



## The Rejected Writers' Book Club

*Suzanne Kelman*

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## **The Rejected Writers' Book Club** Suzanne Kelman

When small-town librarian Janet Johnson is persuaded to attend a gathering of local eccentric lady writers known as "The Rejected Writers Bookclub," she gets pulled into a kaleidoscope of craziness she never knew existed. Collecting publisher's rejection letters like trophies, this quirky society cares nothing for being in print and instead meets to celebrate in style its members' mutually spurned manuscripts. However, when disaster strikes just shy of their 500th letter and a huge club celebration, the group's survival hangs in the balance, and Janet finds herself railroaded into a madcap mission to save it. Coerced by their formidable team leader, Doris Newberry, she embarks on a crazy cross-country dash with a band of merry writers to save the club and the reputation of one very special member. As the intrepid adventurers race to complete their quest, the women's lives are irreversibly changed as they bond together through landslides, haunted houses, false labor, and first love.

## **The Rejected Writers' Book Club Details**

Date : Published March 2016 by Lake Union Publishing (first published October 2nd 2014)

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Author : Suzanne Kelman

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## From Reader Review The Rejected Writers' Book Club for online ebook

### Sandy \*The world could end while I was reading and I would never notice\* says

You have to admire anyone who can sing the first verse of Puff the Magic Dragon (a song that always makes me cry) backwards. But rest assured, this is not Suzanne Kelman's only talent.

When I first started this book I thought it was an amusing piece of fluff, probably a 3 star read. The book is light and fluffy, but like the best ever sponge-cake, absolutely delicious!

I grew to love this madcap bunch of women. It was great to see Janet unwind, loosen up, to become part of something, to make friends, although she would vigorously deny that she was doing so.

Janet is a librarian in the small coastal town of Southlea Bay where she moved with husband Martin, and where her biggest problem is a disappearing trash can and the raccoons that regularly raid it. She is inveigled to attend a meeting of The Rejected Writer's Books Club, where the members face a huge problem. One of their manuscripts has been accepted for publication - it must surely be a mistake because their writing is nothing short of awful - which means that the author must be ejected from the club. They want Janet to help convince the publisher to return the manuscript with a rejection letter, to add to the 400+ rejection letters they currently have, and build their total towards their goal of 500.

But Janet has other things going on in her life. Her semi-estranged daughter is pregnant with twins and is reaching out to her mother.....so she really doesn't have time for this bunch of loonies that want to take her into their midst.

The chapter titles are entrancing "Lemon Cake and Loonies" is one. I wish they had included the recipes (Doris, whom I could see being played by Kathy Bates, loves to cook) for the food they talk about and consume.

An amusing and entertaining read. A fun read. This looks like the first of a series, and I will be reading the next Southlea Bay book.

I received an ARC of this book from Netgalley and Lake Union Publishing in exchange for an honest and unbiased review.

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### Sharon says

I laughed and teared up while reading this book. It was a delight and how I wish I could find an eclectic group of friends like those belonging to the rejected writers book club. Poor Janet has no idea what she is getting into when she gets that phone call Doris about the club needing her help. There was so much to like in this one., Janet's long term marriage to Martin and his war on raccoons and the semi-estrangement with the adult daughter particularly rang true. It was nice to read about mostly "women of a certain age". Although the premise was more fluff than substance I found the friendships between the very different women rang true and Grace's story related at the end was very touching. But seriously, the scene at the airport with Doris and the luggage and then the TSA inspectors was just the best. Highly recommended escape fiction.

## Jules says

This was such a fun book to listen to. The characters were quirky, the storyline was so much fun, and there were some proper laugh out loud moments too. I'm so pleased I chose to listen to this rather than read it, as it really did make cooking and pot washing so much more entertaining over the last couple of days.

I listened this in audiobook format through Kindle Unlimited.

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## Izabella ? Pages Full of Stars ? says

*"There are no bad writers here, only rejected ones."*

This book was a truly charming, warm, feel-good type of read, perfect for a lazy afternoon with a huge cup of tea!

Several years after moving to the quiet town of Southlea Bay, Janet Johnson is still striving to find her place in the community and make good friends. But soon her life turns upside down when she's invited to the meeting of the Rejected Writers' Book Club and will have to help the group retrieve an important manuscript by embarking on a crazy roadtrip.

Initially I was drawn to this book because of its beautiful cover, but what really intrigued me was the description. The book about the writers who collect rejection letters? It made me very curious and I wanted to see how the author will work out such unusual idea.

