



## Vixen

*Gillian Larkin*

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# Vixen

*Jillian Larkin*

## **Vixen** Jillian Larkin

If you love *The Great Gatsby*, you'll want to read the Flappers series.

Jazz . . . Booze . . . Boys . . . It's a dangerous combination.

Every girl wants what she can't have. Seventeen-year-old Gloria Carmody wants the flapper lifestyle—and the bobbed hair, cigarettes, and music-filled nights that go with it. Now that she's engaged to Sebastian Grey, scion of one of Chicago's most powerful families, Gloria's party days are over before they've even begun . . . or are they?

Clara Knowles, Gloria's goody-two-shoes cousin, has arrived to make sure the high-society wedding comes off without a hitch—but Clara isn't as lily-white as she appears. Seems she has some dirty little secrets of her own that she'll do anything to keep hidden. . . .

Lorraine Dyer, Gloria's social-climbing best friend, is tired of living in Gloria's shadow. When Lorraine's envy spills over into desperate spite, no one is safe. And someone's going to be very sorry. . . .

From author Jillian Larkin, VIXEN is the first novel in the sexy, dangerous, and ridiculously romantic series set in the Roaring Twenties . . . when anything goes.

## **Vixen Details**

Date : Published December 14th 2010 by Delacorte Books for Young Readers

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Author : Jillian Larkin

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## From Reader Review Vixen for online ebook

### RaeLynn Fry says

First of all, let me start out by saying, I LOVED this book, and have since passed it on to many friends. I was giddy when I saw it in hardcover on the shelves of my local book store. I wanted to grab someone and say, "I read that before it even came out and it's REALLY good, so you should buy it." But I didn't.

Set in 1920's Chicago, Jillian Larkin's, *Vixen*, tells a story of love, jealousy, secrets, and revenge stitched together masterfully. The novel starts with a short prologue at only 169 words. I was left thinking, "Ooh, this is going to be good" The two sentences that got me?

And then, before snapping her bag closed, she added the small black handgun. Now she was ready.

Who's she gonna kill? I don't care! She's gonna look HOT doing it.

*Vixen* is the first in The Flapper series and follows the life of Gloria Carmody. A rich white socialite engaged to the very eligible bachelor, Sebastian Grey, she thinks she's in love. But that's before she meets a black jazz piano player from the local speakeasy named Jerome Johnson.

Larkin tells the story from the alternating points of view of Gloria, her cousin Clara Knowles, and her best friend Lorraine Dyer. Through the book, it's revealed that each girl has a secret to they'd kill to keep quiet.

Lorraine is hiding her midnight tryst with Gloria's fiancé. Country Clara is hiding her Flapper past and scandalous ties in New York City. And Gloria is in love with a black man.

Each girl is tied to the other in her secrets, new friendships are formed, and old ones lost, as each has to deal with the decisions they make and their repercussions those decisions create.

Everything Larkin gave me is real and tangible. I could taste the descriptions of the clothes, hair, and atmosphere—from the dark and smoke-filled Speakeasies to the cheap liquor during Prohibition.

I felt the jealousy Lorraine had every moment she was with Gloria, the love she held for her best friend, and her unreturned feelings of love towards a boy who would never look at her the same way.

One downfall in the book was that I felt I could connect more with Lorraine rather than Gloria because everything about her was real. I felt that Gloria's situation and problems were a little cliché and typical of this sort of book, but that in no way means I didn't enjoy her character or her story.

I enjoyed the fact that Marcus and Gloria are best friends. That's it. End of story. There isn't a secret crush or love triangle involved—and it's not because Marcus is gay. It's because Larkin has seen that's been overdone.

Despite the lack of romance between those two characters, there is A LOT of PG-rated sexual tension throughout the story and for each of the characters—from unreturned, reluctant, forbidden, to false love—it's all there, and I found myself rooting for each of the characters.

This is a great debut novel. So many times, I see superficial writing and simple stories, especially in YA—it's almost as if new authors are scared of going 'too deep'. But not so with Larkin. Her novel is intricate and detailed, exciting and interesting.

When people say a book is character driven this is what they mean. The story is there and it's strong, but it comes secondary to the characters and their arcs—their story. They are what move the plot. And it moves so smoothly.

I can't say enough about how much I loved this book. It was a little over 300 pages, but it felt like a walk in the park. I can't wait to get my hands on the second in the series.

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### **Tara Chevrestt says**

I never read the "Luxe" stuff everyone spoke of when referring to this book so I had no idea what I was in for. The writing is cheesy. I can't think of a better word. The characters are incredibly shallow and the story line is predictable.

I bought this brand spanking new with my hard earned money so I am entitled to give a rating despite the fact I didn't finish. I also read a good quarter of it before bailing.

Recommend it for: fans of 90210.

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### **Sarah Mac says**

This was pretty bland. Sad, right? Alas, VIXEN is an excellent example of an author not living up to the dramatic potential of her subject matter.

