



Lace

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Four women, Judy, Kate, Pagan and Maxine, are summoned to a New York apartment where they are asked which one of them is the mother of the host. As they unlock the past, the women remember the things that tie them together.

Lace Details

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Author : Shirley Conran

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From Reader Review Lace for online ebook

Zinnat says

The first time I read this I was 11 years old (yes, really) because I had finished reading the stack of books I'd taken out of the library and, as I often did when I sped through my tower of borrowed books, I stole a book off of my parents' shelves.

This was hardly shocking to me at 11, until I got the chapter where the Arab prince is pleasuring his concubine, and that image has since stayed with me in a weird way. I learned about things reading books that were not meant for me long before I should've known any of these things. Even now I'm not sure I ever needed half of that information.

That being said, the book is entertaining. It's got that overly dramatic, shoulder-padded glamour that embodied the 80's and it's fun to delve into the scandalous lives of these women and their adventures through life.

Though it's been a while since the last time I've read this, I remember it being a fun and campy ride and is a great companion to your fancy umbrella drink as you lounge poolside.

Tony says

I'd never read this or seen the mini-series when it first came out (sorry, but I have to admit to being old enough for that); then everyone started doing Grey comparisons and I saw, somewhere, that this was the "Original BONKBUSTER", so I had to read it.

I liked the characters, I liked the plot; the storyline drew me in, and some of the set-piece situations are nothing short of brilliant. Weaving 5 strands of a story over a 20+ year timeframe was very skilful, and the various red-herrings kept the suspense going right up to the end.

Now I need to read Lace 2.

Mei-Lu says

Recently, I've been feeling nostalgic for all those books that were made into mini-series in the 80s and impulsively ordered Lace from my local library. I haven't read the book since I saw the mini-series (starring a gorgeous young Phoebe Cates) and I wasn't really sure what to expect. I was surprised to find that not only is this book compulsively readable, it is also a work of feminism. Conran is ruthless in exploring the rape culture of her generation - every single one of the female characters is affected by rape culture over and over again.

"Don't cry, little bird, " he murmured, "why this weeping? The first time there is always pain, little bird." Like many men he didn't regard rape as rape if it didn't happen in a back alley and there weren't any bruises.'

This book isn't just entertaining and fun and sexy (because there are also juicy yummy sex scenes), it's also a real testament to the white middle class woman's experience of rape culture in the years after World War II. This book has been undeservedly classed as trashy, most likely because it is a bestseller written by a woman that involves love, sex and romance. But Shirley Conran and this novel deserve to be reconsidered.

Tea Jovanovi? says

Sjajna visokokvalitetna komercijalna ženska knjiga... aktualna i zanimljiva i 30 godina posle originalnog objavljivanja... I sjajna ekranizacija... ?ipke... :)

? BookAddict ✍ La Crimson Femme says

I thought I posted a review on this years ago. Obviously I did not. Which is where because I remember this book aver 27 years. I was but a wee child of 12 when I read this book. One of the girls I knew, her older sister was reading it one day at a picnic. So I read a few pages and was like, huh. Then she gave me a few looks into where Lily is with the Arabic man and being sexually used. There were several erotic scenes in here that as a 12 year old really intrigued me due to my predisposition towards kinky sex. Some may say that this is inappropriate, it may have been. But I read it and enjoyed it anyway.

What I remember most is the submission in this story. Forget that is is Lily demanding to know which of the 4 women is her mother... "Are you my mother?" Instead, there is the slight incestuous taboo with possibly having sex with your father which was guiltily arousing. Not that I would ever want to have sex with my dad. But to have relations with a male who had sex with your mother is wrong yet exciting.

I also remember some of the kinky scenes in here back when this was very rarely written. I read parts over and over again. For me, this is a pivotal book in my youth which gave me an idea that I was a bit different than others when it came to physical interaction. There are three other books which had similar impacts. It, Flowers in the Attic and The Claiming of Sleeping Beauty. I read these at age 11, 13 and 14 respectively. For those who have similar kinky desires, you will know exactly which parts that attracted me.

