



The Devil in the Junior League

Linda Francis Lee

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The Junior League of Willow Creek, Texas, is tres exclusive. Undesirables need not apply. Fredericka Mercedes Hildebrand Ware (Frede to her friends) is a member beyond reproach...until her life begins to unravel. When her husband betrays her, steals her money, and runs off to places unknown, it's something Frede would rather keep under wraps. The last thing she needs is to become fodder for the JLWC gossip mill. And to make matters worse, there's only one person in town who stands a chance at helping her get revenge: Howard Grout, a tasteless, gold-chain-wearing lawyer who has bought his way into Frede's tony neighborhood. But here's a price: She has to get his tacky, four-inch-stiletto-and-pink-spandex-wearing wife Nikki into the Junior League.

Linda Francis Lee has written an hysterical novel about the creme de la creme of Texas society, the lengths to which one woman goes to bring her cheating husband to justice, and how taking on what seems like a *Mission Impossible* can change you in ways you could never have imagined.

The Devil in the Junior League Details

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From Reader Review *The Devil in the Junior League* for online ebook

Karen says

no thanks

Nicole says

This is the only book I have ever recycled. And by that I mean into the recycling bin because I couldn't bear to give it away. Books are sacred to me and I never thrown them away. Except this one.

Disclaimer #1: I usually hate "chick lit," especially books that emphasize petty, shallow females. Disclaimer #2: I have been a long term Junior League member and never witnessed any of this. Which leads to my "however" Disclaimer #3: However, I have never been a member of a Southern League (Northeast and CA only) and have heard through some wild storytelling at annual meetings that some of this craziness goes on down there.

I wouldn't have minded if it was humorous or tongue in cheek, because a good stereotype is always worth laughing at. It just seemed vacuous and mean. Like someone who had an ax to grind. And, no, I didn't hate "The Help"... because that was a more thoughtful reflection of time and place. I am also a great fan of literature on the "Southern Woman" and all of those stereotypes.

But please, oh please, I hope some good-hearted woman who wants to give back to her community and become a leader does not forgo today's modern Junior League because of a book like this. I think this book is more a reflection of the author's experience with the women in her life that act a certain way because of their community, class, geography, etc. and not solely because of the League. The League is just another venue, like their churches, bookgroups, PTAs, and country clubs, where such women can once again attack each other.

Kathleen says

Brilliant narration by Jenna Lamia. Set in Texas, this one is meant to be funny, heartbreaking, and a little poignant. It reminded me of Susan Elizabeth Phillips with all the snobby small-town characters, the country club, etc. Echoes of

.

The main character transformed from Sandra Dee ("it's all about taste, sugar. Think pearls, bows, and beige") to a sexpot hellion, bringing to mind

.

I listened to the story without taking any of the stereotypes and anachronisms seriously, just for a laugh (but I didn't laugh enough). I loved the scene at the country club, at the swimming pool.

There's a little romance. I enjoyed *some* of the scenes with the sexy artist Sawyer Jackson (her "marlborough man"). In the end, there is no HEA, but there is a hint of a promising future for them.

LFL is a decent writer in terms of dialogue but pacing is slow, and I couldn't become deeply interested in any characters. The heroine's character development wasn't too bad, as Lee showed Fredericka Mercedes Hildebrand Ware progress from pampered, snobbish, and stupid (who in the world signs legal docs without reading them??) to somewhat wiser and kinder. I liked her growing affection for Nicky and Howard Grout, and her relationship with Nina, her maid. However, despite her character growth, "the fabulous Frede Ware" is not someone I can relate to or deeply respect.

But characterization of some others is weak. I would have given this book a tentative 3 stars, but I despised a few of the supposedly positive secondary characters and couldn't believe how it ended. (view spoiler)

Why should anyone like these women? Hugs all around? No way.

I hear this script is going to Hollywood. Not interested.

