



Rejected Writers Take the Stage

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After months of playing the lottery and hoping for an uptick in her dog-boarding business, Janet's friend Annie must face the inevitable: the bank is foreclosing on her family farm. But thanks to the Rejected Writers' Book Club, Annie doesn't have to face it alone. With just a few weeks to raise the \$20,000 that she and her fifty rescue dogs need to avoid becoming homeless, the writers need a fund-raiser, and fast. Much to Janet's horror, Doris has another crazy plan.

In a moment of inspiration, their fearless leader declares a solution: a musical extravaganza. No one in the group has ever produced a musical, but Doris will not be deterred—they'll write it together. And with Flora, who has never sung a note in her life, as the lead and Janet as their reluctant director—along with a hypochondriac costume designer, a pyrotechnics enthusiast, and Janet's very pregnant daughter pitching in—what could possibly go wrong?

To produce a miracle for Annie, Janet and her friends will work around the clock holding auditions, concocting elaborate costumes, and getting a little too close to blowing themselves up—but will it be enough?

Rejected Writers Take the Stage Details

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From Reader Review Rejected Writers Take the Stage for online ebook

Gaele says

One of the most ridiculous, fun and wholly unrealistic stories I have read in a long time, that surprises readers with an unexpected depth of emotion and solidarity when one of the members of this little club is in trouble. Not to put too fine a point on it, but at one point or another, each of the many characters in this book has their moment of crisis: some simple, others not so, but the varying strengths and quirks in this group show the power of speaking a thought into the universe.

See, the women of Southlea Bay are, at least in this group, a bunch of rejected writers: writers who demand and celebrate each rejection with panache and style, taking no notice of the fact that (at least from what I saw here) there isn't a truly original or workable idea to be found. Oh that's not to say that they are terrible, but particularly with the building of the 'script' for the benefit to help save one of their member's farm and house, the near full on rip off of The Wizard of Oz, and the justifications that make it different are as cringe-worthy as they are utterly ridiculous and funny.

Not knowing what to expect from my first encounter, there was plenty of information and references explaining the first in the series, and the character of Janet – the outwardly most 'normal' of the bunch, with her inability to say "no" and a husband who just laughs at her frustrations and concerns.... Herding Cats comes to mind, clearly and completely appropriate. With everything you shouldn't do to create a play, a retiring and rather 'out of her time' lead actress meant to sing her way through the moments, a stalwart and never take no ringleader and plenty of soft moments where the concern for Annie and her farm strike every character, it was hard to put down and harder to not wonder what will happen next. These ladies of the Rejected Writers club are funny, caring, accepting and above all wholly committed to their group, their friendships and their town.

I received an eArc copy of the title from the publisher via NetGalley for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

Review first appeared at I am, Indeed

Mary says

This is a fun story that got my attention from the start. Why? First, I have rescue pets. Second, I love the theatre.

The basic story is that a group of friends, all unpublished writers, learn that the bank is about to foreclose on a friend's home. Annie lives in her old family home where she houses rescue dogs on the property. The rejected writers decide to write and produce a theatrical production in order to help Annie raise the funds needed to avoid foreclosure.

The fun begins from the time this group starts planning the production: Who will write and direct? Who will perform? But there is more to this story than the efforts to produce the show. There is a touch of romance, a

demanding pregnant daughter, and the uncertainty that they can pull off this venture.

This is not the place to find in-depth character studies or a discussion of serious theatre. It does deal with diverse relationships and how these women deal with them. I became comfortable with these ladies. It is hard to not smile or even laugh out loud when reading about the effort the ladies make to put on their production. I enjoyed the surprises that popped up in the plot and found that I was reluctant to stop turning the pages just because I wanted to read what would happen next.

*I received an advance copy of this book from the author and have voluntarily chosen to provide a review.