We're given a handful of stock teen soap characterizations: Gloria, the Good Girl who wants to rebel; Lorraine, the Bad Girl/Best Friend tired of living in her shadow; Clara, the Mysterious X-Factor distant relation who arrives to supervise Gloria's socialite wedding plans. Gloria doesn't want to marry her fiance -- instead she falls into insta-lust with Jerome, an Unsuitable Love Interest (who actually *is* unsuitable, given that he's a black piano player). Meanwhile Lorraine debates between friendship & climbing over Gloria to take her place atop the heap-o-social-awesomeness. Lorraine also resents that Gloria doesn't realize how awesome she's got it in the male companionship department -- i.e., Gloria's best dude friend Marcus, who plays the role of Golden-Hearted Playboy. But when Marcus chooses Clara instead, Lorraine exposes a dirty secret from her rival's past...except, naturally, her disgust backfires & gets her snared by Carlito, a nasty Criminal With Sex Appeal. Gloria & Jerome, meanwhile, are caught in the crossfire of speakeasy gangsters...which leaves Jerome's sister to pledge vengeance on Gloria's former bridegroom, the stereotypical Backstabbing Rich-Boy Hypocrite, who is tied to Carlito's crew of Capone wannabes.

...And there's a midget gangster named Thor.

Yup. :P

Clearly there's no shortage of plot, but the personalities are wooden as hell. If the author has the skill to flesh them out in future installments...well, she didn't show it here. I liked Clara & Jerome more than the rest, but even they were glorified cardboard. Compounding the problem is the third-person voice. It's flat, flat, FLAT -- lacking any sort of personality, & relating events with occasional snarky comments that weren't so much funny as lamely anachronistic. I do give the author props for a sprinkling of flapper-era pop culture (Buster Keaton movies, Fitzgerald quotes, *The Sheik*, etc). I also give her credit for the interracial romance angle. But these positives aren't enough to boost my rating. The retro lingo felt forced, the characters were drab, & the writing wasn't strong enough to support an uber-dramatic soap opera.

Overall, a big fat 'meh.' I'll stick with Anna Godbersen's flapper books for my soapy teenage prohibition drama.

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### **Josie says**

What a setting! 1920s Chicago, speakeasies, jazz, gangsters -- it's all there. Shame about the characters, though. They were all so one-dimensional that I couldn't bring myself to care about any of them. Clara was the most interesting, and I genuinely did love her backstory and was rooting for her the whole way through. But Gloria was bland and unlikeable, and as for Lorraine -- what a trainwreck. I can't understand why she and Gloria were ever friends. There was nothing to explain that. Oh, and Jerome -- why did Gloria ever fall in love with him? Was it seriously just because he looked at her across a crowded room? I cannot invest in a romance if there's no reason for it. He was mean to her, how ~hawt. I don't think so.

Other than that, this is just typical YA fare with an overuse of the word "flapper". There were whole paragraphs that read a bit like this: "She put on her flapper dress and flapper headband and some vampy makeup. Now she looked like a true flapper! She went to the speakeasy where all the other flappers were hanging out and ordered a dirty martini from the bar since that was a flapper drink. She felt very flapper-esque!" Which made me want to bang my head against a wall. WE GET IT ALREADY, SHE'S A FLAPPER.

The ending was all over the place. (view spoiler)

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### **Nancy says**

The more I read this, the more I realized Vixen sounded like Anna Godbersen's The Luxe, apart from the 1920's setting, that is. But whereas Godbersen failed (IMHO) to deliver her characters, the storyline, and all the scandalous details, Jillian Larkin manages to entice her readers and throw us into the mysterious, dangerous, and ultimately, very sexy world of the Flappers.

The storyline was very driven, and scandalous. I found myself eagerly flipping the pages, wondering what juicy bits Larkin was going to spoil me with. I saw a lot of things coming (as I did with The Luxe) but that didn't take the fun away from reading this.

The characters were all socialites, but they had their distinctive personalities as well that made me like them

despite everything. Take Lorraine, for instance. I would have hated her, but Larkin's characterization of Lorraine really showed depth and the kind of turmoil she was in. Lorraine was always brimming with jealousy, she was clingy, she was a mess but she was also bold and venturesome, and I admired her for her ability to just pick herself up after a fall. Lorraine was more than the in-your-face and annoying villain driven by love and hatred, after all. The Luxe never achieved that deeper level of self and development that I really hoped for, but this book really nailed some of the inner conflicts, and the intricate relationships the characters shared with family and friends.

The 20's were such an amazing time period to write about! Larkin does extremely well in taking her readers into the dark and dangerous rooms of speakeasies, to the imagery of the independent Flappers with their bobs and luxuriously puffing on cigarettes. Seriously, I could imagine every scenario, right down to the magnificent confidence Gloria must have exuded when she made her short-lived debut at the underground bar.

Overall, Vixen was full of juicy scandal, but at the same time, manages to deliver refreshing characters with development, and yes, a ridiculous amount of expected romance. Of course, I fairly enjoyed that last part. With that said, how torturous is it that Larkin is going to make me wait till August 2011 for the next installment??? Argh!

(ARC received through Random House.)

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## Derya says

Gloria, Clara ve Lorraine'in 1923 Chicago'sunda partiler, erkekler ve s?rlarla dolu ya?amlar?.

