEAD!

Please, please, please write a follow up to this fantastically different book and please kill off somebody else.

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### **Steve Cohen says**

If you're a fan of shows like Desperate Housewives that sway between the farcical and the semi-serious, with a lot of humorous coincidence thrown in, then this one's for you. The Southern lady dogwalkers of Gordonston are a gossipy bunch of drinkers with a little too much time on their hands. Their business is knowing, or imagining, everyone else's business in the small, privileged enclave where they live. Of course, the line they tread between consideration and meddling is too easily crossed. Add in hearty doses of judgment, deep veins of social propriety, the panicky need for absolute control, and you get a bunch of prim and proper wackos who will stop at nothing to maintain the sense of order each one requires. Unfortunately for the ladies, they are fighting a losing battle against the forces of Southern hospitality, a mid-life boob job, a life-changing trip to Paris, a contract assassin and a houseful of Nazis, not to mention the guy who doesn't pick-up his dog's poop. The author could easily be writing for TV. This is well done and a fun read, with a nice twist at the end to keep you guessing what's going to happen.

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### **Lee Holz says**

The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club is a tour de force, a sort of Grand Guignol, Peyton Place on steroids with tongue firmly in cheek. My early impression was one of sprawling farce, but I soon came to realize this was an intricate, tightly plotted work without spare parts. The result is highly entertaining, and I recommend this book without reservation.

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### **Ann says**

I loved this book. From the very first chapter it grabs your attention. Some very unlikely elements have you guessing and turning the pages. A group of widows, a community park, politician, a hit man. All dog lovers. Great plot, great clues, and wonderful canines keep you on your toes. Read this one for the story and your love of dogs

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## **Marsha Roberts says**

I enjoyed this book from the beginning, but once I was about half-way through, I couldn't click my Kindle fast enough. I was hooked! The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club is a complex satire that intermingles mystery, drama and dark humor into a multiple plot thriller that kept me riveted until the end. Perhaps I enjoyed it even more because I am from the south and have been to Savannah, GA where the story takes place many times. Mr. Whitehead's description of the old historic district in Savannah was spot-on and as the town's wealthy cling to the illusion of southern gentility, it becomes the perfect setting for his tale of how secrets can entangle people's lives like the Spanish moss hanging in chain-like fashion from the old oak trees.

This story doesn't stay in Savannah, but whether Mr. Whitehead is taking us to Argentina or Paris, the descriptions of the locations are just as lush, just as vivid, as are the characters. One of the things I thought was so extraordinary about how this author handled his unusual assortment of characters was that no matter how flawed they were, they were presented to us without judgment and with a surprising amount of humanity. Considering how disingenuous everyone is, this was quite a feat! There were several revelations about who these characters really were, underneath their carefully crafted lies, that were stunning and revealed by the author with razor-sharp timing.

I won't tell you anything about the characters or the plot because I don't want to spoil this wonderful read for you. But, when you want to sit down, forget your problems and allow a writer to take you into another world, treat yourself to The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club, an easy read, but a real page-turner!

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## **James Wharton says**

The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club was a great and satisfying read. The description was excellent. Particularly noteworthy was the characterization with thorough exploration of the characters' motives and description of their sometimes eccentric personalities. Heidi, Cindy and Carla were interesting and well cast. The reader is hooked immediately by the unusual setting and the great plot. Romance and intrigue always make for a good story. The description of the setting made the reader feel he was right there with the women walking his own dog in the park. I highly recommend this unique book and didn't hesitate to give it 5

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## **Mary Fan says**

The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club opens on a lovely morning in Savannah, Georgia, with your friendly neighborhood contract killer preparing to execute his latest job. Rewind the clock by about a week. The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club, a group of older women with a shared fondness for canines and cocktails, sigh about the impending death of one of their own. Thelma is on the verge of succumbing to cancer. Two of the ladies, former Vegas showgirl Carla and wholesome housewife Cindy, already have their eye on Thelma's soon-to-be widower, mayoral candidate Elliott. We are also introduced to the club's queen bee, an eighty-something-year-old named Heidi, and to several of their neighbors, including Kelly and Tom—a young couple with Hollywood good looks—and newlyweds Veronica and Doug. And then there's the neighborhood villain: an old man who fails to clean up after his dog during his walks in the park.

