



Smart Blondes

Sonia Koso

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Austin socialite Carrie Pryce has no clue her criminally charming husband is carrying on with another woman until she returns home unexpectedly, mistakes the sounds of passion for a home-invasion robbery and accidentally shoots him in the backside. Stunned, Carrie drives all night to her quirky hometown and collapses in a near-catatonic state.

A crew of ladies spanning three generations realize it's up to them to help Carrie get her life out of the ditch. Known as the "Presbyterian Mafia," these are not sweet old gals. They have a book club that never reads, a garden club that doesn't garden, and a bible study class that gossips about the Methodists. They're known around town for antics including catfights, car chases and Voodoo rituals. The women enlist Carrie's former childhood best friend Portia (now a lawyer) and her flamboyant cousin Eric (recently returned from New York) in their effort.

While dealing with the after-effects of her imprudent gunplay and managing a hair color disaster, Carrie meets Rhett Richards. He's an attractive oil field worker who can make women think un-Christian thoughts by the mere act of wearing a pair of tight wranglers. Carrie soon learns that hometowns can be the perfect places to bury old scandals and create new ones.

Smart Blondes Details

Date : Published July 2014

ISBN :

Author : Sonia Koso

Format : Kindle Edition 277 pages

Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Romance, Business, Amazon, Humor, Mystery

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From Reader Review Smart Blondes for online ebook

Tere J says

I really liked this book! I would recommend this book! I would read something else from this author! This book is like Seinfeld episode - you're not sure what the plot is, cause there was so much going on with a lot of characters. The characters that are endearing are awesome, and the ones that are supposed to be schmucks are that as well! I can't remember what it was 'classified' as, humor, chick lit, drama - who cares, because it had all that and more. There is so much going on the first 1/2 (52% on my Kindle) that I couldn't tell what exactly the plot was, there was a story line, but there were other characters & their stories too. As I told a friend that exact sentence, she asked, why did you stick with it? I'll tell you, because it was completely entertaining to that part, enough that I read it in 3 days. It's a very easy, light read. There are all sorts of details for this little town/community of characters, that includes all of them through the book.

From a literary standpoint, and I'm not a critic, just a weird reader (if you saw my tastes of other books and reviews) I ended up enjoying that the chapters don't just tell the story of one character, so a lot happens in "a chapter" versus various other books that a new chapter takes you to an entire different story line, character. So you really didn't know if the next paragraph would begin talking about someone else, and their story.

I got a little confused with the time line twice - but a timeline is discussed, so you get a better idea of the duration. The author wraps up the story nicely for all characters, and honestly, after reading some trilogies of 5 series book, I could honestly see, if the author had wanted to drag this out, could have split it up, but in my opinion, did a fantastic job in telling all their stories in one book!

I toyed with 4 vs 5 stars, but gave this 5 stars, because I wanted to keep reading to figure out what was going to happen. Was it amazing that I couldn't put it down, not to me. Was it funny, entertaining, serious, creepy, romantic, dramatic, sad = yes! That's a lot to accomplish in 1 book! So kudos Sonia Koso! And I am going to completely steal one of your character's quotes: "every time someone watches one of their (Kardashian) shows, a book commits suicide" AWESOME!

Julie says

Smart Blondes by Sonia Koso is a July 2014 publication. I was provided a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Austin, Texas is a thriving community of the Avant Garde and the affluent mixing and mingling seamlessly. Into this area, two girls grew up together, one a beautiful outgoing blonde who commanded attention from everyone easily, while the other was always in the background being the studious cheerleader for her friend. After growing up they took different paths in life and lost touch... until one of them gets herself into a bit of jam and heads home.

As it turns out Carrie's charmed life has come to a crashing halt. Her husband, Jake is having an affair with the french maid and Carrie catches them in the act. Her reaction was priceless. She returns home and moves back in with her mother and seeks the advice of her childhood friend, Portia who is now a successful attorney. While Carrie has been living the socialite lifestyle, Portia has been working her tail off. But, she has a good marriage and her only wish is that someday she and Travis will be able to have a child, which is something they are having trouble with.