I have to admit that for the first part, my feelings for the story and the characters were mixed. I couldn't quite connect with it and I didn't really find most of the characters likeable. But as the book progressed and the characters grew to care for each other I also began to warm up to them and in the end it was a really entertaining read.

The very idea of the rejected writers' book club was interesting to me but at the same time it was something that took me the longest to understand. When Doris got an acceptance letter from the publisher, she and the other club members acted so negatively, I couldn't understand it, until I realised that the real reason behind the club was actually the fact that these women simply enjoyed each other's company and that was more important to them than getting their writing published. Once I understood that, I was able to enjoy the whole story much much more.

For me, the heart of the story was a fun and quirky cast of the characters. Each of them were different and interesting, but they still "clicked" and completed each other. Once they grew on me, I really began enjoying their interactions. And another piece of the novel that I loved was the humour. There were some crazy moments but I decided to take everything lightly and thus had lots of fun reading about the characters' mad adventures. I also truly adore the story that was told by one of the characters, Gracie, and I secretly wish the author could write a companion novel based on it. It was one of my favourite parts of the book and I'm glad that it was included.

To sum up, *The Rejected Writer's Book Club* is a book that will make you laugh, cry and will make it hard to put it down! It has amazing, cozy settings, delightful, eccentric characters and fun story. It's a very promising

debut and if the author ever decides to revisit Southlea Bay and its residents, I'll be happy to read more about them. And if you are up for a light-hearted and humorous read, definitely give it a go!

*I have kindly received a copy of this book from netgalley and Lake Union Publishing in exchange for an honest review.*

The review also appeared on my blog.

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### **Valerie says**

So many times I wish I could give things half stars. This is about a 2.5 for me. I wanted to like this book so badly. It seemed right up my alley. Librarian in a small town joins a group of women and eventually makes friends. It sounded so great, but it ended up just feeling tedious and a jumbled mess.

The beginning started out a bit slow and the main character got on my nerves with her inability to stand up to a woman who just seemed to be steamrolling her. Then, the first part of the road trip, it seemed to get better. I enjoyed the first part of the road trip and enjoyed the adventures they had. However, the longer the road trip went on, the more tedious it became. It was like everything you can EVER think of to go wrong during a road trip went wrong on this one. It just became too much. I got to the point where I was thinking, "Really? ANOTHER disaster? Really?" Some people who have reviewed this book found that portion of it to be funny. Unfortunately, I found it to be boring and felt it slowed down the story line. The ending, however, I felt was pretty good. I enjoyed the last chapter and the epilogue.

This book has a lot of potential, I just personally felt that it needed less drama and more interpersonal interactions. We hear a lot about what's happening to the ladies, but we don't see enough interaction between them and the others in the story. What characters we had were not as rounded as I would've liked to see. We get some background and see some growth and vulnerability in them but not as much as one would hope to see in a book this length. Perhaps as the series goes on we'll learn more about them, but unfortunately, I'm not sure I'll be around for it which is disappointing given how much I really wanted to like the book when I went into it.

\*\*\* I received a free copy of the e-book from NetGalley in exchange for my fair and honest review. All opinions are my own. \*\*\*

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### **Juli says**

I absolutely hate DIY projects. If there is a way to fall off a ladder, spill an entire can of paint on myself or otherwise cause harm.....it will happen to me. With my son turning 13 this summer, it was definitely time to update his room. It's been the same two shades of blue since he was 3 -- the last time I gathered up the courage to paint the walls in there. Before I could come up with an excuse to not do it, I took my son to the local home improvement store and let him pick out his colors. Dark red with a medium tan for the trim. Brushes, little plastic paint cups, wooden stir sticks, plastic drop cloths, holy water, first aid kit....brought it all home and prepared for slow torture. I am decidedly NOT Bob Villa.

What does this have to do with a book review?? I'm getting to it! :)

I had to find the perfect audio book to keep me company while I tried to complete this painting project without hurting myself, or destroying anything. I chose The Rejected Writers Book Club.

So glad I did! It was the perfect choice!

Silly, light-hearted and fun, this book was wonderful to listen to as I painted the walls (and myself) red and tan. I looked like a murder victim who fell into melted chocolate ice cream -- but I was smiling! So I figure that's a win! (And I didn't spill any paint! a few drips here and there...but no large Oooops moments)

The audiobook version of this novel (Brilliance Audio) is narrated by Tanya Eby. I have hearing loss and at times I have trouble understanding female narrators. But, Tanya's voice is clear and her pace is perfect. I didn't have any trouble understanding her. Her tone and inflection was perfect for this humorous, fun book. I soon lost myself blissfully in the story as I worked for hours painting out my son's childhood, morphing his room to a teenager lair.