Each member of this idyllic suburban neighborhood harbors a dirty little secret. Or, if they don't at the



beginning of the novel, they do by the end. The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club follows each member of the community through their intertwining lives. Picture perfect on the outside, not so much behind closed doors. One of them is the contract killer's victim, and one of them the employer. But who? And why? With everything that's going on in Gordonston, everyone is fair game.

Whitehead successfully employs the third person omniscient perspective in his novel to give the reader insights into each character's thoughts and motivations, often within one scene. In an era where first person and limited third are in fashion, using the omniscient voice is a daring yet highly effective move. Although Whitehead writes with a distinctive lilt, the narrator for the most part seems invisible, a mere camera through which the reader watches the characters, none of whom is exactly what they appear. Whitehead wastes no words, somehow keeping the prose fluid and tight at the same time. As a result, the pages fly by while at the same time allowing a reader to become immersed in the language and descriptions. Honestly, this book contains some of the finest examples of the omniscient voice I've seen in contemporary literature.

Whitehead seamlessly integrates the various intertwining storylines. The cast is large, yet each character is so unique that it's easy to keep track of who is who. Whitehead deftly guides the reader through the secrets, mysteries, and multiple plots, making *The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club* an easy, relaxing read. There is so much going on, and yet everything feels straightforward with the way Whitehead tells it.

In addition to his plotting abilities and knack for creating memorable characters, Whitehead also possesses a real talent for descriptions. It's easy to picture the locations described in the novel, be it a town in Argentina or the luxuries of Paris. His writing style is mesmerizing, hypnotic even, and it's easy to get lost in the locations and the lives of the characters. My one criticism would be that he doesn't always let the reader know where in the timeline they are (for instance, there's no indication that the first chapter, with the hit man, actually takes place after the bulk of the book until you get close to the end).

*The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club* is a garden of irony, a brilliant suburban satire on par with the popular American TV show *Desperate Housewives*. Part thriller, part drama, the multitude of questions hanging in the air make it a gripping page-turner, especially toward the second half, where the plot really thickens. It's a relatively short book, and I ended up reading the whole thing in a single day. With all the juicy details and shocking revelations, I just couldn't put it down.

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## **Yawatta Hosby says**

This 20 chapter book was okay. Heidi, Cindy, and Carla were part of the Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club. The other member, Thelma, had died from cancer; she hadn't even been buried that long before Cindy and Carla fight over Thelma's husband, Elliot. The neighborhood was like Wisteria Lane times ten. They had secrets galore and were crazy. It was awesome how psycho people became towards the end.

My favorite part was when one of the younger neighbor's visited Paris without her husband. Once she returned home, everything unraveled in everyone's lives. When I say everyone, I mean every single character. The story didn't just focus on the three ladies of the club; it also involved their neighbors (two couples, two older gentleman).

It was cool once it was revealed who the hitman and director was. And I loved knowing when a character was plotting on someone else without their knowledge—it was like I was in on the secret. There were four hits requested throughout the novel but only one was picked. I liked how the ending suggested that the other ones

still weren't safe. Like maybe there could be a sequel?

The author was great with setting. The way he described things allowed me, as a reader, to see hear, taste, and smell what the characters did.

The first chapter was impressive and suspenseful. A man dug up a hole and readers knew someone will die by the end of the book. But after that, there was a bunch of headhopping (unless it was written in the omniscient point-of-view? One time a dog's feelings was described), so I couldn't get lost in the story. It felt like I was reading about characters instead of getting a chance to go through their journey with them. It seemed like there was a lack of immediate scenes. The story had a lot of narrative summary, so I wished there would have been more showing rather than telling.

The story started off slow, but towards the middle (and especially the ending), it picked up and was pretty interesting. I loved seeing the friendships and romantic relationships self-destruct. One other thing—facts kept being repeated throughout the story. I wish things were only told once (especially backstory). For example, chapter 1 and chapter 18 were exactly the same, word for word. I figured it was to remind readers that a guy was there to kill someone and now the plan was about to spring into action, but readers already knew that since the first chapter.

If you think you can get past the repetitiveness, then give the book a try.

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## **Kitty Muse Book Reviews says**

At first pass, the neighborhood of Gordonston, only a stone's throw from Savannah, Georgia, seems like the perfect place to live. Lovely old homes, nice yards, and a park in the center for running the dogs and passing the day—what an idyllic setting.