With Carrie's return, some of Portia's resentments return as well. However, Portia is a professional and an adult so she works at putting all that in the background. Meanwhile, we are introduced to a really eccentric and hilarious cast of characters that are friends and relatives of Carrie and Portia's. Eric is a gay cousin , and Deane is really an old family friend but was like a grandmother to the two girls. The marriage of Jake and Carrie is for all intents and purposes over with, Jake being the initiator . Jake's mother who never liked Carrie attempts to control Jake and her granddaughter and all the ensuing divorce issues.

The characters are either very solid with good moral principles or they are shallow and self absorbed and immature. Carrie is sort of milling around in the middle of all that trying to discover her true self. Portia learns a lot about her childhood friend while working on her case and learns that things were not always the way they appeared to be. She ends up gaining a lot of respect for Carrie by the time all things are said and done. When it looks as though Carrie will have to start her life over not only as single mother , but all the bells and whistles she has become comfortable with will no longer be supplied to her by her soon to be ex-husband. But, Portia has refused to just let things go and is working furiously to find a way for Carrie to get what she deserves.

I really enjoyed this book. It would fall into the women's fiction or chick lit genre and is really screwball at times . Each character is well defined and you will love them, hate them, feel bad for them, care about them and root for them. As a Texan I could sort of relate some of these people and could recognize the type of character the author described. Sometimes though the characters were eccentric enough that they could have been from areas much further south and would have fit right in. (No offense, I was born in the deep south and am a transplanted Texan) . You will love the way things turn out for everyone in the end. Everything all comes together in the most hilarious way and even though it's not the Happy Ever After of fairy tales , it's really a lot better. I'm going to rate this one 4 stars.

Ange H says

A fun, quick read about a tight-knit group of friends in a small Texas town who close ranks and help one of their own when her rat-bastard husband takes up with the nanny and dumps her. Nothing earth-shattering here, but some good laughs and quirky characters (actually, a few too many characters, it was hard to keep them all straight.) I recommend this one for a bit of light entertainment after a heavier novel.

Zee Monodee says

This book definitely has the perfect feel for women's fiction set in a small town and that features a cast of quirky and adorable creatures. These people border on the 'absurd' sometimes, but only just so that they end up feeling real, and not just cardboard cutouts of citizens of that little town.

It was a journey to come to love Carrie, to get over Portia's resentment, for both women to take a step aside - Carrie from the spotlight, Portia from the shadows - and find their rightful place, in their own right so to speak.

The only thing that put me off was the very telling voice of the author. It read a lot like a book written in the 90s, when telling, surface descriptions, and omniscient POV that hops heads all over was the norm. If you're into that kind of read, perfect. If not, you might want to try out a sample before you commit yourself. I also

felt that the author didn't delve deep enough into the characters when she wrote them - I didn't become them, which is what I expect when I pick up a book to read, especially one of women's fiction.

Debbie Hughes says

Great book! Love the story. Look forward to reading more from this author.

I felt so connected with each character. Just enough history given on each so you really feel like you know each and every one.

Medavis66 says

Cute read. Rather humorous at times. I found many of the characters relatable, but didn't really get into any of them too deeply. Carrie sees life as she knows it come to a sudden halt with the discovery of her husband's affair. Estranged childhood best friend, Portia, must help Carrie deal with the legalities to get what she deserves.

ARC provided in exchange for honest review.

Zindia Pierson says

I loved this book!! I loved the interplay between the characters and the detail of life on a Texas town.

peggy malloy says

Couldn't put it down

This book had everything, from sad to quirky, not too sexy, just enough, predictable in places, and then surprises..I think there is more to every character, and they should be explored

Dora says

A great girl friend book

Imagine that you have the perfect life--you are rich, thin, queen of your social group, your husband is fiendishly handsome, and your child is wonderful. Now, imagine coming home to what you think is a burglar molesting your nanny in your palatial home, pulling out your gun for which you have a concealed carry permit, only to find that your husband is having sex with the nanny on your marble counter and you fire off a shot that ricochets and grazes his buttocks. This is what happens to Carrie the protagonist of the story.

