



Claudia Silver to the Rescue

Kathy Ebel

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In this gutsy debut novel, flawed but unsinkable Claudia Silver cuts a wide comic swath through 1990s New York City in her misguided attempts to find love and happiness.

Estranged from her bohemian Brooklyn family and fired for an impropriety at work, Claudia Silver is officially in over her head. When her younger sister lands on her doorstep urgently in need of help, twenty-something Claudia desperately wants to offer the rescue that she herself has longed for. But Claudia missteps dramatically, straight into a disastrous love affair that disrupts three very different New York households. Ultimately, she discovers the resilient nature of love where she least expects it—among her own family.

Claudia Silver to the Rescue is the fierce yet tender chronicle of the many humiliations and occasional triumphs of a young woman determined to wrest her identity from the spectacular wreckage of her mistake. Uncomfortably hilarious, quintessentially human, Claudia is an unforgettable heroine who shoots for the stars and hits the ceiling.

Claudia Silver to the Rescue Details

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Author : Kathy Ebel

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From Reader Review Claudia Silver to the Rescue for online ebook

Megan says

I just really did not like this book, though I can't really put my finger on why. I think it just rubbed me the wrong way. Can a book do that? I really liked the title but I guess the old adage about judging a book by its cover should be extended to not judging it by its title too. Claudia was just a really unsympathetic character and I didn't find anything realistic about her. None of the characters rang true to me. I guess it seemed really stereotypical...she sleeps with the angry black man, is roommates with the rich wasp, has a younger sister who is the only white girl in the ghetto. And don't get me started on the affair with the older man. Who would really do that, especially in this context. I had to force myself to finish this one and probably would have just quit midway through (which I hardly ever do) except that I had already listed it as my currently reading book on here and hate to let my goodreads profile down!

Pam Gary says

I genuinely liked Claudia from the start. She's the kind of gal a few years out of college, in her first job (which pretty much sucks), got fired from that first job (which was her fault due to a bad life choice), and now it looks like she's going to become guardian of her teen-age sister. But everything does come together in the end, but not without a lot of stumbling.

Author Kathy Ebel employs a wealth of humor in all the right places throughout the book. It's a story full of funny stuff; and it made me laugh a whole lot--out loud!

Angeles says

I am having a difficult time coming up with a positive review, despite not hating the book. I love flawed character sqq nobody is perfect, and nobody should claim to be so.

The imperfections were not the issue. The issue was the lack of real consequence, the character's inability to deal with anything, and the way she was handed an entirely acceptable ending to this story without having to work for anything.

Must of us can relate to hardships, unexpected blessings, and avoidance. But the depth of real-life experience is missing from this novel.

David says

My review appears in New York Journal of Books; my additional remarks are in an article that appeared in a different and now defunct publication, which begins with the next paragraph.

Jewish books: Claudia Silver to the Rescue targets Girls' viewers

Looking for a beach novel with Jewish characters and NYC flavor? Try Claudia Silver to the Rescue, the debut novel by television (Cold Case and Law & Order SVU) and magazine feature writer Kathy Ebel.

This is a book that appears to target the same audience as HBO's series Girls. In my New York Journal of Books review I describe the novel as "a fun and funny read about the mistakes twenty-somethings make when they first live independently as adults."

A week or two before graduating from Barnard College (also Ms. Ebel's alma mater) Claudia's mother calls to tell her she is not welcome at home and to find another place to live. Two years later Claudia and her college roommate share an apartment in Park Slope, and her roommate's family have become a kind of surrogate family.

In the first half of the book Claudia stumbles from mistake to mistake at work and in her love life before making the largest error in judgement, which provides the novel's dramatic climax, and which will cost her her surrogate family but will lay the groundwork for reconnecting with her own family of origin.

To fill in the details you'll have to read the book or listen to the audiobook version, both of which are quite enjoyable.

Robert says

Claudia Silver may be in her twenties, but she hasn't left her teen years firmly behind. She has about as much sense as a love-struck fifteen-year-old left on the subway overnight and who might be prone to hallucinations on more than a few occasions. But I loved her anyway. That's fucked up, right? Yeah, I thought so, too.