Maudeen Wachsmith says

It was very upsetting to me when Olivia Goldsmith passed away several years ago as I had loved her wry sense of humor so. I do believe Linda Francis Lee must be channeling Olivia Goldsmith in this wonderful book, *The Devil in the Junior League*. She has the same fast pace and quick wit that were the hallmarks of so many of Goldsmith's bestsellers. I just loved this book from beginning to end and could hardly stand to put it down once I started it. It was just too much fun to see Gordon get what he justly deserved. I hope we see more of Frede Ware (and Sawyer!) in upcoming books by Ms. Lee. I will be chomping at the bit until I can get my hands on another Frede Ware book!

Greta says

Love it, love it, love it...

Maybe it's because I just finished my first new-member year with the Junior League of Minneapolis but I found this book absolutely delicious! The author writes as if you were there with her, and talks to you a la "Clarissa Explains It All" sort of way (Yea for Melissa Joan Hart!).

I would definitely recommend it... some parts get a bit boring, but there is always another juicy twist. Texas seems like a foreign country after reading this book, and beings that there are some native Texans on my GoodReads Friend list I would be curious on their take!

Nancy says

What can I say? The organizational "controversy" surrounding this book really made me smile (or was it smirk?). Without telling too many (unladylike) tales out of school, I'll share that I learned at my Junior League book club (for "retired" leaguers) that this book was banned by the National organization. (for book sales that is the small world parallel to the Catholic church banning The DaVinci Code---i.e. "let's run out and buy it"!)

I wouldn't even dream of commenting on whether the author's experiences could have any parallel to the organization that I know, but I'll concede that the book was very entertaining and just romps along to a satisfactory conclusion.

I can't really imagine that anyone would really want to read it for the book's intrinsic merit---but it is an amusing, fictional update on the age old Society story. Maybe it is not so unlike Jane Austen's Emma after all.

Amber says

As active league member I always give my new provisional member a copy of this book. It's a fun look into how some of the more rigid leagues run and how it effects it's current members

There is southern prissiness on ever page as we watch Fredia have to find a way out of the mess her husband left her in. I loved the two characters come in to save Fredia! The obnoxious lawyer & and his new wife who still lives and dresses as if she were in the movie clueless.

And what does miss clueless want more than anything?? She wants to join the junior league. So if Fredia trains this woman then gets her admitted in to the league then the outspoken lawyer will help Fredia get her money & life back on track.

And somewhere slips in a handsome attest that gets little miss Jr Leaguer out of her kitten heels and into stiletto!

Shannon says

This book is like reading a Lifetime movie. It's so bad but you can't stop reading. I knew what was going to happen after the first couple chapters. Still I could not put this book down....why you ask. Maybe because I had to see just how it was going to end. Maybe because I had to get to the happy ending I knew was coming.

I will say I did skip paragraphs at a time because they were so useless in the whole story. I got very annoyed with Frede's attitude and use of French words. I did enjoy the picture that was painted of the Texas Junior League. I could really see each of the ladies and the air of hair spray and superiority that went along the big Texan hair.

If you are looking for something fun and silly to read, this would be a good pick. Just don't expect anything over the top and amazing.

Allie says

What can I say? I pretty much loved this book. As a member of the Junior League (though not in Texas) this story had me laughing out loud and rooting for Frede. The Junior League of Willow Creek, Texas is described in exactly the way I imagined the Junior League to be. Exclusive and snobby with back-stabbing women who had nothing better to do all day than sip tea and think up ways to one-up another. Thankfully, my Junior League Chapter is nothing like that.

Frede Ware is the Queen of JLWC. The legacy member and the future President. Her League life is perfect... perfect committee choice, perfect husband, home and style. It all falls apart one day when her perfect husband disappears taking all her money with him. What comes next is a great lesson in self-discovery. Frede, in exchange for his free services and while trying to maintain her dignity in spite of the humiliating betrayal of her husband, agrees to get Nikki Grout, the so-wrong-for-the-JLWC wife of her attorney neighbor, Howard, into the JLWC. Little does Frede know, she will learn more about herself than she ever thought she could.

I can see why the AJLI dislikes this book. It does not cast the JL in a good light... at first. The exclusivity, the stereo typical woman, the snobbishness. But, by the end of the story, the ladies of the League come together to help Frede get her dignity back.