1920'lerde h?k?met taraf?ndan yasaklanan alkol, d?nyan?n en me?hur gangsterlerinden Al Capone'un yasad??? alkol ticaretiyle zirveye y?kselmesine, hatta TIME dergisinin kapa??na ?kmas?na kadar varan bir dizi olayla sonulanm??t?. ?nk? yasaklar daima cezbeder ve insanlar? ne kadar yasaklarla dize getirmeye al???rsan, o kadar kontrol edemeyece?in ve neticede pi?manl?k duyaca??n olaylarla kar??la??rs?n. ??te 1923'de geen Vixen/Fettan'da mafyan?n i?letti?i gece kul?plerinde alkol su gibi ak?yor, d?nemin tutucu kesiminin ?iddetle k?nad??? jazz m?zik icra ediliyor, k?sac?k salar? ve haval? elbiseleriyle flapper'lar g?n?llerince e?leniyorlar.

"Kendinde bir ?eylerin de?i?ti?ini hissedebiliyordu, iinden karanl?k bir ?ey y?kseliyor, y?zeye ?kmak iin ?n?ne gelen her ?eyi bast?r?yordu. Sesinde yeni bir enerjiyle, 'Pekala, o halde,' dedi. 'Haydi gidip kafay? bulal?m.'"

Mafya babas? Al Capone ve flapper'lar?n idol? Zelda Fitzgerald (F. Scott Fitzgerald'ın e?i) kitapta karakter olarak yer almasalar da yazar isimlerini anmadan gemiyor. Al Capone'un masas?nda tak?lan yeni yetme gangster Carlito Macharelli asl?nda kitab?n tek gangsteri. Bunun yan? s?ra, birbirinden farkl? karakterlere ve gemi?lere sahip Marcus, Bastian ve Jerome isimli genler kitab?n erkekler klub?n? olu?turuyorlar.

Jilian Larkin'in d?nemin ruhunu yans?tmaya gayret eden roman?, zaman zaman heyecan? art?rmak iin ucuz tr?klere ba?vursa da kendini k?s?sa s?rede okutmay? ve okuyucusunu e?lendirmeyi ba?ar?yor.

<http://vampirellaninguncesi.wordpress...>

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## Amber says

While not the best 1920s story, it's clear that the author knows this time period enough to make it still entertaining.

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## Guillermo says

Somewhere in the back of my head, while reading Vixen, I learned that I'm glad I wasn't born a girl. And it's not for the patriarchal reasons that most men might come up with, but because when it comes to cruelty, you girls take the cake. Boys will physically bully the weaker one, but girls destroy you socially, emotionally, mentally - which is far worse than the bruise on your forearm.

Jillian Larkin created a world - set in the 1920s, the flapper generation (not to mention the age of the Lost Generation where expatriates roamed around other countries, each writing great novels) - that sucks you right in and leads you down the path of three lives of three rather stunning girls.

There's Gloria, a top-notch socialite whose engagement to Sebastian "Bastian" Grey only means a life of boredom for her. In a last attempt of adventure, Gloria sets off with friend Marcus Eastman to the most notorious speakeasy in Chicago - the Green Mill. There, Gloria is lured into the world of the flapper. She's seduced by their allure and their brash lifestyle. The singer on the stage sparks her most wildest dream of singing in front of a live crowd - a dream that would never be realized as long as she is engaged to marry Bastian. Most of all, she feels a sudden magnetic attraction to the piano player and jazz musician, Jerome Johnson.

Then there's Clara, Gloria's cousin from Pennsylvania, who arrives to Chicago under the assumption to help Gloria with her wedding. Truth is, Clara's running away from the life she led in New York. She plots to use Chicago as a fresh start. There she is drawn into her cousin's secrets and her inner circle. Most of all, she is drawn to Marcus Eastman. However, strange notes start arriving - first mysteriously left in her room - and a ghost from her past resurfaces. Clara is faced with her secret life unraveling while keeping up her act.

And finally, there's Lorraine, Gloria's closet friend. As she realizes those in her world are slowly drifting in several directions, she begins to scheme how to get them back. However, the more she schemes against her best friend and Clara, the deeper she digs her grave.

Jillian Larkin breathes a unique life into each of her characters, never afraid to turn the tables at a whim. Vixen is probably the best young adult novel I've read this year (that's not saying a lot considering it's the first I've read this year). Best of all, it lacks what is taken too seriously these days - you won't find cell phones, wizards or vampires in this novel. Instead, you get the sheer glamor of a lifestyle your grandparents probably enjoyed or were against. You are dropped into a world where communication between friends isn't as easy as signing onto an instant messenger or picking up your cellphone to text. No, Larkin picked the 1920s because things were difficult back then, while at the same time being much simpler. She created a love story we wouldn't think twice about these days but would have caused an uproar in scandal back then. She created a world in which girls still scheme against each other, but they did it in fashion - no joke, I really do like the 1920s which acts as the sole reason for my interest in the novel. I surely can't wait until *Ingenue* hits bookshelves in August of this year.