Before she can truly come to terms with what she has done and the fact that her car dealer husband wants to

trade her in for a new model, she is back in her home town. The Presbyterian mafia a group of women ranging in age from 38-93 years have gathered along with her gay cousin to try to help her out of her difficulty.

This story is warm and witty and the friendships among the women are priceless. Don't desert your female friends--sometimes they're the only ones who can pull you through.

Rhonda says

I found this on the "Best Chic Lit I've Ever Read" list, so perhaps my expectations were too high.

Had I rated it at the half-way mark, I would have given it another star - maybe two. I thought it went downhill about the time Rhett came on the scene. I was enjoying the strong women theme without a Prince Charming riding in.

I also felt the ending was rushed, which left me disappointed in the book. Having said that, I admit to enjoying the humor and the story in the first half, or 2/3 of the book.

Trish says

This book was a free kindle download for me and now I feel like I should actually send the author some money. A fantastic bargain for me and one of the reasons I keep downloading those freebies. This book has the flavor of Southern Women chick-lit, no wonder since it's set in Texas. While the author doesn't yet show the skill and talented story telling of my favorite authors in that genre, she definitely shows the promise. The story of Carrie and Portia, as well as their mothers, friends and others in Texas is intriguing and quickly became a page turner. You throw in a few eccentric characters and you appreciate this story all the more. Recommend.

Jean says

'Smart Blondes' is quite a surprise read for me, with elements of chick lit, crime, and suspense genre all coming to play, and seamlessly interwoven. When Carrie Pryce accidentally shoots her cheating husband mid-coitus, she runs away and ends back in her hometown where she is reunited with estranged best friend Portia and a cast of characters that add to the craziness.

What I like about this book is that it shows complex relationship dynamics that make the story so compelling. The friendship aspect of the story is clearly and effectively presented, but not always in a good light. The characters are well-developed, each of them having a certain degree of quirkiness. At times, it can get a little overwhelming and takes you away from the main plot a bit, but you'll realize how they wonderfully come together in the end.

Ian Wood says

This is the complete review as it appears at my blog dedicated to reading, writing (no 'rithmetic!), movies, & TV. Blog reviews often contain links which are not reproduced here, nor will updates or modifications to the blog review be replicated here. Graphic and children's reviews on the blog typically feature two or three images from the book's interior, which are not reproduced here.

Note that I don't really do stars. To me a book is either worth reading or it isn't. I can't rate it three-fifths worth reading! The only reason I've relented and started putting stars up there is to credit the good ones, which were being unfairly uncredited. So, all you'll ever see from me is a five-star or a one-star (since no stars isn't a rating, unfortunately).

I rated this book WARTY!

WARNING: THERE MAY BE UNHIDDEN SPOILERS IN THIS REVIEW. PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK!

Not to be confused with *Smart Blonde* by Stephen Miller (which I have not read), this is fiction and set partly in Austin, Texas. I like to read novels set in places I know or have known. That said, it actually didn't seem like my kind of novel except that the blurb did its job and lured me in. I was intrigued by the idea of main character Carrie Pryce coming home unexpectedly from her spa weekend, finding her husband going at it with a youthful French girl, and shooting him in the ass (accidentally, of course). These things happen.

After that it went downhill for me, with Carrie retreating to her home town where she hangs with a wildly varied bunch of older women, including one who is ninety and a "pair of twins". I found that description hilarious. Do twins come in any other issue than a pair? I know one twin can die and thereby leave the other on their own, but he or she is still a twin right, even though the other isn't extant? Or is it possible to get twins in numbers higher than two?!