A must-read for any Junior League member!!

Natalia says

I picked this book up because I belong to the Junior League of St Louis, and curiosity got the better of me. My problems with the book, though, have little to do with her portayal of the Junior League, but more with the book's weird feeling of anachronism. While her main character is supposed to be 28 in a book published in 2007 and set in contemporary time, everybody in the book, and some of the details feel at least 10-20 years out of date.

- I am about the same age as the main character, and went to a private southern university with some of the daughters of Texas's finest families. While they did wear full makup and dressy jeans to class, I didn't see any of them running around in pearls. And, more to the point, thed *did* wear tube tops and stretchy cigarette pants to go out to the clubs and bars. so this idea that Texas girls from the right kinds of families don't wear things like that? Maybe 20 years ago.

- All the characters are supposed to be in their late 20s, but read quite a bit older. I can't pin down what it is that makes me feel this, maybe the endless discussions of clothing that seems out of character for young women. And the fact that they don't seem to have any youthful interests (or much in the way of interests at all, really)

- The description of the League. It's true that there are still a handful of leagues nationally that do require sponsorship for membership, I've simply never heard of a League that required 6 sponsors. I even looked up the requirements for all of the leagues in Texas, and only half require sponsorship at all, and most only

require 1-3. Only one required 4, but 4 is still a lot less than 6.

It was a quick read and I cheered for the friends rekindling their friendship. But I just couldn't get over the characters and anachronistic feeling.

Renee says

"She had forgotten that it was possible, and decidedly more desirable, to wrap one's true feelings up in "bless your hearts" and "aren't you sweets"....Now don't misunderstand, it's not that Texas women don't have opinions or share them. We do. It's just that we wrap them up in honey and smiles and hugs until a sharp rebuke can feel like a compliment, the true meaning not sinking in until later, hitting like a left hook to the jaw. As the saying goes, a Texas woman can tell you to go to hell, and make you think you're going to enjoy the trip."

Although not usually into chick lit, as a Texan and former Junior Leaguer, I couldn't resist it. This is a funny, fluffy book to breeze through in a couple of nights.

Heidi says

Generally, I do enjoy the chick-lit genre, but this one dragged a bit. Half way thru the book it finally started getting more interesting, but by then I was so tired of her using "moi" and "tres" and "fabu". It was a little nauseating. Even for those who enjoy the chick-lit stuff, this is not one I'd recommend.

Traci says

This is closer to 3.5 stars so I rounded up. Was this the best book I've read? No. Was it entertaining and a quick, light read? Yes. There were some issues...like others said...the main character Frede being 28 yet seeming to be at times much older with the way she was written, but I was still amused by this book.

Marsha says

Southern women really are different. Even when their lives are imploding—the mistress shows up just after the wife (finally!) gets pregnant with her husband's child—they maintain their cool. Then they plot revenge.

Fredericka Mercedes Hildebrand Ware struggles to turn the trashy Nikki Grout into someone the Junior League of Willow Creek will accept into their ranks because she needs the help of Nikki's husband the lawyer and this is his price. In doing so, she obtains a little of Nikki's joie de vivre—and something of her funky style of dressing. So what happens to Frede, as her friends call her? Does she get even with her cheating, adulterous husband? Does she get her house, money and life back? Does she get to settle down with the handsome, rugged artist (who is definitely not gay)?

Well, this book isn't as predictable as all that and the ending is a delightful jolt to those who expect typical unsurprising chick-lit fare. If you like reading about the trials, tribulations, anguish and triumph of a Southern ice beauty who never (well, hardly ever) loses her temper, cool or towering sense of self worth and self esteem, then this is the book for you. Frede is funny, haughty, winning, withering, influential, demure, immaculate and a killer dresser whether in tasteful flats or hooker stilettos. She's a terrific heroine and I highly recommend this book for people who want a little extra in their light reading.

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Wendy says

Oh my god...how lame is this book????? The worst kind of chick lit! I think I lost IQ points just reading it.