Danielle Urban says

Rejected Writers Take Stage by Suzanne Kelman is a wonderful woman's fiction piece. The characters are charming. There are moments I laughed out loud, worried, and fell in love with this group. A group of writers get together to help one of their own be saved from being homeless. Their actions to save her and the dogs under her care, will be full of drama, flair, and excitement. This book is full of craziness, humor, and friendship. The sense of community in this small-town of theirs was believable. I loved following along. Suzanne Kelman's writing is entertaining from the start to end. Overall, I recommend it to readers everywhere.

I got this copy from Net Galley. This, is my honest review.

Lynn says

I love the clean humor of these books. I'm definitely going to read the next one! This is "laugh-out-loud as you read and make people look at you strangely" kind of funny. I remember laughing my way through the first book and wondered if this one could be as good. It was!

Darcysmom says

I received an ARC of this book from Netgalley for free in exchange for an honest review.

What a pleasure it was to catch up with the kooky, quirky ladies of the Rejected Writer's Book Club. The entirety of the book was set in Southlea Bay. I loved getting to know the denizens of the town. In this second book of the series, the ladies need to help Annie, one of the rejected writers, save her house. Major hijinks ensue.

The Flora and Stacy subplots really kept the story moving.

While Rejected Writers Take the Stage can be read on its own, it will be much more enjoyable if you have read The Rejected Writer's Book Club first.

Glenda says

An enjoyable read? I love the diversity of each character and the different personalities are very true to life. The author has written about a diverse group of women who have forged a connection through their writing skills—or rather the lack of? It is humorous but also tugs on my heart strings. Each character is unique but relatable. Having lived in many small towns, this story and its cast of characters brought many memories. I would recommend this book to anyone! Be prepared to laugh and have a love/hate reaction to various people. It is a HEA and I like that! I received a free copy and chose to write a review.

Melissa Henderson says

A wonderful story of friendship, love, and what can happen when a group of friends care deeply about each other. This story made me laugh from the very beginning. I laughed and I cried throughout the whole book. The characters remind me of people in my own life. The author tells a story that touches the heart and keeps the reader wanting to know more about the characters. I LOVE this story ! I am telling all my friends about this story. I received a copy of this book from the author and this is my personal honest opinion.

Joanne says

I read the first book set in Southlea Bay some time back and loved it so I was really pleased to be contacted by the author Suzanne Kelman to ask if I'd like to read the sequel, *Rejected Writers Take the Stage*. I'm pleased to say, I enjoyed it just as much. Although it's a sequel, you don't need to have read the first book as the story is completely standalone. If you have read the first book though, you will enjoy meeting the characters again.

In this book, the ladies of The Rejected Writers Book Club are still happily receiving rejection letters for their work but this time have a new writing challenge to face. One of their number, Annie, is facing losing her home, and sanctuary for her rescue dogs, as she has fallen behind with mortgage payments. Her friends are determined they won't allow this to happen and come up with the idea of writing and performing a play to help raise the money she needs. Meanwhile Flora, is delighted to find that her friend Dan is coming to visit but who is the clingy woman he brings with him?

Once again I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with the eccentric ladies of Southlea Bay. I love the obvious friendship between them, despite their differences, and the way they rallied round to try to help Annie in her hour of need. The stage show Doris writes bears more than a passing resemblance to *The Wizard of Oz* and there were so many moments which made me laugh out loud. As soon as there was a mention of characters appearing in a cloud of smoke or being catapulted onto the stage, I knew it was going to be a hoot!

Aside from the stage show, Flora's blossoming romance with Dan is a major strand of the story. She can't understand who this Marcy is who Dan has brought to Southlea Bay and although it's obvious to the reader what is going on, poor Flora is very despondent. There are so many missed opportunities and misunderstandings between the two and I was willing them just to talk to each other properly. If only Marcy didn't keep getting in the way!

A thoroughly enjoyable read about the value of friendship and sticking together with lots of warm humour - I

can't wait to see what the ladies get up to next!

Anita Kovacevic says

When a book starts off with this chapter title - FROZEN YETIS & SCOTCH TAPE SHENANIGANS, you know you are in for a fun(ny) ride. If you have had the chance to read the first book in the Southlea Bay Series, The Rejected Writers' Book Club, and liked it as I did, then you are looking forward to each of these chapter titles, each of the darling characters and their quirky mishaps and strong friendship. If you enjoyed Suzanne Kelman' witty writing, you will have high expectations.