But like all teenage fantasies it wasn't a perfect match, nor was it even a near perfect one. In fact, I abhorred her and loved her in nearly equal parts. There were occasions where I wanted to give her a hug, and there were plenty of occasions where I wanted to slap my forehead, scream, and run in the opposite direction. By the end, I might have had a nice semi-permanent red spot along with a decent amount of brain damage, and possibly finished my cardio for the entire month of March.

So what gives? I might have reached a new level of softness around my middle, or I might have just discovered a hidden gem in the midst of a woodpile before the entire stack of debris was doused in kerosene and set ablaze. I'm still processing and evaluating all the inputs, but I'll go with the hidden gem option for two hundred Alex.

I was more than a little entertained, even if I wasn't exactly rescued. CLAUDIA SILVER TO THE RESCUE reminded me of a soap opera, so it wasn't all that surprising when this little tidbit was actually discussed in a bit of depth in the novel, and it reminded me on more than one occasion of how lucky I am with my family and my relationships and my job situation, because I really don't endeavor to find out how much worse it could get for myself, but I have no problem reading about somebody else's problems over the course of 259 pages or so.

Cross-posted at Robert's Reads

Mark Flowers says

ugh.

Carol says

Yeesh, what an unlikable character to build a book around. Just unethical to the point of loony tunes. The title, too, is very misleading. If anyone needs rescuing, it's Claudia Silver. There were a few brief moments of humorously perceptive writing which got me to give it two instead of one stars. Just a grab off of the New Fiction shelf at the library. It will feel good to give it back.

Patty Corwin says

A good summer read. This story of a Brooklyn girl who, against gigantic odds, tries to make it in New York strays from the formulaic. The character of Claudia is streetwise and naive, trying to be adult but behaving more like a surly teen. Her younger sister Phoebe, beautiful and unaffected, struggles with abuse and self-determination. Despite untraditional mishaps and errors of judgment, both come to terms with their foibles and reconcile with their pasts. An untraditional coming of age story.

Amy says

While this book has lots of clever dialogue, the book itself isn't all that clever.

We start out, very briefly, with Claudia about to leave college. She doesn't have a clue about what to do next and talks to her mother about coming home. She is told there's no room for her there and that she needs to make other plans, which surprises her. This is one of the things that I didn't like about this book. Claudia knows her mother and should have known that depending on her wasn't an option. Claudia is portrayed as a person who does the least amount of work possible to get by and at the same time, as someone who has pretty much always had to take care of herself. These two things seem contradictory to me. Growing up with a cold mother, she should realize that once she is done with college, which I'm sure she had to pay for by herself if she didn't have a scholarship, she would be responsible for herself. If she had no after-college plans or career goals, why bother going to college in the first place? People who grow up with little or no money do not take a college education for granted. They don't pay for 4 years of college to end up in a job where they order lunch for people. Once I was able to get past the first chapters that seemed so contradictory to me, the book got a lot better. The plot made more sense and was interesting. Claudia is completely unlovable from my point of view, though she does get some points for how much she cares about her sister. I don't know that her upbringing can be blamed for the selfish and horrible person she has become. She has this adoptive family who have done so much for her, and would help her out if she would only ask, and she repays them by stealing from them and destroying their family. She doesn't really deserve the happy ending the book gave her.

Kathryn Grimes says

I picked this up from the browsing shelf at the library based on the title and jacket copy, and enjoyed it quite a bit. Anyone who's floundered upon leaving college or during their twenties will be able to relate to Claudia; the book is like a less provocative, equally poignant version of the TV show "Girls." Despite her college degree, Claudia is wholly unprepared for the practicalities of adult life and loses her first job out of school. Even so, she attempts to help her younger sister out of a difficult family situation, with mixed results. At the same time Claudia begins an affair that upsets her fragile support system. The characters are nuanced, not cartoons as could have been the case given the affluent Manhattan social milieu in which the book is set. The complexity of Claudia's relationship with her mother and mother's boyfriend are treated with sensitivity and humor. Overall, a nice mix of escapism and compassionately-drawn social satire.

Katie says

I heard that Lauren Graham recommended this book so I got it at the library. I was not a fan though. The main character is infuriating and does really stupid things, then randomly everything ends up well for her at the end of the book. It made no sense to me.

I will say, that I found the writing to be entertaining. The descriptions were good, I just hated the plot and actual story.

Moniek Jaspers says

'Claudia Silver to the Rescue' consists of three parts. For me, personally, it took a little while to get into the book and its characters (Maybe because I'm a Dutch girl reading an English book. Or Maybe because that's just the way the book was written).

