



Crazy Ladies

Michael Lee West

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Librarian note: an alternate cover for this edition can be found here.

From the author of *Mad Girls in Love* comes this lively multigenerational tale of six charming, unforgettable Southern women -- a novel of love and laughter, pain and redemption.

Though she was born in Tennessee, Miss Gussie is no country fool. A woman who can handle any situation, she has her hands full with two headstrong daughters who happen to be complete opposites -- dour Dorothy and sweet Clancy Jane. Hoping money will heal childhood wounds, Dorothy marries the owner of a five-and-dime, while Clancy Jane gets into a mess of trouble, running off with a randy tomcat who pumps gas at the Esso stand. And then there are Gussie's granddaughters, the smart but plain Violet and fancy-talking Bitsy -- a new generation whose lives will reflect a nation's tumultuous times. From Tennessee to New Orleans, from psychedelic San Francisco to a remote Southwestern desert ranch, this funny, poignant novel spans more than four decades as it vividly recounts the universal loves, sorrows, and joys of women's lives.

Crazy Ladies Details

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Author : Michael Lee West

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From Reader Review Crazy Ladies for online ebook

Magpie67 says

I just can't give any stars for this title. While the author hit upon many historic moments in time... none of the characters, in my opinion, were part of the history being discussed. They were not really a part of the time periods even though they were living in the moments. The biggest movement was the hippie/Vietnam era and even that was downplayed as characters just moved leisurely through the pages. Even the racism, as awful as it was to hear Dorothy say the N word, it was just that... her trash talk of the coloreds. The book is depicted in Tennessee, a southern state that very much was for segregation within schools let alone all the other areas such as water fountains.

The characters fell flat, didn't interact very well with each other thus each chapter was stilted... as we moved from one storyline to the next. This book shouldn't have been written as individuals telling a story. Each chapter should have grown with time and introduced the characters and possibly been a longer book. The death at the beginning should have had more meaning as the title progressed. The title doesn't fit the contents.

The statement before the death, how the rape would look, how the victim would not be believed, how the intruder would not be charged because who he was and who his parent's were on the social status... That, of course, is a timeless situation... as we are a nation facing abuse still and are trying to squash it, no matter who you are in 2018. This gave me pause to think, as did the sudden crib death and the depth of depression and grief. But none of the characters made me care or see them as real people dealing with these subjects.

The characters were self absorb, uncaring, dysfunctional, lost souls... Dorothy wanted love, and thought status through her husband, his store, her bridge club, her house and her son would bring the love she longed for from her mother, Her mother couldn't give the love to the oldest whether the almost rape incident caused it, the colicky baby or the era of the depression. It's unclear where the mother and child lost touch with each other in the six years they had together before the second child was born and the maid was hired. The author jumps ahead that far in time with no real explanations. One dimensional views of each person with faults, but no causes for the faults. These three women go forward causing pain in their offspring's lives with no clear motivation to the reader how they will continue living or why we would care to see the rest of their lives. The drama was mundane, their daily lives moved at a snail's pace even though months and years rolled by. One minute Violet is a baby and the next chapter or two she is 12 or 13.

Violet , Bitsy and Mack were the real victims and yet they were minor characters floating in the background. The glooming abyss.

Mich says

chick lit. michael lee west writes the BEST books! this one is the 'first' book about miss gussie and her antics as she grows up and raises a family. super good read with a southern twist

Sarah Jamison says

This was my second West book within a month and even though I only checked it out because the book I

wanted wasn't around and I couldn't think of anything else to get, I'm glad I did. This is the kind of book you read while somebody else drives and you have 10 minutes in the car. You have five minutes in a checkout line, so you read some of it. Thirty minutes before bed is plenty of time to learn more and more about the Crazy Ladies of Crystal Falls, Tennessee. A paragraph here, a chapter there. The point of view style was frustratingly wonderful. I became a little upset at how closely I identified with Dorothy for awhile. I read this book during family holiday gatherings when I should have been spending time with loved ones, or minding children, or both. Great book, great author. I'll read everything else she's written.

Sarah says

I was disappointed with this book and can't even remember if I finished it or not. It just couldn't hold my attention and the characters weren't very relatable.