But while the dogs play together at one end, the Gordonston Ladies' Dog-Walking Club (total members: three) catfight at the other, hissing and spitting behind their genteel Southern manners. Replace the park with a shark tank, and you wouldn't be far from the truth.

Behind the well-constructed façades of the good neighbors of Gordonston lie sinister thoughts and devious plans. I won't go into any of them here; suffice it to say that almost every inhabitant of Gordonston is in danger of losing his or her life—at the financial hand of those they trust the most. There are those who have the motive and the financial means to get rid of those who stand in the way of their ambitions. The question is—who will survive who?

This is by far the most intriguing murder mystery I have ever read. Instead of a "whodunit", it's more like a "who's gonna get it, and why". Mr. Whitehead weaves a tale as intricate as a spider's web—and ten times more captivating. Twists and turns, turns and red herrings, are sprinkled throughout the story. Characters come to life under his crafting, and they are all very real—and very unforgettable.

But what will really be worth the wait for the reader is the unveiling of the hired killer—and even more so, of the one who hired this assassin. The reader is kept guessing until the very end. And that, my friends, is what makes a good murder mystery.

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## **C.M. Wright says**

It took me awhile to get into the book, but that's probably my own problem as I like action...and lots of it! But OMG! Stick with it and that book ROCKS! I hope there is a another book.

Great job, Duncan!

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## **Julie says**

The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club by Duncan Whitehead, is a short novel that sort of defies a specific genre. I suppose one could place it in the mystery suspense thriller group and be OK. But, there is touch of satire thrown in as well.

This book has about 196 pages, and I believe the publisher is Dog Ear Publishing and is a 2012 copyright.

Gordonston is a nice neighborhood in Savannah. On the surface it's a place anyone would feel comfortable living in. There's a nice park where on any given day you can see the citizens walking their dogs. You might notice three older middle aged women, sipping cocktails out of paper cups and enjoying each other's company while they gossip and let their dogs play.

However, appearances can be deceiving. These lovely ladies just lost one of their best friends to cancer. Other residents of this quite neighborhood have their own problems as well. Doug and Veronica are having money problems. Tom and Kelly are just too good to be true, both beautiful and healthy and in love, until Kelly wins a trip to Paris and Tom can't go.

Elliot just lost his wife, Thelma, to cancer and his running for mayor. He's worried about something from his past coming out before the election.

Then there is a gentleman that refuses to pick up after his dog after walking him in the park. The ladies vow they will have address this issue.

Slowly, we see this idealistic, charming neighborhood become a hot bed of jealousy, greed, dark secrets, lies, and maybe even murder.

I had no idea what to expect when I started reading this novel. This is I believe the first novel for this author and if that's true, then I'm impressed.

No one is what they appear to be on the surface and I promise you will never figure out what is going to happen next. Dark humor and quirky characters, twist and turns abound.

The tension builds to a climax that you never see coming.

This is a unique, imaginative story, very different from anything I have read in while.

I recommend this on for those who love a good satire, mystery , and a litte dark humor. Overall I would give this one a B.

Thanks Netgalley for the the ARC

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## **Jody Zimmerman says**

The Gordonston Ladies Dog Walking Club by Duncan Whitehead is one of the most fun and enjoyable books I've read in a long time.

If I had had the time to read it in one sitting, I would have. When I had to put it down, I found myself looking forward to picking it up again, anticipation for a special treat.

The plot focuses on three well-heeled ladies who live in an exclusive neighborhood in Savannah, Georgia, and who regularly meet each afternoon in the neighborhood park for the purpose of letting their dogs play. In reality the ladies meet to sip their favorite cocktails concealed in plastic cups while they gossip about their neighbors.

Duncan Whitehead has distilled the worst attributes associated with southerners into his characters so accurately that I found myself laughing out loud when so-called best friends became worst enemies while still maintaining total social decorum. I am not going to go into any of the plot because I do not want to reveal any of the twists and turns that make this novel so entertaining. Suffice it to say that if you like duplicitous, backstabbing, self-indulgent, prejudice, and cowardly people who outwardly attempt to appear perfectly kind and good to the world, you'll love this book.

Mr. Whitehead's writing style is fluid and descriptive. His use of the third person omniscient point of view fits perfectly with his characters and their reactions to the people around them. I especially like his technique of establishing a scene and then revisiting it later after the reader has gleaned additional information about the characters.

If you like mystery, murder, intrigue, and dogs, buy this book right now. It is a five star read.

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