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## **Alanna (The Flashlight Reader) says**

Speakeasies. Forbidden romance. Betrayal. Jillian Larkin's novel *Vixen* has all of these elements and more! *Vixen* is the first novel in the new *The Flappers* series. In this book, Gloria, the beautiful protagonist, is out to claim her identity before her marriage to the prestigious Sebastian Grey. After one night at the speakeasy the Green Mill, Gloria finds herself changed, but she doesn't know to what extent. Suddenly, she is more outspoken and mysteriously drawn to Jazz. With her friends Marcus and Lorraine, Gloria continues to frequent the Green Mill despite knowing that her fiancé and mother would be furious if they found out.

After several twists and turns (and sultry scenes) Gloria finds herself breaking every rule she has ever known. Her world is changing faster than she thought possible. Gloria starts sneaking out of her house to visit the forbidden speakeasy, protesting against the rules and her pretentious fiancé, and finds herself forming romantic feelings for the club's taboo pianist, Jerome Johnson. Everything is working out for Gloria until someone betrays her. Could it be Lorraine, her insanely jealous, social-climbing best friend? Clara, her "sweeter than pie" cousin (with a dark secret) from Pennsylvania? Bastian, Gloria's fiancé with a wicked alter-ego?

Larkin's beautiful, descriptive language paints a beautiful setting of 1920s Chicago. Her writing style transports the reader to that fantastic era in American history. Capturing the allure of flappers, speakeasies and gangster-ruled Chicago is certainly one of Larkin's writing strengths—along with the development of her characters. The passion between Gloria and Jerome is searing, and gives the reader goose bumps. But Jerome and Gloria aren't the only characters shooting sparks. Readers can feel the passion between Marcus and Clara escalating.

The ending of *Vixen* will leave you with your mouth agape. Lies, scandal, murder, and shocking revelations leave Gloria racing towards a new chapter in her life, and embarking on a journey that no previous Chicago socialite has ever been a part of before. But Gloria isn't the only character facing new adventures. Marcus and Clara have found the beginning of something wonderful, while Lorraine and Bastian are seething in the shadows of jealousy and revenge.

The next book in the series, *Ingénue*, (set to be published in August 2011) will surely be—as our young flappers would say—"totally Jake."

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## **Michele says**

Although it's been mentioned by other reviewers, my chief problem with this new series is that it is a complete re-write of Godbersen's *The Luxe Series*, the only difference being the names of the characters and the time period (the *Luxe* is set in the late 1800s while *Vixen* is set in the 1920s). So there is absolutely nothing original about this novel. One can only presume that Delacorte Press saw the huge financial success Harper Collins had with *The Luxe Series* and decided to cash in on it. But even though I'm not a fan of that series (absolutely hated it), if I were author Anna Godbersen, frankly, I'd be pretty ticked right now.

Aside from constant references to "flappers" and the occasional 1920s slang phrase ("you're the bees-knees"), there is nothing that transports you to the historical period this novel claims to represent. The principle teenaged characters are written no different than a modern-day clique of privileged, snotty kids who have nothing better to do than to scheme and plot where their next drink, cigarette, or sexual partner is

going to come from. Now I realize there are some things in this world that never change - teenagers likely being one of those things - this is simply a modern Gossip Girl dressed up in flapper's clothes.

It's a weak storyline at best: young girl is engaged to marry rich bad-guy that she doesn't love. She yearns to be free from her privileged upbringing and be a flapper. Add to the mix some backstabbing best friends and some "deep, dark secrets" and you're supposed to be captivated for 400+ pages.

I simply couldn't find anything redeeming about this novel. The characters are shallow. The setting feels like the interchangeable dresses you put on a paperdoll. The dialogue is simple.

Zelda Fitzgerald is rolling over in her grave.

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## Debbie says

This book started off slow for me. I loved the whole flappers era aspect and how Gloria, Clara and Lorraine's forays into this underground environment varied so widely. The way it affects each of them is not exactly what you would expect given each girl's personality.

### The characters

Gloria was your typical rich girl who was spoiled growing up and feels the need to rebel before she submits to a marriage of convenience. The main problem I had with her was that as the story progresses she decides she wants to become a jazz singer and is even willing to run away with a forbidden man and try to make it big in New York. This sudden desire seemed to come out of the blue and thrown in there simply to facilitate the forbidden romance. I would have liked to see some build up as to why she would want to become a singer in the first place.

Clara was probably my favorite character. She has a somewhat sordid past that she is sent to Chicago to try and runaway from the results of her actions. She reinvents herself as "country Clara" in order to try and right her life and I loved seeing how parts of her act truly reflect her character and she must grapple with finding the happy medium between her rebellious side and her softer side.

### The romance

Despite the whole singing career aspirations coming out of nowhere I did like the build up of Gloria's fascination with Jerome, an African American piano player in a speak easy. You are kept guessing if she is really willing to give up everything and face a life of recrimination if she were to pursue a romance with Jerome. For Jerome, he would also face a tough future as white people would distrust his presence with a white girl and his own family and friends would judge him for dating a white girl. Seeing if the two were really willing to make that huge leap was one of the things that kept me reading.