Part one was mostly explaining the situation of the characters: where they were, what had happened to get them there... It was a lot of 'explanation' and I'm more of a dialogue kind of girl, but arriving at part two, I was completely hooked. As part one was mostly seen through Claudia's (main role and title role) eyes, it was a wonderful surprise and marvelous experience that Kathy Ebel suddenly chose to use a technique called 'skipping to another storyline' (directly translated from Dutch). First you were reading about Claudia's rather difficult and often stupid situations, wanting to continue reading, seeing how she would find her way out of that mess, and then you suddenly jumped to Phoebe (Claudia's half-sister), who was also dealing with some stuff (Naturally- I won't spoil what). Now, completely focused on Phoebe, you skipped back to Claudia again. Etc. Etc. The continued use of this technique made me want to read more and more. In my opinion that was a smart move on Kathy Ebel's side.

In part three the author used an omniscient narrator. A very, very wise choice, because, for example, I wouldn't have missed out on Mr. and Mrs. Tate's conversation and Mrs. Tate and Edith's conversation for the world! Kathy Ebel found a way to connect all her characters to one another and 'just' sticking to Claudia's side of the story, would not have been enough. Brava.

Furthermore, Kathy Ebel made good use of wonderful references, showing me she has great (literary) taste.

Lauren Graham's quote on the cover of the book--which I thought might be a bit exaggerated because Lauren and Kathy are best friends, but it is not-- says it best: "Claudia Silver is an utterly lovable 'heroine' with a voice--and a journey--that had me hooked. It's a very funny book with a deeply compassionate heart. I rooted for Claudia, I felt for her, and I [definitely] didn't want to say goodbye".

I read this book on my daily bus-rides from and to school (not allowing myself to read it anywhere else) and not only did Kathy Ebel manage to make my bus-rides more enjoyable, she even made me sad when yet another bus-ride ended. I just wanted to stay in that bus longer and longer, for the simple reason, to read.

Rachel says

I'm probably being too generous in giving this book four stars, and letting my biases about other reviews sway me. Claudia Silver gets a bad rap as a protagonist, because she's relatively shallow, self-absorbed and self-defeating. Really, to a degree, everyone in this novel is rather blasé, despite some serious subject matters, which makes Edith's turn-around in the final act a little eyebrow archy. Then again, sometimes it takes a jolt from a stranger to look at your life seriously.

This novel is teeming with so much sarcasm and physical description of the '90s that it reads like a sophisticated, retrograde episode of "Girls." It was also a bit relentless, so exhausting to keep reading. The beginning of the novel was kind of amusing in a "shit you pull when you're 20" sort of way, but I can see how it's wearying at the end; even Claudia finally gets it. At the same time, we kind of see how these behaviors get passed down from generation to generation.

Phoebe's modeling career was a bit stereotypical; I could buy it more at the end when she had a personal networking opportunity. I also think Claudia got her job way too easily, but I guess it shows how networking pays off, plus everyone having about the same attitude. I wish we got more of the Parkers; they seemed a bit more real. The Tates were this WASPy, highbrow mess, but we mostly got to know them through their decorating tastes and party manners, not as people. I felt the most for Bronwyn, sheesh, for Claudia to ruin that relationship. :/. She really has a sense of self-defeatism, likely borne from her family's sense of victimization.

Judaism played into this novel by way of Claudia's family having a persecution complex, and the occasional attempt to light some candles, go to synagogue or read Jewish literature. Apparently both Claudia and her mother, Edith, are very literary (Ebel didn't really provide much direct evidence, but the cleverness of their dialogue holds some merit) but that doesn't stop them from screwing up their lives. But, in retrospect, it really makes sense that people who are engrossed in worlds of classical fiction would do such a thing. :p

Mandie says

Meh.

Jenny says

I'm torn on how to rate this one. On the one hand, I thought the writing was sharp and solid. On the other, I had very little sympathy or empathy for Claudia, who makes a colossally stupid decision pretty early on in the story that left me with a bad taste in my mouth. I picked this up because it had a Lauren Graham pull quote on the front, and it definitely had a similar feel and setting to *Someday, Someday Maybe*, but I just couldn't quite get over the Super Bad Choices that Claudia made. Still, I tore through this in a single sitting and will definitely read more by this author.
