



Smitten Book Club

Colleen Coble , Kristin Billerbeck , Denise Hunter , Diann Hunt

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""Consider that your beau is like a coveted novel whose compelling first lines you've just begun to read." --A Gentlewoman's Guide to Love and Courtship"

At a rummage sale, Heather, a member of the Fireside Book Club, discovers a turn-of-the-century romantic advice book written by a once-famous Smitten, Vermont, resident. When she shares the precious volume with her friends in the club, they find clues about a hidden treasure rumored to be buried in their tiny town.

As Heather, Abby, Lia, and Molly take turns reading the book, each projects onto it her own literary tastes. Heather sees it as a mystery. Abby discovers delicious dashes of Jane Austen. Lia sees in it the idealism of a bygone day. And Molly just wishes they'd made the book into a movie!

One by one, each of the women finds romantic love--often in spite of the historic book's advice. And in searching for the legendary gold, the friends discover the best kind of treasure. The kind that brings hope and healing to each of their hearts.

Smitten Book Club Details

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Author : Colleen Coble , Kristin Billerbeck , Denise Hunter , Diann Hunt

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From Reader Review Smitten Book Club for online ebook

Melanie says

Review on Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/review/R2GGPCCQ...>

Review on my blog (to be posted 4/5): <http://christianbookshelfreviews.blog...>

Smitten Book Club is the third book in the "Smitten" series. I have to say, this has been one of the most unique series I've seen. All of the books are a collection of novellas from four authors with different main characters - and yet there's one central theme/story that binds them together.

For Smitten Book Club, it was Pearl Chambers' book and the search for the legendary buried gold. I think this was my favorite part about the book, as I loved the little bit of mystery it brought to the story. The quotes from "the Gentlewoman's Guide to Love and Courtship" (Pearl's book) at the start of every chapter were fun, too!

As for my favorite novella, that was the last one: Happily Ever After by Denise Hunter. It seemed like the novellas got better with each one: Love by the Book was just okay for me; I felt like it needed better editing, as the story didn't seem to flow that well and was confusing at times. Shelved Under Romance was good and I liked this story. A New Chapter is my second favorite novella in this book; I enjoyed it very much and the only thing that I didn't care for all that much was how quickly things moved in the end - didn't seem believable. As I said, Happily Ever After is my favorite of the bunch. I felt like it was the most complete novella and flowed the best. I really liked that one! :)

Overall, a fun read! If you like contemporary reads, you might enjoy Smitten Book Club.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received one or more of the products or services mentioned above for free in the hope that I would mention/review it on my blog. I was not required to give a positive review, only my honest opinion - which I've done. All thoughts and opinions expressed are my own and I only recommend products or services I use personally and believe will be good for my readers. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

Margaret Tidwell says

I really enjoyed this book I just wish each of the stories were longer and maybe their own books. I hated how the endings always seemed rushed. Other than that though I loved this book just as much as I loved the other 2 in the series. I can't wait to see if they write another one because it is such a fun idea and the authors work so well together.

Lisa (Remarkablylisa) says

Didn't even know this was Christian romance until I kept reading mentions of prayers and GOD. sweet,

wholesome, fluffy, and sometimes dramatic collection of stories I enjoyed listening to.

Lorrie says

This book was written by 4 different, wonderfully-talented authors, each telling the story of 4 close friends, all belonging to a book club in Smitten, Vermont. The authors wrote about each girl, their unique life stories and their finding love in God's own timing. This is a Christian romance novel, so it is interspersed throughout with exemplary godly virtues. It was a pleasure to read.

I received an e-copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.

Dianne Peeler says

So enjoyable!!!! More, more and more

Barb says

The century-old Gentlewoman's Guide to Love and Courtship is no ordinary book club choice. But for the little book club in Smitten, Vermont, it might be their best pick yet!

The thick, leathery tome Heather pulled out of the dusty cardboard box was definitely coming home with her. Not only was The Gentlewoman's Guide to Love and Courtship an appealing curiosity by virtue of its title, but it was also written by Smitten, Vermont,

native Pearl Chambers, a local gentlewoman from three generations back.