The basics: small town librarian Janet Johnson is invited to a local women's book club meeting. When she gets there, she is surprised to find that the group is centered around rejection letters from publishers. Every member has had their writing rejected for publication....most multiple times. They have a special book filled with these rejection announcements. They proudly meet each time another is received. Just short of the 500 letter mark (which they plan to celebrate with a big party), disaster strikes. Their leader, Doris, has her book accepted for publication! Oh the horror! They beg for Janet's assistance to get the manuscript back. Janet, who is heading to San Francisco to help her pregnant daughter, tries to refuse...but it just so happens that the publisher they need to contact is located in San Francisco. The ladies embark on the most ill-fated road trip ever.....car trouble, rock slides, and many troubles await them as they fight to save their fearless leader from the horrors of publication.

Now, there were just too many pitfalls in this trip for it to seem even remotely realistic. But, I don't care. The story was just hilarious and fun to listen to. I don't give a hoot whether it was realistic or not. It got me through hours of painting with a smile on my face! Sometimes you just need a simple, funny story -- and for me, this book was perfect. I loved it! Janet Johnson is a fun, slightly snarky, main character. And the group of ladies are all quirky and fun. Add in the silly things they have planned to get the manuscript back (including chaining a member to a toilet until they get what they want) is just complete zany fun.

The Rejected Writers Club is the first book in the Southlea Bay series. I can't wait to read book 2: The Rejected Writers Take the Stage. :) Suzanne Kelman has also published a book of verse, Big Purple Undies. For more information on the author and her writing, check out her website:  
<http://www.suzannekelmanauthor.com/>

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## **Terry Gene says**

Yep, a 5-star. Rare for me as I detest auto-5 and auto-1 reviews.

This is a fun story, with heart, silliness, and a compelling character. Pure pleasure, and a guilty reminder that stories don't have to be elitist to have value.

Janet is retired to a rural island, takes up part-time employment as an assistant Librarian, and is still not settled after years. She's adopted by a Book Club.

The book club, which concentrates on Rejected Writer's, takes her on an improbably journey down from the cozy Washington State island to bustling San Francisco. Each disaster on the way strips away a little of the comfort zone Janet has built over the decades. When she gets to San Francisco, she's finally ready to

reconcile with her estranged, and very pregnant daughter, Stacy.

A story about moving to an ideal retirement, and not fitting in.

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### **Christine Nolfi says**

A quirky and fun read. Highly recommended.

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### **Evann says**

Road trip book! I'm a sucker for anything set in/near Seattle. I also love stories about groups of women. I am probably not the target audience for the book, age wise but I got something out of it none the less.

The club aspect is cute. I like when rejects join together and get sloshed. Unfortunately the characters we hear the most from are not very likable. I'm not sure why. I think it's maybe the style of book. Or maybe we're supposed to like them despite being insufferable. Anyway, Annie was adorable. I'd love to hear more about her dogs and purple knitting needles. The whole story was a lot like an episode of Murder, She Wrote, in that it became enjoyable once I suspended my disbelief a bit and let it all unfold. Southlea Bay is absolutely the Cabot Cove of the Pacific Northwest. Which is actually quite lovely when I'm in the right mood. If the rejected writers book club bumped into Jessica Fletcher they'd hate her because she's a popular published author but it'd be a blast.

Thanks to NetGalley and Lake Union Publishing for allowing me to read the book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Sheri says**

This is seriously the funniest book I've read in a long time. I want to be friends with these ladies and travel with them. I found myself laughing out loud at so many parts. It was fantastic! The characters were so fun, all of them, and I so enjoyed watching them grow. They became almost real to me and I hated that the book had to end. I completely recommend this book. Not many books end with putting a smile on my face, but this one did!

\*Thank you to the Author/Publisher/Netgalley for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for a fair and honest opinion\*

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### **Anne (Booklady) Molinarolo says**

The Rejected Writers' Book Club by Suzanne Kelman is one of the **best** books I've read this year. Imagine if novels by Debbie Macomber and Janet Evanovich had a baby, The Rejected Writers' Book Club would be that baby. I laughed all of the way through the book. These ladies of a certain age know how to have fun and get into some situations. I really want to go on their next road trip!