And the author sure delivers. Yet again. Her charming tale of a group of average (ha-ha) small-town ladies, an unlikely bunch but a band of bonded pals nonetheless, joins to save a member of their Rejected Writers' Book Club from financial ruin and losing her family farm estate (turned into a dog shelter). Do they simply pitch in with money? No. They are average people with average incomes. Do they go begging online? No. They are average (some even elderly) ladies on a remote island with an age-appropriate reluctance for social media. They set up a charity musical. Can they dance, sing or direct? No, but why should that stop them, especially with their town matron Doris pushing and pulling them all? Enough spoilers from me - let me just say the story will have it all - from feathery boas and a run-down theatre to a love triangle, catastrophe and (re)birth. And fear not, the author skillfully introduces a few segments which can help you follow even if you have missed the pleasure of reading the first part.

What I love most about the series are the characters - a cast of everyday people we all know and love, or love to hate, and I am happy to find some new ones in this book, a very welcome addition to the Southlea Bay family. I admit I would have slapped Marcy, the vixen, on several occasions, and yet she did make a certain process possible eventually. (Come to think of it, I could have even knocked some sense into Dan a few times, but yes, we all know such naive men, too.) Doris is the sort of lady we all get annoyed by, but when trouble comes knocking, you always want them on your side, Lottie and Lavinia are unique in their duality, Janet is the not-always-loud voice of reason, Martin is phenomenal and so on. Gladys is my absolute favourite although she'd (only) be getting supporting role award if it came to filming this. (What's the hold-up, by the way?)

There is friendship and kindness in this book which is so rarely found these days; and that good feeling is what you are left with after you read it. The laughs, the giggles and chuckles, too. It reminded me in spirit to The Darling Buds of May, one of my favourite TV comedy series. So there - if you want to feel like that, read it. You may just hug your family more, call your friends again. Or simply tickle someone, just for laughs. Well done, Suzanne Kelman! Comedy with heart is not easy to do. We should all laugh more often. Thank you.

Tanya Eby says

What. A. Riot!!!

Katherine Sunderland says

This is the second in the Southlea Bay series and it was a delight to return the crazy, colourful and highly entertaining world of the Rejected Writers' Club. If you haven't read the first book it doesn't matter, this

works just as well as a stand alone. Kelman is very good at filling the reader in with any information that they need in a non evasive manner with a succinct recap to allow you to pick up the story and tell you know all you need about the key characters to enjoy this second foray into the usual chaos, hilarity and heartwarming adventures of the eclectic gang.

Our protagonist, Janet, is our narrator for some of the chapters. She is an engaging and witty observer of events as she tries to "navigate her way through all shades of crazy that is small town life." She joined the Rejected Writers' Club a few years ago and took them on a road trip across America as they attempted to get one of their manuscripts rejected. Yes, you read that right - they wanted to get a contract to publish one of their novels rejected! As their name suggests, the Rejected Writers' Club is a group of women who have been writing terrible novels and keeping a collection of their rejection letters which they then share with each other on a monthly basis.

This book opens with Doris Newberry on the warpath ready to construct a ludicrous plan to help raise some money for Annie whose farm has been threatened by the bank unless she can raise a huge amount of money.

"The words 'Doris Newberry' worked faster than 'abracadabra' to create disappearing tricks all over Southlea Bay."

Doris is a vibrant soul, but actually all the characters in this story are distinctive and vividly portrayed, literary and metaphorically full of colour and very easy to visualise.

"[Ruby] had opted for an ensemble she was calling "prism joy", if people asked, with inspiration from the rainbow colours that bounced around her shop from the crystals hanging in her windows."

Ruby is also on a 'detox' which does not go down well when the group meet for an emergency meeting in the cafe and she asks for hot water with a squeeze of lemon.