I remember when I read this book if I was sick or something was wrong with me. I wish I had someone to talk to who could have explained it to me. I wish the internet was around so I could look up information. As it was, I fumbled around as a child. Still, I survived. This book holds a special place in my mind because of its influence. If I went back to read it now, I probably wouldn't think much of it.

Tory says

The basic story line and plotting was OK. There were no moments of absolute wow or a desire that keep reading no matter what, but it was an interesting and engrossing read.

The major downfall for me was the timing of the story. The book is divided into about 11 or 12 parts, with no discernable reason for this division. A part does not solely concentrate on the actions or adventures of one of the five main women, not a one single part cover a specific time period. Instead you follow one woman for a while, hear some of her adventures and then skip over to another. There are no dates to identify when each section is taking place and often the age of the woman concerned is disregarded. The only timeline identifier is usually "two years later" or something similar. Quite often I was wondering two years later than what, when we last saw this woman or two years after the last section finished. It soon became apparent that

each time you changed characters, you changed time periods. As there was often little interaction between the four women or mention of them in each others lives this made dovetailing where each section of the story fitted together rather difficult.

I also found it difficult to establish an emotional connection with any of the women involved. For the majority of the book there was nothing emotionally substantial. It was just descriptions of what happened, not how any of them felt about it. This could be because the book was written in third person with five lead characters. However this lack of connection made it hard for me to care about the outcome. The majority of the time I found the women to be uninspiring and self-absorbed. Rarely did they think beyond their own circumstances or question motives of the males around them, unless a reason to do so was thrust in their faces. For a book that appeared to be about the power and success of women, it very often showed these women as needing men in their lives to succeed and be happy.

The ending of the book appeared very sudden. The emotional attachment that was suddenly formed in the last chapter between all five women, seemed very rushed and unconvincing. I felt that it finished without answering any questions and leaving more issues to be resolved than had been hinted at during the entirety of the book.

In short, LACE has a confusing timeline and chronology, distant characters which is hard to form any attachment to and a hasty abrupt ending leaving more issues unresolved than not. I know there is a sequel to this book, but I am not in any hurry to spend any more time with these women. This is not a book I am in any hurry to read again, nor would I particularly recommend it to anyone of my acquaintance.

Min Kimber says

"Which one of you bitches is my mother?"

Simple literary genius! We've all heard lines in movies that have stuck with us forever, but this was the first time I'd read a book and had that happen to me!

My love of literature began early in my life, but Shirley Conrans' Lace was one of the first novels that got me excited and hence I remember it vividly (although I re-read it recently, just to be sure you see).

But as an enthusiastic teen I read the book and then I awaited the mini-series of the same name with baited breath. Because if they didn't use that line... well they just HAD to! I was not disappointed. (I maintain firmly that one should always read the book BEFORE one watches any re-enactment of it! NO EXCEPTIONS! And this is not the last time you will hear me say this!)

But back to Lace...

As a teenager I loved Lily! I wanted to BE Lily! She had been hard done by, she had a terrible upbringing, but she was not going to let that stop her being who she wanted to be and by God, she would make those accountable for her misfortunes pay!

And she always got what she wanted.

Lace is a great story, about women, our fierce love and protective instincts for our children, our lovers, and our girlfriends as well as our abilities, our talents and our passions.

Of the four possible mothers of Lily my bet was with Pagan. I identified with Pagan, like me, she was rebellious, questioning of the rules (just because it's always been that way, doesn't mean it always should be) and sometimes she got things terribly wrong.

The characters in Lace are all like this, they have very realistic and human qualities, imperfections that endear them to us as we can see ourselves in there somewhere.

