

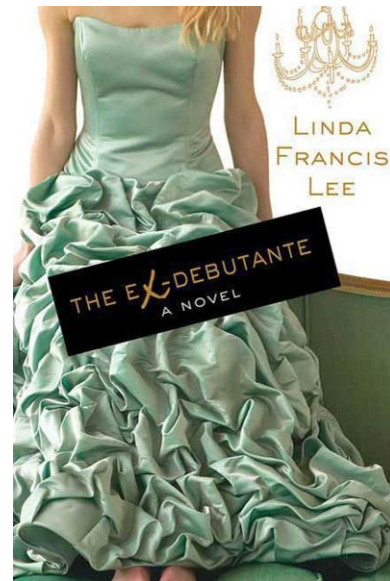
READING GROUP GUIDE

The Ex-Debutante

By Linda Francis Lee

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Ex-Debutante* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *The Ex-Debutante*.

About the Book

When Carlisle Wainwright Cushing left her native Texas to start a new life in Boston, she had no regrets. The former Texas debutante, who never felt at home in her Southern skin, had found liberation--or so she thought. Until the day she gets an urgent call from her mother, reporting that: one, the Symphony Association Debutante Ball, which Carlisle's family has sponsored for years, is about to be called off; Two, her mother's divorce has the whole town talking; And three, the family's good name is at stake and Carlisle is the only one who can fix it all. So Carlisle takes a leave of absence from her law firm and goes to Texas to help. Her fiance, who has no idea she's an heiress, can't know that she's organizing the ball, handling the dramas of the girls involved, settling her mother's suit--and coming face to face with the true love of her life, whom she ran out on when she left Texas. Her trip home challenges Carlisle's sense of herself and brings the pieces of her past together, so that when she finally re-meets the man of her dreams, she's in a perfect place to tempt fate.

About the Author

Bestselling author of nineteen novels Linda Francis Lee is a former Texas Debutante who has high hopes that all photos of the experience are long gone. She currently lives in New York City with her husband where she is at work on her next novel.



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Discussion Questions

1. How do you think Carlisle's mother's pending divorce affects her relationship with Jack?
2. According to Ridgley, there are three types of women: Those born fabulous, those who learned to be fabulous, and those who would never, no matter what, be fabulous. How do you think Carlisle brought out the fabulousness of her less than fabulous debutantes?
3. How does Carlisle grow into her own fabulousness? Does she redeem herself for her first attempt at being a debutante?
4. Throughout the novel, Carlisle pits her Texas upbringing and her newfound Eastern brashness against each other. When have you ever had to shift between two worlds?
5. Willow Creek is vividly divided by the "Haves" and "Have-nots." How does the debutante ball bring the town together? How does it pull it apart?
6. If you had to choose between the worlds represented by Jack and Phillip, which would you pick? Why?
7. What kind of role does family play in *The Ex-Debutante*?
8. How do you think the current generation of Wainwright Cushings mirrors their ancestors' reputation in Willow Creek?
9. How does the debutante ball bring Carlisle, Savannah, and Janice together as partners and sisters?
10. As you read *The Ex-Debutante*, which character did you most identify with? Who did you least identify with? Why?

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