



Socialite Evenings

Shobhaa Dé

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Karuna, a prominent Bombay socialite, is trying to flee the nightmare of the present by escaping into the past. An unhappy divorce and a succession of sordid affairs have left her bruised and battered and, in an effort to forget, Karuna begins writing her memoirs. As the story of her life unfolds we see how the gauche middle-class girl metamorphoses into a star--and we also meet her friends and enemies: neurotic, man-hungry Anjali; gorgeous, vivacious Ritu; trappy, outrageous Si; Abe, who prefers young girls; Varun, a high-profile editor with a penchant for young boys; Krish, the pretentious adman, whose wife actively helps him in his extra-marital affairs; Girish, the art-film maker in search of the perfect 'Shakuntala'...All of these characters and more play out their lives against the backdrop of Bombay--a city unique unto itself...

Socialite Evenings Details

Date : Published January 30th 2007 by Penguin India (first published June 1st 1991)

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Author : Shobhaa Dé

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From Reader Review Socialite Evenings for online ebook

Tiffany says

Urrrm. Whilst I love all things Hindustani, I felt like most of this book was centered around a woman's sexuality, or rather a rich woman and her friends sex lives and the unhappiness they experienced surrounding their marriages and extra marital affairs. The main character annoyed me -alot- just her general apathy to life, and I found the story at times took forever to reach certain points in the character's life etc. I remember writing on facebook that all this was so far was "sex, sex, sex" and as I write this now, I can't think of anything else.

If Shobhaa De did write this heavily influenced as a reflection of the sordid parts of the Bollywood lifestyle, then for that it is salient and totally indulgent, but still, for the most it wasn't.

Anand Kanojia says

Shobha De's signature writing style quietly reflects and simmers boldly in this novel.

Modern living story of a women oscillating in present to past and running down emotional escapades. I picked it up during my one of the work-break period and spent some days to get over entirely.

All i can say plot is missing edges and spikes that usually keep hitting and glued around, if you have a habit of reading fast-paced novels. Probably author's style of holding story pace is slow and unorganizely. Weaves a frame of relationship push-pull of woes, fights between husband-wife, 'dutiful' daily routines

Its not a linear story with tight editing, but a kind of feminine, warm yet bold & expressive that usually author is known for to write. Good detailing of women's thought reflections to life, and hence female mass should like it.

I haven't again taken it on hand after finishing once ^^

Laxmi says

Karuna, the novel's main character narrates us through her life, from her modest, middle class beginnings to her eventual ascension into the socialite circles of Mumbai's elite. The first third of the novel is dedicated to her complaining about her middle class background and dissatisfaction with the life she leads. We learn quite a bit about her "closest" friend Anjali, and at one point, a hundred or so pages into the book, I found myself trying to figure out who the actual main character is, since Karuna spends a good portion of the novel praising and simultaneously complaining about Anjali, the quintessential airheaded socialite. As the story slowly and painfully progresses, Karuna marries a childhood sweetheart in order to ascend to the upper class, and we hear about her unhappiness with her shallow marriage and bland husband. She continues to chronicle

her boredom with marriage, her husband, and reality, choosing to lose herself in the literary world instead. Two-thirds into the novel, there is still no riveting anecdote or colorful moment that really captures your interest. Karuna continues to regale us of tales of infidelity, religious shams, and even a few mafia members make an appearance, and yet, she does so in such a lifeless, colorless tone, that we just shrug past it. Besides Karuna and Anjali, none of the characters are given much depth or personality, notably Karuna's husband, which contributes to the novel's lifeless storyline.

As I ended the book, I was disappointed on so many levels. The only semi-useful take-away from the novel that I got was the mentality of India's middle class. Karuna discusses her thoughts and disappointment with being a part of the middle class, and even though India is nearly a world away from America, I found myself understanding some of her viewpoints. Nevertheless, this is definitely NOT a novel I would recommend to anyone unless you find yourself bored out of your mind with absolutely nothing else to do.