Little did Heather know the repercussions this little curiosity would have on her and her friends' romantic exploits.

When Heather and her fellow book club members begin passing the book around, their respective interpretations are unleashed on their respective love lives . . . for better or for worse. Is it a mystery? An idealist fantasy? An intimation of Jane Austen? As romantic love finds its way to each woman, the Guide proves itself both surprisingly prescient and hilariously irrelevant.

What's more, a handwritten inscription indicates that the arcane book might hold the only clues leading to buried gold — exactly what one of the members needs to keep her house. How could they not go treasure hunting?

Stories of faith, hope and love. Excellent read. 5 stars.

Tereia Joe says

I enjoyed this joyful book. I am a chick flick type of woman so this for me was wonderful. I love a happy ending. What was a surprise for me was that I actually enjoyed the separation of the woman stories and how they came together which reminds me of the movie "waiting to exhale" regarding friends of woman there for each other but they each have their different lives happening. This was very enjoyable and I believe there are other series with these woman to them so I will look into it to see about them.

Lisa at Farm Fresh Adventures says

I love the smitten series! While they could stand alone, it's best to read the series in order to keep the characters straight!

Of the heroines, Abby was my favorite!

Darla Damron says

4 good stories to finish the series. It was fun and easy to read.

Cherie Kasper says

Four authors write stories about four girls - Heather, Abby, Molly and Elliana (Lia)- who live in Smitten, Vermont and they all belong to the Smitten Book Club. While telling their stories each author uses excerpts from an old book called The Gentlewoman's Guide to Love & Courtship by Pearl Chambers. Through this book each girl find clues to a hidden treasure and also knowledge of becoming a better woman.

I loved how each story was completed on its own, but also included things from the others book. I also felt that each of these four authors wrote exceptionally well while building the characters and the story flowed smoothly. Reading this book was a real pleasure. I felt like the four girls were my close friends by the end of the last book. I would have loved to be part of the Smitten Book Club.

Anna's Herding Cats says

Reviewed for herding cats & burning soup.

Amazon: <http://amzn.to/2jmol4W>

The Story:

A long lost gold mine and a book club determined to find it. Oh yes. I love a treasure hunt. The ladies found an old etiquette book on how to snag a man at a library sale and in it's pages are clues for discovering the lost mine. Something they desperately want in order to help their friend who recently lost her husband and is struggling financially.

I really enjoyed this collection. Each of the couples has some sort of history which I like in a novella. Either they'd known each other in the past and were reunited or were currently in each others world (librarian and patron, for example). I liked each set up and thought they flowed very nicely from one to the next. Time with friends, book club, real life struggles, funny moments coupled with serious ones. It was just a nice easy listen as they each tried their hand at deciphering clues and falling in love.

The Narration:

The narrator for this one was Pam Turlow. This was my first time listening to her and oh, I like! Narration was easy and nicely paced. I was in sync with her from the first chapter. I was really nervous about reading an anthology on audiobook and that things would blur too much but it was handled nicely and I was able to follow along and keep track with no problem. I also listened to it in just 3 days which for a 9+ hour book is really fast for me. But I kept sneaking bits in whenever I could because I just enjoyed listening to Turlow. I'll hunt down more of hers for sure.

Grace Tolman says

This was actually the best out of all of the "Smitten" series that I've read/listened to.

I liked that there was an ongoing theme of 2nd chances for all of the ladies. I liked that there was a mystery about the hidden treasure. And I liked that each one of the ladies were different in personality. It helped me distinguish them from each other. I thought that the writers, although created their own story lines worked well together, especially with the blended and overarching themes. I also liked that they talked about books. I, of course, am a book lover so the references throughout the stories about different books got me excited. Plus the fact that they all found their happy endings, especially the widowed Molly, made this book fun to read/listen to.