The author also made a faux pas with the French term *joie de vivre*, rendering it inaccurately as *joie de vie*. The line would have been funnier if, instead of reading "...his *joie de vivre* turned green" it had read, "...his *joie de vivre* became *joie de vert*" or something along those lines (or those airlines! LOL!).

Some critics have viewed this novel as 'strong Texas women' taking care of their own, but I don't buy into this strong /INSERT STATE NAME HERE/ women nonsense. Women in general are strong, it doesn't matter what state or even nation they hail from. Not all of them are strong, of course but probably a lot more of them than you might guess, so I didn't see anything unusual, noteworthy or surprising about their behavior.

That said, this was not a novel about strong women, but about rich, idle women with little to do but gossip and get into each other's business. Included with these women was gay guy who was so stereotypical he wasn't even remotely real, and a couple of husbands who were so thinly-painted that they were nothing more than screen-printed T-shirts sported by two of the women. Other than fashion and home décor, the descriptive portion of the book was non-existent, and so all that we were left with was smart-mouth and smart-ass, which quickly became tedious.

What I did notice was that all of these women were very well-off, so they had the time, freedom, and resources to help, something which far too few women have even today. It would have made for a more interesting story had they been impoverished and faced this same domestic problem in Carrie's life. I don't know this author, but I got the strong feeling that this novel was very much autobiographical - not necessarily down to the fine details, or to shooting of anyone, but in terms of the characters and how they interact - but it made me wonder what she would write next, having blown all of this in her first novel.

The problem, of course, with having these purportedly strong women take over Carrie's life is that it did

nothing more strongly than it did highlight how thoroughly weak, helpless, and needy Carrie was. There's nothing wrong with having friends of course, and especially supportive friends who rally round at a time like this, but this still leaves an impression that Carrie is somehow inept, or handicapped in some way. That's not a good way to portray her. There's no doubt that someone going through what she did would feel betrayed, hurt, lost, and adrift, but the fact that she takes no steps to move out of that, and towards a divorce (in the fifty percent or so of this novel that that I read) isn't constructive or interesting. What it shows is how utterly shows how paralyzed and inactive she is and that's not remotely flattering or endearing. The fact that none of the other women even broached divorce (in the part I read) shows how lacking in pro-active measures these supposedly strong women truly were.

Thus the 'strong women' aspect of the story was undermined to a disturbing degree. Indeed, it seemed to suggest that Carrie's real 'handicap' was that she's female! This impression was further exacerbated by the fact that Carrie's problem is evidently completely solved by her falling for the most stereotypical studly male imaginable. This isn't something you want to do in the novel that this was supposed to be, but it's what we got, unfortunately, and it's one of the reasons why I'm rating this negatively. The other I'll discuss shortly. Admittedly I didn't finish this, so I may have read this wrong, but by the half-way mark I had read enough to have serious *déjà vu* (or perhaps in this case *déjà lu*) and not want to read any more.

The author jumps around a lot in her story-telling and she puts in a lot of back story, which to me was annoying because it bogged the whole story down. I found myself skipping the large swathes of info-dump simply to get back to the action. Unfortunately, there was far too little that might be termed action. Although it was nice and a bit unexpected to get Jake's PoV, this really contributed nothing to the story, which I viewed as Carrie's, yet even she appeared to be merely along for the ride instead of moving and shaking.

Jake is Carrie's husband, and although he has a PoV, he doesn't have a leg to stand on, being the stereotypical philanderer. Indeed, there were too many stereotypes. With a name like Carrie it would have been hilarious had she gone all Carrie White on Jake's juvenile, mid-life-crisis, unfaithful ass instead of ricocheting a 32 caliber bullet into it, but this isn't that kind of story unfortunately.

Here is Jake's problem (aside from being a moron): "Jake momentarily thought about how beautiful Carrie had been" He didn't think what a good friend she was, what a great companion, how strong, how intelligent, how easy to be with, how wonderful, how pro-active, how independent, what a good mother, what a fine person. None of the above. It was all about beauty. But the truth is that this wasn't really Jake's problem, it was the author's problem. I'll get back to this.