### The story line

The story started off slow but the ending is what grabbed me. When Gloria and Jerome's romance is betrayed you are kept guessing who was the one who turned them in. Was it Clara? Lorraine? Someone else? The ending will leave you hanging and wanting to know what happens to each of the characters in the next book.

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## Bird says

Kudos to this book for not shying away from controversial subjects - sex, smoking, underage drinking (during Prohibition, no less). So many YA authors seem nervous about including those things in their books, probably from the backlash that will inevitably arise from conservative parents/teachers.

The only YA I usually read is paranormal, so this was a bit different from me. However, I loved the world of the 1920's, and didn't mind the lack of the supernatural at all.

In short...

The Good - strong plot, lots of realistic time period details

The Bad - stereotypical and disagreeable characters, choppy narration style

The book is narrated by three characters. It's nice to get the viewpoint from the three main players, but at the same time there are definite limitations. Many times a character's "chapter" will end on a bit of a cliffhanger, and you then have to read through the next two chapters (narrated by the other characters) until returning to the original cliffhanger. But by that time, the cliffhanger events have passed, so rather than seeing it firsthand, the reader only sees snatches of it when the character "thinks back." Or it isn't revisited at all through that character's eyes again, and is instead viewed by another character. A bit anticlimactic.

But my main caveat is that the characters were all horribly stereotypical, and extremely unlikeable. Gloria, the overly privileged teenager who is sure that happiness resides outside of her wealthy world and with some handsome, troubled man. Lorraine, the best friend tired of going unnoticed by everyone, who tries too hard and resents Gloria for having so easily what Lorraine feels she'll never have. Clara, a girl with a troubled past, who pretends to be someone else, then worries if a boy will ever like her for who she truly is. Then there are some dangerous mobsters, an overbearing, fortune-hunting mother, etc.

I could maybe overlook this if all of the characters together had even one redeeming quality. Alas, that was not the case. Everyone was deceitful and selfish, worrying only about their own wants/needs and not worrying how that would affect those around them. (Or worrying only superficially.) This is why I tend to avoid most YA that isn't fantasy/paranormal, because then the focus tends to be a Gossip Girl-esque parade of bratty girls rather than a story with an actual plot.

This story did have a solid plot, and moved along nicely, but I didn't really care what happened to any of the characters by the end of the novel. Good plotting isn't enough to make me overlook horrible characters. I won't be continuing on with the series.

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## Jules says

There should be a "couldn't finish it because it was so bad" shelf in addition to "read/to-read/currently-reading". As it is, I've made my own, but someone ask Goodreads to get on that, because I think making it one of the three default shelves would be a great addition!

This was...well, not terrible; it was certainly competently written, but it was just extremely dull. If you've read *The Luxe* or watched *Gossip Girl* (or, hell, read even one of the GG books) you know all the characters already. Which in and of itself might not be a problem; I like the GG show, and I liked *The Luxe* series! And I ALSO love flappers. So you'd think this would be an easy sell for me.

The problem is, I feel like Larkin ALSO decided that the similarity to those meant she didn't have to do any

work to tell me about these characters. It was like she was writing by rote, going down a checklist of attributes characters should have, relationships, etc. -- and she never did any of the work to make me care about her versions as opposed to, say watching *Gossip Girl* or re-reading *The Luxe* series. If she wasn't willing to do the work to make me care, why should I care -- or put in the effort of finishing the book?

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## **Anna (Curiosity comes before Kay) says**

So, this book TRULY surprised me! I did not think that it would be as good as it turned out to be. I figured it would be a let down, because how could it match up to the description that it was given?:

Jazz . . . Booze . . . Boys . . . It's a dangerous combination.

Every girl wants what she can't have. Seventeen-year-old Gloria Carmody wants the flapper lifestyle—and the bobbed hair, cigarettes, and music-filled nights that go with it. Now that she's engaged to Sebastian Grey, scion of one of Chicago's most powerful families, Gloria's party days are over before they've even begun . . . or are they?

Clara Knowles, Gloria's goody-two-shoes cousin, has arrived to make sure the high-society wedding comes off without a hitch—but Clara isn't as lily-white as she appears. Seems she has some dirty little secrets of her own that she'll do anything to keep hidden. . . .

Lorraine Dyer, Gloria's social-climbing best friend, is tired of living in Gloria's shadow. When Lorraine's envy spills over into desperate spite, no one is safe. And someone's going to be very sorry. . . .

From debut author Jillian Larkin, *VIXEN* is the first novel in the sexy, dangerous, and ridiculously romantic new series set in the Roaring Twenties . . . when anything goes.

So that is the description on the inside cover. This book had a very surprising cliffhanger ending that I will not spoil. I ended up loving all of the girls, but I think my favorite was Clara. She is trying so hard to figure out who she is after a major disappointment in life. I loved Marcus, who is best friends with Gloria. He was the most wonderful guy in the book other than Jerome Johnson. Speaking of Jerome, I DEFINITELY did not expect this book to explore interracial relationships and prejudices in the 1920s! The way Jillian Larkin did this was relatable and realistic. This entire book has absolutely beautiful descriptions and emotional insights. It was in triple

third-person omniscient point of view, so each chapter alternated between the girls (Gloria, then Clara, then Lorraine) and while it didn't use the word 'I' it got inside of their thoughts in a very personal way. Bastian Grey is a very odd character, because at first you think that you know who he is; then he turns into someone completely different. It was very shocking the way his character changed, but he was so deliciously villainous! I loved this book almost too much to cast it. But I will anyway because I am just DYING TO!