But there was just a 25% chance of my being right about Pagan, after all there was Judy, the poor American girl, Maxine, the wealthy French girl and Kate, the English girl (like Pagan) to consider. The four friends had made a pact many years ago to never reveal which one of them was actually pregnant.

But Lily wanted to know, and she would stop at nothing to find out.
So, was I right about Pagan? And did Lily find out who her mother was?
Well, that would be telling.
You'll have to read it to find out. And when you do... OMG... look out for the bit with the goldfish!

Fiona says

Well, colour me surprised, but I loved this.

I was told it was trash. I went into it expecting to be mildly entertained. True, there is a very definite target audience and as a general rule it has a vagina, but I had so much fun with this book.

Which one of you bitches is my mother?

Thus does Lili, famous gorgeous actress, attempt to find out from four women which of them is her birth mother. The women, Maxine, Judy, Kate and Pagan, went to finishing school in Switzerland in the late 40s. One of them got pregnant and had a baby, which got put up for fostering. *Lace* follows the four potential mothers, and the daughter, as they grow up. They all do exciting things, and difficult things, and spend a lot of time hopping to and fro across the Atlantic, and all but one of them gets married at least once. There are a miscellany of men, who are pretty much all secondary characters, and some of them are awful and some of them are lovely. By the time it got to the end, I had narrowed down the potential mother to one of two, and of those two it was not the one I had expected.

I don't really read books for sex (I swear! shut up), so I was far more interested in the gooey relationship and Career!Woman stuff than anything else. I have three observations to make on that front: 1) there wasn't as much sex as I had been led to believe, 2) apparently it is quite easy to overuse the word 'erotic' as a descriptor, and 3) the goldfish scene is indelibly burnt into my memory and that is NOT HOT, GUYS. NOT HOT AT ALL. YKINMK, apparently, but I stand by the fact that GOLDFISH ARE NOT MY IDEA OF A GOOD TIME. Good grief.

That aside, *Lace* is very much a product of its time, in terms of content as much as in terms of style. There's a very good article in the Guardian about how it's actually quite feminist, which basically sums up a lot of the reasons I enjoyed it. I really recommend the article, if you have ten minutes.

I think I also enjoyed this book because I came to it at the right moment - right now, I've just finished my degree(s), and I'm trying to work out what to do with my life. I identify a lot with some aspects of all the characters, in terms of how they react to where they are in life, and what they want to do with it. I'm glad I read this now, because it was remarkably reassuring. I wonder, if I come back to it in a decade's time, whether I will think the same thing. (It is, after all, quite a sheltered novel about very sheltered and privileged people - on which more in a second.) I also wonder how much more it will have dated in another decade, because it really has dated in the last 30 years. That didn't at all detract from how much I loved it, though - in fact, I think that escapism of being set in a different world to the world of 2012 made the bits I did identify with resonate more.

Let's talk briefly about how sheltered and privileged the characters in this book - and the book itself - are. And that is, very. They do well, when they want for money it is not on a desperate level, and they make up for it with luck, and influence. I don't even care how privileged it is, it's escapism. The world that Conran writes is clearly one she has grown up in. She's been to a Swiss finishing school. She can spot vulgarity at

sixty paces. She describes the outfits of every character with a relish unparalleled in the sex scenes, and it's marvellous. Surprisingly, that doesn't grate with me at all - there's some quality to the book that just feels really observed. I am a bit of a snob about my describers of old money - it's very difficult to pretend, and Conran's rich set sounds right, in some indefinable way. I liked it.

When I picked up *Lace*, I expected it to be the sort of thing I'd file under 'guilty pleasure,' or 'books I like but would never be seen reading.' I know a lot of people, after all, who would roll their eyes at how much I enjoyed it. But I did enjoy it, very much indeed, and I can think of several friends to whom I will almost certainly be recommending it. Interestingly, at least two of those are people I met as a teenager at school. Four stars.

Joanne says

"Which one of you bitches is my mother?" I instantly knew I was hooked after reading this line.