Yes this is more fluff than substance, but it's funny and heartwarming if you keep reading after the first few pages. Then "the reject" ladies provide you with lots of laughs and action, hijinks included.

The "reject ladies" are on a mission. They need to get back one of the members manuscript from the Publisher that has (gasp) *ACCEPTED* her book for publication. Now, the The Rejected Writers' Book Club have been writing their Poetry and Novels for a few years, and celebrate the Members' Rejection Letters.

*"There are no bad writers here, only rejected ones."*

But the rule is: if one of their members get an Acceptance Letter, she is out! And their infamous (General Patton-like) leader, Doris is THE one who'll be left out from her group of friends, not to mention the hurt her manuscript will cause another member who is close to her. And they need 26 more Rejection Letters to get to their goal of 500. When they get that many, the Club plans a big "rejects" festival for the Rejected Children of Southlea Bay, Washington.

They turn to Janet Johnson, a librarian, as their go-to book lady. But Janet has other things too worry about. A racoon problem that looks like the rodents are personally waging war against her husband, Martin. And her cold, somewhat estranged daughter is pregnant and suddenly wants her mother. Janet has really never felt comfortable or made friends since moving to Southlea Bay, and really doesn't want to get involved with the "loony women", but she does. And the result is a wacky, hilarious road trip to San Francisco to see her daughter and to help retrieve Doris' manuscript. What could go wrong? Pretty much everything.

Their Plans A, B, and C had me in stitches. And the scene at the San Francisco Airport had me roiling with laughter. (Remember, I asked What could go wrong on their Road Trip?) But the friendship of the ladies and their loyalty to each other are the main thread that run through the novel. And Grace's story will warm your heart.

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### **Kathryn says**

Yes, quirky and fun, a road journey - women who have an adventure and bond. And who thoroughly enjoy their status as rejected writers!

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### **Deborah Blanchard says**

I absolutely loved this book! It is heartwarming and funny. It is about friendship and the funny antics between these "rejects". I loved their road trip, I laughed out loud so many times. The things that happened to these women will make you laugh and feel like you know them. I felt a part of this book. They were my friends. Doris was a hoot. So bossy that you couldn't help but love her. The characters are richly developed, so much so, that I lost myself in this book. The dialog is snappy and at times hilarious. This book never lagged and I never got bored. It was a great read from the very first page until the end. I hated that it had to end. I could read about these ladies forever. I highly, highly recommend that you all read this book. It will make you feel and that is what a good book should do. I absolutely rate this as my # 1 book so far in 2016! It is a fast and easy read and you will not be able to put this book down. I can not stress enough, do not miss out on this incredible book about women and how friends can come from the most unlikely of places.

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## **Tessa Stockton says**

I grew up in the Pacific Northwest, and Southlea Bay, including its colorful cast of characters, seems suspiciously familiar – like my hometown and residents! :D I thoroughly enjoyed this novel. Feel-good fiction with a twisted plot that is delightful, full of laugh-out-loud humor, and welcomed nostalgia. I will definitely be reading the next in the series.

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## **Nola says**

The members of the Rejected Writers' Book Club only need another 25 rejection letters from publishers and they'll crack the magical 500. They have big celebrations planned, but their dreams are suddenly shattered. Inexplicably, their fearless leader Doris has her book accepted by a publisher in San Francisco! Not only could this mean the end of the club, but Doris has just discovered that an incident she included in the book may actually be true and could hurt someone close to her if it's published. The motley band of rejected writers enlist the help of town librarian Janet because she's a book person. Janet is the only 'normal' one, but soon finds herself agreeing to escort the ladies on a road trip from the island community of Southlea Bay to San Francisco. Will Janet survive the car trip? Will the soap star's baby turn out to be an alien? And can they convince the publisher to give Doris the rejection letter she craves?

I picked up this book because I wanted a fun read. I wasn't sure what to expect when I started. The members of the group seemed a bit 'over the top' and I wondered if the joke would wear thin. But I was pleasantly surprised. There was more depth to the book than I was expecting, as it touches on issues of loneliness and connection, acceptance, the importance of family ties, and valuing others regardless of outward success or failure. And of course there's a lot of humour. How can you go wrong with chapter titles like 'Unchaining Ethel from the Toilet'? Probably more in the 'smile often' category rather than 'laugh out loud', but it was heartwarming and the author uses a lot of great metaphors and similes.

Probably more 'chook lit' than 'chick lit', but well worth a look if you'd like a light holiday read.

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