"I can bring you a lemon, but you will have to squeeze it yourself. Squeezing lemons for people who don't have the strength because they are not eating is not in my job description."

Doris suggests that the Rejected Writers' Club put on a musical in order to raise the money needed to save Annie's farm. Before she knows what has happened, just like in book 1, Janet has found herself volunteering to make the far fetched suggestion become a reality.

"Had I agreed to direct a stage show? The words got stuck in my brain, like soap in a colander. I didn't know the first thing about directing a show."

Neither does anyone else in the group. Neither can any of them sing, dance, act or direct. But that is not going to deter them. Especially when Doris decides to hold auditions with a very clear list of what they are - or are not - looking for in their prospective cast and crew. Her poster details this so anyone bold enough to step up to the challenge is clear about what is required of them:

"No late arrivals, no loiterers, no time wasters, no kids, no food or drink, no bad singers, no bad dancers, no bad actors. Come on down it will be fun."

But against all odds, the one thing the Rejected Writers' Club can ensure is fun. And they will always rise to a challenge. Against all odds!

The Rejected Writers Take to the Stage isn't just about a chaotic, eclectic group of women, it also has a subplot of a love triangle between three characters and also explores issues of friendship, love and small communities.

This is a great, lighthearted novel about a charismatic group of women. It has echoes of things like "The Calendar Girls" and "Big Stone Gap". As with Book One, it would make a fantastic TV series or film. Kelman's writing is fast paced, entertaining, lively and enjoyable. If you are looking for a bit of escapism, a place to lose yourself for a while, a story about friendship and pulling together then this is the book for you.

Nicole Normand says

I received a free copy from NetGalley; this is my honest review.

I loved how the author gathered this bunch of unbelievably crew together and all the mishaps that go with it. I certainly laughed much less than with the first book but I really didn't like Stacy the self-centered daughter at all all in the first book; imagine my surprise when the author brings her back with a "decisive" place around her parents and her mother's friends, all the while being even more selfish - I didn't think it could be possible - and childish. Pregnancy doesn't excuse such attitude.

Marcy too takes up the stage - no pun intended - with Dan, and she too is the most manipulative person, apart from Stacy perhaps, in the world and everyone falls for her act, Dan included.

I felt I was more than enough irritated through the story between those two and I was not entertained enough in between, so every time I sat down to read I didn't expect to LOL like with the first story.

I loved the ending, didn't expect it, and was glad it had a "feel good" aura about it.

Selena says

Just as funny as Rejected Writers Book Club! I loved it from beginning to end. There HAS to be a book 3- they've got some planning to do...

Joan says

What a hoot! I laughed so hard at times while reading that tears literally flowed. Kelman has created characters and dialogue and situations that are truly hilarious.

But the book is not all laughs. There are some serious times too. In fact, the concern for the women in the Rejected Writers Book Club this time is saving the family farm of one of their members. Behind in her mortgage, the bank is hoovering over Annie, threatening possession. Doris' answer is to put on a benefit, a musical production. And that is when the fun begins.

There is also a little romance in the book. The growing relationship between Dan and Flora hits a roadblock when that conniving Marcy latches on to Dan. How can one man be so clueless about the wiles of a woman on the prowl?

All of those elements combine to form a well crafted humorous novel. I thoroughly enjoyed reading about how the women in the club came together to help Annie. It's a heart warming story with quirky characters, a tender romance, and scenes that will make you laugh your socks off. A plus for me is that it takes place on the island of which I am a native and still reside. I can hardly wait for the next in the series.

This is the second novel in this series but reads very well on its own.

I received a complimentary egalley of this book through the author. My comments are an independent and honest review.

brr says

I know these people!

These two books are the funniest books I have read since the James Herriot books. I have read books that claim to be funny and they do not rate a smile. "Janet's" descriptions of the other members are great, and while she protests not wanting to be a member, she's glad she is. I also like her description of her house: rats in the cellar, bats in the attic, and mice in the kitchen. I know that house. In fact I have lived there.. For light reading, and a funny story, this book would be a good choice.