We're told in the blurb that "Carrie meets Rhett Richards. He's an attractive oil field worker who can make women think un-Christian thoughts by the mere act of wearing a pair of tight wranglers." Once again this made Carrie look like a weak women in need of a manly man to give her some spine. It was insulting and clichéd in the extreme. Rhett, seriously? Pathetic.

The blurb said that these women are known as the "Presbyterian Mafia". We're told that they "have a book club that never reads, a garden club that doesn't garden, and a bible study class that gossips about the Methodists." They're also evidently "known around town for antics including cat-fights, car chases and Voodoo rituals." None of this suggests strong women, and it isn't even evident in the fifty percent or so of the novel I read before I quit in disgust. What that felt like to me was a cheap bait and switch and I didn't appreciate it.

The problem for me by that point is that there was no evidence whatsoever that Carrie was ever actually going to do anything. She's completely passive and the only things which happen are those which happen to her, not because of anything she initiated. She doesn't make things happen, and frankly she became totally boring after her initial shooting to stardom, as it were. The way her character was written was insulting to women, dishonest to the blurb (which wasn't at all a surprise let's face it) and boring to read. I know she was

going through a lot, but she didn't remotely look like she would ever take the reins, not even when she got to ride the horse!

What really made me quit this book though, was reading the word "beautiful" one time too many. This author is obsessed with describing every main female character as beautiful, and even some who were not really main characters. Consequently, these were not remotely real women, and I cannot abide reading about female characters who are rendered patently false by poor writing. Yes there are beautiful women even if you define beautiful by popular, skin-deep acclaim as this author does, but they do not usually make for interesting stories. You need people who are beautiful inside for that. Here's the shallow litany:

"Deane was still beautiful"

"with beautiful young Gloria"

"Carrie was still beautiful"

"her parents were still beautiful as could be"

"Katie Dell was still a beautiful woman"

"Serving the most beautiful and popular girl!"

"but you are just so beautiful" (this from "Rhett" not because she's beautiful, trust me, but because Carrie's putting out for him. To some men, that's all beauty really is.)

"beautiful she was. Rhett's callused hands met tender skin" (I told you!)

"with their beautiful baby girl"

Even hair didn't escape this metronomic appellation (or should I describe it as an appall-ation?): "their natural hair color was a beautiful auburn"

It was just sickening to read this time after time after time. The blurb should have said this was about rich beautiful women, not strong women. In the world we've created for women, strength isn't beauty, It's making a go of things when there is no beauty, and this author either just doesn't get it, or doesn't care for it. Why female authors consistently do this to other women is a mystery to me.

Male authors do it too, let's not forget, and this blind obsession with shallow meaningless "beauty" as opposed to just writing about real, regular people, warts and all as it were, is what was truly sickening. Regular everyday women need not apply - only beautiful ones. I reject that and invite you to do so too.

In the end this book wasn't about strong women, and it betrayed the title by making those women who were featured nothing more than stereotypical blondes, not smart blondes at all. Never was there a novel more mis-titled than this one. I cannot recommend it.

Lately25 says

Better than expected...

I don't know why I wasn't expecting much from this book, but I'm so glad I was wrong! I have so enjoyed reading this book full of strong Southern women, and their shenanigans, that I'm actually sad it's over. It captured my attention from the very beginning, and held on tight until the end.

Debbie Colson says

The story of pretty girl having to get her life together is somewhat redundant, so I was hoping this would be an interesting twist. The story is something of a combination of Steel Magnolias, Hope Floats, and Legally

Blonde. It was and wasn't interesting. I liked the characters and the premise of the story in that smart sassy Texas woman take care of their own, but Carrie, a main character, is a stereotypical predictable plot line. I liked Koso's writing and dialogue; she captures a Texas woman's grit. The book was free through Book Bub, so it was a good free read.