Bella Thorne as 'Gloria Carmody'

Blake Lively as 'Clara Knowles' (with shorter hair obviously)

Emma Roberts as 'Lorraine Dyer' (also with shorter hair)

Trevor Donovan as 'Sebastian "Bastian" Grey'

Garrett Hedlund as 'Marcus Eastman'

[image error]

La Monde Byrd as 'Jerome Johnson'

Katerina Graham as 'Vera Johnson'

Stefanino Sorice as 'Carlito Macharelli'

Abigail Breslin as 'Ginnie Bitman'

Marion Cotillard as 'Claudine' (the Carmody family's maid)

Marcia Cross as Beatrice Carmody (Mother)

I truly fell in love with this book and I will definitely be buying my own copy. I will also be desperately awaiting the release of "Ingenué" in September! I would recommend this to anyone who enjoys historical fiction, romance and intrigue. Enjoy the book and comment below if you wish! :)

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### **Bonnie (A Backwards Story) says**

With another new year—and decade—upon us, I thought it would be a good time to look at a new book that takes place close to a century ago, during the Roaring '20s. (Can you believe it? Another decade and we'll have our own version of the 20s!) Debut author Jillian Larkin has released the first in her Flappers trilogy, *Vixen*. Told in three alternating points of view, the novel is pure historical fiction: we learn not only about flappers, as the series title suggests, but get a peek at what life during the Roaring '20s was like, from prohibition, speakeasies, and gangsters to fashionable clothing, hairstyles, and slang. There's a little bit of something for everyone, and Larkin paints a picture that makes it easy to picture the vibrant decade in the mind's eye. The book releases at a good time, too: HBO recently released aired the debut season of its latest TV hit, *Boardwalk Empire*, and fellow teen author Anna Godbersen (author of the popular historical series *The Luxe*) recently released a new book set in the same time period, *Bright Young Things*. There's also talk of a movie version of the musical *The Drowsy Chaperone*, which closed on Broadway about three years ago.

While I'm not normally a fan of novels with chapters that alternate POV, Larkin handles the shift well and such a break-up of the novel is necessary. The three main characters in the novel lead very different lives, and through each of them, we're able to flesh out different aspects of the decade. In fact, Clara steals the show despite the fact that her cousin Gloria is the "main character" of the novel. I found myself most eagerly

looking forward to Clara's plotline as she tried to make a new, "regular" life for herself after previously being a flapper in one of the most notorious speakeasies. It is through Gloria and her friend, the scheming, back-biting Lorraine, that we experience teenagers going through rebellion as they try to grow up too fast and live glamorously--while, of course, hiding what they're doing from their parents and, in Gloria's case, fiancé. The novel ends with everything in flux, making it easy for readers to start looking forward to the release of 2011's *Ingenue*, coming out in August.

The Teen Section needs more historical fiction. So much of what's out there is war-based (and a lot of that revolves around the Holocaust). There is so much more that has happened and decades chock-full of stories waiting to be told. It's nice to see a niche forming for a decade that isn't heavily studied in school but still full of intrigue. I hope this trend continues and that period pieces are finally beginning to make their way back into fashion.

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### **Jamie (The Perpetual Page-Turner) says**

3.5 - 4 stars.

Let's just start out with-- hello, my name is Jamie and I am obsessed with the 1920's and flappers and I will read anything related to said obsessions. Seriously. I once was a flapper for Halloween. I just love the flapper fashion, the literature that arose from the 1920's, the jazz, the transition into the modern culture, the progress in woman's suffrage movement, the mobsters, the speakeasys..it is all just so exciting to me! I just love reading and watching movies set during this time. Anyways, once I saw this book I just KNEW I had to pick it up.

Vixen has it all -- romance, glitz and glamour, catty girls, mobsters, secrets, and suspense, -- and is set in one of those most interesting and alluring time periods in America. It also did deal with more substantial issues like friendship, loyalty, the suppression of women, racial and societal expectations, etc. In some ways this reminded me of *Gossip Girl* set in the 1920's with the high society, secrets, backstabbing and shocking public revelations. And I totally was picturing the episode of *Gossip Girl* where Chuck opened the speakeasy and they were all in flapper-like costumes. Larkin nailed it. At some points I felt like if I closed my eyes, I'd be transported into some dark speakeasy, filled with smoke and booze, dancing with glamorous flappers and gangsters with pin-striped suits. I could hear that jazz music playing and feel the excitement of being rebellious and sexy in my fringed dress, headband and bobbed hair cut.

There were some interesting characters in this book. Clara was my favorite -- she was smart, despite some obvious bad choices in her past, and I thought she was interesting and was the shining star for me. I did appreciate some of the dimensions we started to see in Gloria and I started to really appreciate her. At some times I felt like Gloria and Lorraine were a bit cliched and predictable but the storyline and the setting made up for what they were sometimes lacking for me. The storyline was well crafted and I kept wanting to find out what happened.