Kimberly says

I'm just not big on stories of dysfunctional women who make stupid choices their whole lives. "Crazy Ladies" was an apt title. Both the characters and the story lacked depth. In some ways this felt like a Cliff Notes version of a book even though it was almost 400 pages long. I forced myself to finish thinking somehow it would redeem itself. It didn't. There are too many good books out there to waste your time on this one.

Dolly says

I liked this book. The only thing that bothered me was some of the language used, but due to the time setting of this book it made sense I suppose.

I thought it was interesting seeing the story through all of the different characters.

Rachel says

I normally do not like fiction, but I really couldn't put this book down. I grew up the crazy tales and trouble-making characters and I feel like this is a grown up version. The book starts in the earlier part of the 20th century and ends in the 70s, a journey through the secrets and lives of three generations of southern women. I really like the way that the author tells each chapter in a different character's voice. The author has a great way of weaving the characters stories together. The author has a way with words that makes the situation and characters' thoughts come alive. The stories are not only saucy and humorous, but they are also real. I loved some of the twangy choice of similies like when one character walks in on another fooling around... describing them as "wrapped around eachother like stripes on a candy cane." I was slightly disappointed with the ending. I don't know what I expected, but was built up for something more. I was so excited to find out "Mad Girls in Love" picks up right where "Crazy Ladies" ends. I have found a new favorite author (!) and can't wait to read more of her stuff.

Melissa says

I really liked this book. Sometimes books with Appalachian settings are very heavy. Sometimes they are so simple they make southerners look silly or ignorant. I found this book had a very good blend. It tackled some tough issues but it was complemented by humor to lighten it up a bit. The characters were varied as well. The book covered forty years so as the reader, I saw them grow. None of the characters were completely good nor bad. Like real people I know, I found qualities to admire and to dislike. I think that is what I liked best about the book - the cast of believable characters that I came to appreciate if not admire.

Heather Gay says

I can always go back to this book for light-hearted laugh out loud fun. Michael Lee West tells the same story from different perspectives, (think Barbara Kingsolver's *Poisonwood Bible*), and the voices are so consistent, so genuine and SO Hilarious. I thought HE was a genius author that could really capture the female voice until I found out that He, Michael Lee West, WAS a woman!! Less impressed once I found that out, but the book is still great. Similar style to *Fried Green Tomatoes*, etc.

Leslie says

What a find!!! This book came from a hunt for Southern, fun beach reads for a recent trip. Chosen simply for its title and cover photo, once again, I am reminded that sometimes you can pick a book, just for its cover. The 6 women in this book ARE crazy, and thoughtful and caught in the roles assigned to them by the family and their community. All of this is wrapped up in a family whose history is irrevocably changed by one incident.

Add this to your summer reading - you will be glad you did!

Carla says

My aunt gave me this to read. I'm finally on the last chapter today. It has been such a great read that I'm disappointed that it will be over after this last chapter.

Shannon says

This story takes place over 40 years, from 1932 to 1972, in the southern United States. It centers around women in a family (5 women plus their maid). The chapters are written in their different voices. The book was a wonderful read, very easy to lose yourself in it for a couple hours. It's especially good if you like southern stories or stories that take place "back in the day", as I do.

Erika Miller says

Wow. If you ever wanted to read a book about every terrible thing that could happen to a collective group of women...look no further! Admittedly, I was not in the mood nor the correct headspace to take in a tale of such tragic proportions when I read this, but it is a downer nonetheless. I enjoyed the author's style and the slightly dark, if not a bit self-indulgent humor that peppered these pages. I also enjoyed the backdrop of major historical events and cultural norms/attitudes. Seeing the characters live through the Vietnam War, and hippie age...some of them completely unable to let go of racial prejudices and old ideals was interesting. This was also an interesting look at how "coming home" provides solace for the soul no matter where life takes you. This was not my favorite read, but I would not be opposed to trying out something else by this author.

Maria (Ri) says

I finished this one last night and I am already missing the characters! I really loved this book! It reminded me so much of *Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons* by Lorna Landvik, one of my favorite authors. This is southern version with a little more dramatic kick. As crazy and "unlovable" as she was, Dorothy was one of my favorite characters. She needed to be loved so badly but just went about it in all the wrong ways. Oh Dorothy, if only I could have seen you for counseling and a homeopathic remedy!

Irene says

This book is a delight--funny, thought-provoking, sad and also inspirational. The characters are interesting and well-drawn. Hard to put down and one that I read again and again.