Brooke (i blog 4 books) says

Review originally published on i blog 4 books: <http://iblog4books.blogspot.com/2014/...>

4.5 stars

Love by the Book by Colleen Coble

This novella starts the book off well. The town rallies around Molly in her time of need, and I'm interested to see how that story continues to play out later. Heather is a sweetheart of a character, and I loved how giving she was. When Paul comes on the scene, I could see where this story was going, but I enjoyed the journey, quick as it was. Great start to the collection! [4 stars]

Shelved Under Romance by Kristen Billerbeck

Oh, Kristin Billerbeck! I love how her characters are so stereotypical. It definitely adds a bit of humor to the story. :) Abby is the quintessential nerdy, boring librarian who seriously needs a social life. Her friends are so sweet to encourage her to try new things, and Wyatt definitely breaks her out of her comfort zone! The ending is pretty rushed, but I enjoyed Wyatt and Abby's friendship as they learn to look past the obvious to see the true character of the person inside. [3.5 stars]

A New Chapter by Diann Hunt

This novella has so many elements that I love in a story—childhood friends reuniting, kids playing a main role in the story, forgiveness as a major theme! Sigh. As Lia and Joey reconnect, I enjoyed getting to know them and see how their relationship grew out of their friendship as kids. While this was a short story at around 80 pages, it didn't feel short, and I think it has a lot to do with the fact they already knew one another. I also adored Lia's mom and Joey's daughter! Sweet story all the way around. It's hard to choose, but I think this one might be my favorite story in the collection. :) [5 stars]

Happily Ever After by Denise Hunter

After reading a bit about Molly in the previous novellas, I was pleased to finally read her story. I had such empathy for her as she faced one struggle after another. And I loved Gage—a true hero! The final story in this collection is the longest and has the feel of a complete book, though I would have been happy to read about Molly and Gage for much longer than the 120 pages that Denise gave me! [5 stars]

Overall

I've thoroughly enjoyed the previous books in the Smitten series, and Smitten Book Club was no exception! All four authors did a great job including the main characters from the other novellas, and it was fun to continue reading about their stories throughout the other stories. The idea of a book possibly giving clues to a hidden treasure was fun, and I loved the hint of mystery woven throughout the book. With four talented authors contributing to this book, I don't see how anyone could be disappointed! Highly recommended! [4.5 stars]

I received a free copy of this book from Thomas Nelson through Litfuse Publicity in exchange for my fair and honest review.

Cassandra says

I really wanted to like this book, especially since it was about a book club AND a treasure hunt...but I didn't. It was one of those books that I had to force myself to finish. The basic premise of the book was good- four friends (and members of a local book club) each find love and a clue to the treasure's whereabouts. Each friend's story was a separate short story in the book, written by a different author. The problem is every single story sounded the same. Girl gets acquainted with boy (that she knew previously), they fall in love FAST, there is a misunderstanding where the girl winds up in tears and then... Ta da!...they wind up engaged in a ridiculously short amount of time. In addition to this unbelievable scenario, I was also annoyed by how previous spouses (even ones that died in horrific ways like a young mom being shot over Christmas in a mall??) are kind of dismissed as being non-important. Like when the "hero" tells his new love that despite his wife dying in such a horrific way not even a year ago, he's kinda over it bc things weren't "perfect" before she died. So annoying!

This book was kindly provided by netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Wordsworth says

Rating is an average of the first two stories. This one will be a DNF for me, though I liked the premise. I nearly stopped part way through the lousy first story but pushed on to give at least one other author a chance. Unfortunately it was doomed by the combination of lackluster writing and irritating audiobook narrator (seriously though, the female voices sounded like Amy Acker at her most annoying, and the men sounded ridiculously sonorous, as the narrator attempted to use an almost-singing tone to make up for her lack of low pitch). But seriously, the first story sucked hard. The writing itself was insipid and the plot improbable, given the lack of demonstrated character development or chemistry. And what even DID happen four years ago? Were they dating and she wanted to get married and he flipped? Why do we get told everything instead of shown?

The second story was much better written but not enough to convince me to keep going through this project clearly written by a bunch of friends who didn't want to offend each other by editing the literal crap out of the others' stories.