Lace centres around the lives of four best friends depicting their lives from the forties to the late seventies. One of the close group has a teenage pregnancy and this mystery of who the father is lies at the heart of the story. The book is epic in scope taking us on a sweeping journey through Gstaad to Paris to Hungary to Cairo to the Middle East to London and New York. I also liked that Conran based the characters' lives and experiences on aspects of her own life. Lace is not as trashy as most people believe. There are, in fact, feminist overtones to it with strong female characters who are all successful career women. Plus, the miscellany of men involved are secondary characters and serve mostly as lovers ranging from a king to a transvestite husband. There is far less sex than I was led to believe too. I also liked the detailed descriptions of the glamorous clothes through the eras.

I thoroughly enjoyed the glittering, melodramatic and fun ride that Shirley Conran took me on. Looking forward to watching the Lace mini-series and also continuing the characters lives in Lace 2. Just one more thing... I will never look at a goldfish in the same way again!

kagit kiz says

Konusu ?sviçre de yat?!? okulda okuyan dört k?z?m?z?n y?llar sonra bir otel odas?nda ünlü film y?ld?z? Lili nin "...taklar hanginiz benim annemsiniz " sorusuyla ba?lar.Bu dört kad?n?n ya?am?n? bir dantel inceli?iyle anlatan kitap içinde her duyguyu bar?nd?r?yor .Genç k?zl?ktan kad?nl??a geçi? ilk a?klar ilk deneyimler kendi cinsel kimliklerini bulma çabalar? hayal k?r?kl?klar? aldat?lmalar? ama her ?eye ra?men ne olursa olsun dostluklar?n? yitirmemeleri o kadar güzel anlat?lm?? o kadar ayr?nt?l? ki ya?am?? gibi tan?k oluyorsunuz ayr?ca romanda dört kad?n?n yan? s?ra ünlü y?ld?z Lili'nin üzücü ya?am öyküsüne de tan?k olacaksınız?z yer yer çok üzüldüm su an bitirdim ama hala etkisindeyim muhakkak okuyun

Hellen Riebold says

This book was full of every cliché possible, it had no overarching story seeming rather to be a collection of as many sexual situations the author could think of, and these were not well written. Having finished the

book it seemed to me that the first and final parts were connected but that almost the entirety of the rest of the book could easily have been skipped without detracting from the reveal at the end. This book is very long and not worth the investment it demands.

Freda Malone says

Ok, so I watched the movie many years ago and decided to read the book. I'm glad I watched the movie first. Once in a while I'm into the chic lit drama that seems to attack my inner child and give in to the juicy, bad mouthed, mystery of 4 women whom one had birthed a child in secret. The book was written very well and held my attention as flashes of the movie came into play. It was long until the pages were becoming a blur as I was able to follow each scene, saying to myself "Oh, yes. I remember that part". However, I think I outgrew the chic lit drama scene in my 30's so it wasn't as enjoyable the new phase of crime mysteries I read. Still a good book. Had I read this in my 20's I'd have rated it higher, I'm sure.

Barry Pierce says

Before you read my review, saddle up to your mother and ask her about the goldfish scene in *Lace* (1982). Watch her blush. I doubt there is a woman alive who lived through the 1980s without reading or watching *Lace*. The novel opens with one of its most famous scenes, the young actress, Lili, has gathered four women to a hotel room in New York. The four women were childhood friends and have all made waves in their respective careers. Lili stands above them and delivers her killer line, 'Which one of you bitches is my mother!?' A classic is born.

I went into *Lace* well-aware of its infamy. The numerous sex scenes present in this novel gave way to a new genre, the bonkbuster. However, *Lace* is far more than just 750-pages of erotica. I would genuinely call it a feminist classic. After the Lili's confrontation in the first chapter the novel jumps back to our four 'mothers', Maxine, Kate, Judy, and Pagan, in their teens in a boarding school in Switzerland. We then follow their lives as they all become highly successful and influential women. This is where the underlying feminism becomes present. This is a novel about women owning their own lives. There is literally one prominent male character and he is an actual barbarian. *Lace* is *The Women's Room* meets *Deep Throat*.