My one gripe with this book is that I felt like the author went a little bit overboard with the lingo of the time period and she didn't need to because she really had me convinced of the time period with how she built their world. All these phrases and slang were dropped into the story and it felt like a like a kid who learned a set of vocabulary words and tried to keep impressing people with packing them into sentences. It just didn't flow all the time and seemed awkward. The overuse of all the lingo was distracting and it was really unfortunate because she already set such an authentic scene for the reader.

I will note that this might be inappropriate for some younger readers -- lots of booze, smoking and it's pretty sexy. I thought it was tasteful but definitely a little more mature than some YA lit geared for younger readers.

My Final Thought: Vixen is a sexy and intriguing debut that captures the excitement of an era and an underground lifestyle that is full of glamour, grit and danger. It is edgy and provocative without being trashy. It is a promising primer, for older teens (and YA lovers of all ages), into a period of time that should be explored more in YA historical fiction. I cannot WAIT for the second book to come out as the ending was quite exciting and ends with quite the bang..literally. In the meantime, I'll be trying Bright Young Things which is also set in the 20's and seems to be about flappers.

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### **Stacia (the 2010 club) says**

Really liked this one. I needed a book that was going to show me some action and not just talk about it. This book fit the bill. I've been reading some heavier content lately and was craving something fun and fast moving. Thank you Vixen for giving me back some of the fun!

#### **Reasons this book shined :**

1. Many flawed characters with secrets to hide
2. Taboo interracial relationship (for the time period that is - how scandalous!)
3. A good part of the time was spent in an underground speakeasy - a den of sin for the young crowd, full of illegal booze, smoking, jazz, and dancing in beaded dresses. I wanted to be there!
4. Lots of scandal and intrigue. Sometimes you just need a good drama.
5. Depth where you didn't expect to find depth. Hey, it wasn't all fluff!

Each chapter had a rotating viewpoint of one of the three girls. Each one had a different and interesting story to tell. This writing style kept the story from getting stale, which I appreciated. Some authors aren't able to write like this without it feeling disjointed, but Larkin nailed it.

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### **graveyardgremlin (formerly faeriemyst) says**

*3.75 stars*

*Once upon a time there were three beautiful girls who went to the best schools (and speakeasies), and they were each assigned booze and clothes that are the cat's meow. But the flapper lifestyle took them into different directions and now they work to find out who they are and what makes them truly happy. My name is Vixen.*

And so you've been introduced to the first installment of The Flappers series Charlie's Angels' style (the best I was able to come up with anyway).

#### **Meet our Angels Vixens:**

*Gloria* - She's the one who has it all: *the* name, riches, looks, clothes, a handsome fiancée, everything comes easily to her, and everybody seemingly loves her. But this poor little rich girl isn't so happy after all and so she begins to rebel.

Clara - Burned by her former flapper lifestyle, she's now trying to start over as "Country Clara" without her sordid past coming to light. So has she turned into a goody-two shoes or is it just part of a grander scheme? Only time will tell.

Lorraine - Jealous of best friend, Gloria, she's desperate to step out of Glo's shadow to become the center of attention as an individual.

**Before getting to my review, there are a few questions that should be addressed:**

Is this great literature? *No.*

Will this book change your life? *No.*

Will you learn anything from reading this book? *No. Well, maybe some twenties' slang.*

Is this book accurate to the period? *No, there are some liberties, but it's good enough as wallpaper to the players and scenes.*

Is this book entertaining beyond belief? *A resounding YES!*

VIXEN is very easy to read and captured my attention from the first page, and while it may not be the best book ever, I had a lot of fun reading it. While there's nothing glaringly obvious anachronism-wise, I did question some word choices, phrases, and actions, but overall they were easy to overlook and I likened it to watching *A Knight's Tale* starring Heath Ledger. Written in third-person, each chapter focuses on one the three girls' point-of-view, starting with Gloria and continuing with Clara and then Lorraine, throughout the book until the end.

As for the characters, Clara (named after Ms. Clara Bow?) was definitely my favorite to read about, she's recovering from the aftereffects of her life in New York City (which includes a boy, of course), and is trying her best to leave the past behind and move on with her life. Her story had a lot to offer and she felt like a real person who had made mistakes and was now left dealing with the repercussions. Lorraine was a trainwreck you can't take your eyes off of, and while I can't say I liked her, I felt sorry for her. She tries way too hard to stand out and ends up making herself look pathetic; if she keeps it up she'll turn into a very ugly person whom everyone hates. Forget Gloria, Lorraine is the "real" poor little rich girl of the book. She's in the middle of making all the wrong decisions and we're along for the journey, which made her multidimensional and interesting to read about as well. Gloria was my least favorite, mainly because I don't think the author knew quite how to write her. At one moment Gloria seemed like a good girl rebelling, but then there would be moments where she was a real bitch and those two aspects just didn't gel into a cohesive whole. Now if she was seemingly sweet on the outside and really was a conniving bitch underneath, then I'd be on board or at least would get it. But she wasn't that type of bitch and she wasn't Alexis Carrington-bitchy (or insert less-dated reference here) either. How she was written made her look more like Sybil and didn't render me to sympathize with her at all. It didn't help that I felt she was too close to a Mary-Sue for my liking. I don't like perfect or near-perfect characters, they're boring and so was she. What was her motivation for anything, such as singing? Was that always a dream or did it just now come about? Is her recent behavior only happening because she's unhappy? Sorry, but there's just not enough there to make me care about this character. Gloria needed to be more fleshed out to make her feel like a real human, with real thoughts in her head and real feelings, and not a cliched cardboard cut-out.