Selva Subramanian says

Read it long long ago. I remember liking it. Even otherwise it should be the best of what Shobhaa de wrote.

Rajni Vashist says

This is first time I read Shobhaa De book although read her articles n no of times in Newspaper. This is Book is a reflection of this bold lady. I enjoyed her book which is a mirror to aristocratic, hypocritic and double standard socialite.

Elizabeth says

I still am not quite sure what I think of this book.

It's about a woman coming of age and maturing in Mumbai/Bombay, India. She does not know what she wants of life - whether career or personal related. She marries for reasons she does not seem to know. She divorces. She comes to terms with her family.

There are aspects of her life - about muddling through and ending up where one should be that ring true.

Zainab Abbas says

Okay, so, I admit. i picked this book up from the library solely on the basis of the cover.

Having that out of the way, I have very mixed feelings about Socialite Evenings. The book is an epitome of an oxymoron. I wanted to PUT IT DOWN, yet I couldn't resist a few pages. There were times when I went, WHY ON EARTH HAVEN'T THEY MADE THIS INTO A MOVIE? and then start thinking of the various actors to play the characters and blah blah. But at some point, I'd go like, thank goodness. This would make for a very very dull movie.

To sum this up in one word: the book is CLICHE. EVERYTHING. The storyline to characters. Everything. But if you're looking for a piece of chick-lit, with torrid affairs, the so called glamor of 'high society' a bored wife and all that, go ahead.

Ronak Gajjar says

I don't even know where to start this review from!

Concept: **2.0/5.0**

Execution: **2.0/5.0**

Characters Bespoken: **0.5/5.0**

Cover: **1.0/5.0**

Overall: **1.25/5.0**

P.S.: Maybe I read this because I had lost my mind!

NORA says

I enjoyed it for what it is - fiction/fantasy. Not a reflection of the times or mores. No doubt there are some people in this world with lots of money and nothing to do who manage to have interesting lives, but the write hasn't chosen to write about them.. No idea how she got published in Penguin, nor why this book was so popular.

Dita Von says

Very spicy and kitty party kind. Almost reminiscent of the movie Page 3. It was my companion in Mumbai airport.

BetweenTheCovers says

Trash, plain and simple.

This was my first time reading a book by Shobhaa Dé and it will be my last.

The story is cliched, tawdry and boring. The writing is mediocre at best.

I picked it up because she had written for Times of India. I was disappointed.

Chaitalee Ghosalkar says

Having read De's articles earlier, I was looking forward to this book. So one can only imagine my disappointment when my experience turned out to be quite anti-climatic.

The setting of her story did call for some sleaze, but the author turned the trashiness aspect to turbo mode. I

only read till the end because poor me desperately clung on to the expectation that there would be something good ahead. Alas!

Ramesh kumar says

This book is superficial,could delve much deeper into issues of society,relations.It fails miserably.De is satisfied with mere contrast between various echelons of society in a naive way.Relations between humans is a VAST subject, does not end at surface level.No doubt, author has tried to give a glimpse of what goes on in media world and ad world, but she could have gone to more depths, and not remained "awestruck"by the glares of these worlds.It is not clear what she wants to say or defend?Is she defending the ad world,media or the participants thereof?She should not have taken sides in a clumsy way. She is not clear about the aim of the novel.It is not entertainment ,in any case.

.Most readers will find this as a novel without an appropriate end , incocclusive.Shows confused mind of the author.

Mona says

When I found out this was published over 20 years ago I found it hard to believe. The India and characters described are very different from the India I am familiar with. Also the author uses a lot of language/expressions/vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to some of her readers and which she does not translate/explain.

Jennifer Solove says

William Dalrymple called Dé the "Indian Jackie Collins", so I was expecting some good smut (and perhaps some insight on the sordid side of Mumbai high society). I was pretty disappointed. Good "trash" needs a fast pace, witty dialogue, outlandish characters, acerbic asides, and attention to aesthetic details (why I knew Crazy Rich Asians would be a hit before it exploded on the American market). This novel flounders with none of the above. Shame.