I think it is obvious that I adored this novel. It has sold three million copies for a reason. However it is quite of its time. I doubt we'll never have another *Lace*. New editions of Shirley Conran's bibliography were re-published after the phenomenon of *50 Shades* in order to show the world exactly how erotic bestsellers are done. Conran was ordained 'queen of the bonkbuster' a few years back and I can definitely vouch for that title.

Angela says

Awesome novel! Very well written and kept me surprised and very interested. I would recommend it to anyone. Warning... There is a second novel called *Lace 2* (how original, right?) I'm telling you, do not google it and ruin the plot event for yourself. Turns out it was a television series back in the day. Naturally my curiosity got the best of me as I was trying to figure out what the second book was called and came across **BIG AND BOLD** the whole premise the story is based on. I was only half way through the book and my world shattered! Do me a favor, don't ruin it for yourself!

kingshearte says

Four elegant, successful, sophisticated women in their forties have been called to New York to meet Lili, the world-famous movie actress.

Already a legend despite her youth, Lili is beautiful, passionate, notoriously temperamental... Each of the four has a reason to hate Lili. And each of them is astonished to see the others; for they are old friends who first met in school, old friends who share a guilty secret - old friends whose lives are changed when Lili suddenly confronts them and asks, "Which one of you bitches is my mother?"

The answer to this question - a question that has obsessed and almost destroyed Lili - is at the heart of Lace. As the reader travels from an elegant Swiss finishing school in Gstaad to the glittering places where the rich and successful congregate, the book traces not only the life of Lili herself - abandoned, seduced, exploited, but at last rising to triumph as a star - but the lives of the four women, one of whom is her mother.

The blurb actually goes on for several more paragraphs, and I was tempted to include them, because I wanted to point out a few things in there that make me wonder if whoever wrote the blurb actually read the book, but anyway.

I don't actually have all that much to say about the book, although I enjoyed it. It fits a formula, that of 3 or four women who meet in school and become close friends. They're all wealthy, except one, who either marries into wealth by the end or creates her own. One of the wealthy ones has been raised to feel perpetually inadequate. One of them's foreign. There's bound to be some exotic royalty (sometimes one of the women, sometimes someone else). And there's some sort of secret scandal, usually involving somebody's pregnancy. It's good light chick reading, although not as light as, say, the Shopaholic series.

This particular incarnation of that formula was actually quite good. Well-developed, believable characters, in well-written situations. I was starting to think Conran had issues with men, but all the girls eventually found love, and I guess we all go through a few Mr. Wrongs before we find Mr. Right.

One thing I did think was really kind of neat about this book was the way she depicted female friendship. In fiction, female friendships are almost always torn apart somehow when they feature so prominently in a story. The deeper the friendship is portrayed in the beginning, the more likely it is to fall apart by the end. This one didn't. The four women went their separate ways after school, but remained close friends who stayed in contact, visited often, and were always there for each other if one of them needed help. There was one blip between two of them, but as soon as they figured out that it was engineered by the guy involved, they immediately picked up where they left off, with no lingering feelings of resentment or suspicion. Right to the end, they protect each other. After Lili finds out which one is her mother, and wants to know who her father is, the mother hides the truth to avoid hurting both Lili and one of the other three (even though it was ancient history), and all three know she's lying, for various reasons, but instead of suspecting the worst, they believe that she has good reasons, and not one of them calls her on it. It's nice to see female friendship portrayed like that, because that really is how the really good ones are.

I've learned that there's a sequel, in which Lili goes looking for her father (the stated father is dead, so I guess she learns that that wasn't true after all?), and I think I'm going to read that, because there really were good reasons for her mother to keep that information to herself, so I'm actually quite curious how all that's going to go down.