The love aspects of the novel were fairly glossed over, mainly Gloria and Jerome's story, and felt more like teenage hormones than actual real love.

*"I don't know you but you're hot and I love you."*

*"Nothing will keep us apart!"*

*"We'll be together forever!"*

Which is too bad because I like the idea of an interracial romance taking place in the 1920's, it could have been fantastic, but instead was tepid and generally unromantic. It didn't help that half the duo was boring old Gloria and the other half never developed beyond the fact that he's a black musician who's forbidden to her due to the color of his skin. I wished for more impact and still hope for that in the next installment of the series. Clara's budding relationship with Marcus was far more realistic because they actually had

conversations \*gasp\* and was well-paced. The relationships between the girls were touch and go, sometimes they felt authentic, then at other times interactions appeared too advanced to where the relationship had last left off; it was like there were scenes edited out in chunks. The same could be said of the developing romance between Gloria and Jerome.

So a few things bothered me in the book, such as the issue I had with every girl who wasn't one of the main trio being cattily described, i.e. eyes are close together, that color makes her look sallow, etc. Can we get over doing that already? That's not encouraging good behavior. A little more positivity would be a refreshing change. Another thing that annoyed me was at one point, the crap hit the fan and \*minor spoiler\* (view spoiler). There were some minor editing inaccuracies, such as when Gloria's dress goes from gold sequined to red in less than a page (pages 74-5) but nothing too overt to jar me out of the book altogether. Lastly, perhaps there was a bit too much twenties' slang that wasn't always incorporated into the text as smoothly as possible.

Overall, the plots were well-done and moved along at a brisk enough pace that I never got bored. The ending unfolded so that it tied up the multiple plotlines while still keeping plenty of loose ends for the sequel. So, a lot of the book is superficial, in some cases there are caricatures instead of characters, and it is a shallow interpretation of the Roaring Twenties, I don't care, the book is just plain fun and sometimes that's all I need. And while I can't say I loved this book and it totally lived up to its beautiful cover (seriously that dress is gorgeous, though I could do without the pit shot), I was suitably entertained and will read the sequels to find out what happens next, while I keep up the hope that Gloria will turn into a real, live girl.

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## Chris says

When I finished listening to this book I wanted to go wash my ears out with soap. Yuck! Ptoooey! Ewww! The idea is a good one. The story of three teen girls in 1923 Chicago. Gloria is the only daughter of an extremely wealthy family, and she's engaged to marry into one of the best-known families in the city even though he's a stuffed shirt who's made it plain he doesn't love her. Lorraine's family is also wealthy, but she's extremely insecure about, well, everything. So that makes her desire more than anything to be a flapper. (yeah, right) Clara is Gloria's cousin, a former flapper who has come to Chicago in the guise of a mild-mannered farm girl to escape the repercussions of an affair in New York. The chapters alternately tell their stories. Lorraine drags Gloria to a speakeasy where they engage in sultry flapper repartee with the bartender and patrons while downing drinks. This is despite the fact that they're 17 years old and seniors in high school. In fact, during the course of the book, these girls walk around with flasks tied to their thighs and drink more than I did in four years of college. Gloria becomes infatuated with the piano player, a young black man named Jerome. On another visit the band's singer quits and - wouldn't you know it - Gloria decides to try out to become the new "torch." So now this very sheltered teenager is skipping out of school to go practice with an all-black band in an illegal gin joint. The situations are so ridiculous they're laughable. But what really drove me crazy was the totally anachronistic language (Was he coming on to her? It was the engagement party from hell.), the lack of continuity (she's described as going down the stairs from the stage and then they're going across the stage, Lorraine is given a handkerchief with ice in it after her face is slapped--a minute later she's folding the handkerchief and giving it back) and scenes that don't actually end (there's a showdown at the end of the book -- one of several showdowns -- that we never find out how it ended). Clearly the author was trying to appeal to modern teen girls but in doing so she gave up on any sort of historical accuracy. Clearly good writing wasn't a top priority either. I know a lot of other people really like these books. Maybe I read something different?

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## Angie says

Well... I must say that the first half of the book was cute but only so-so. The end of the book was great though! All of a sudden the story really took off. I have to say it was kinda daring for the author to talk about an interracial relationship that took place in the 1920s. I will be curious in future books to see just how accurate to history the author stays. At first I wasn't going to read the sequel but now I am for sure! ! I gave it three stars only because the first half of the book was a little but of slow.

<http://angelasanxiouslife.blogspot.co...>

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