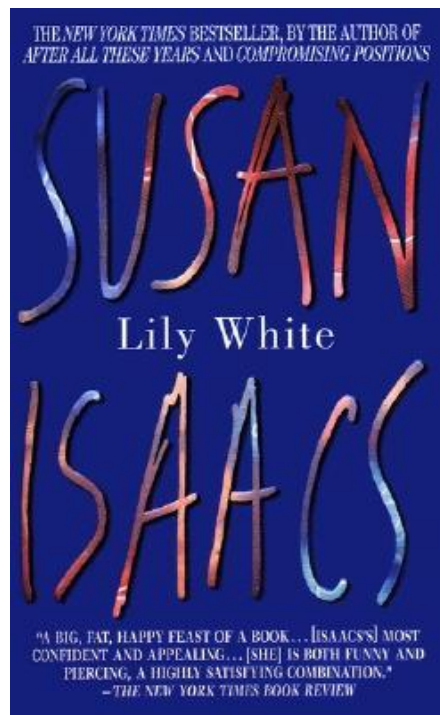




Lily White

Susan Isaacs

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In Susan Isaac's most ambitious and dazzling novel to date, we are introduced to Lee White, a criminal defense lawyer practicing on Long Island. Into her life drifts Norman Torkelson, a career con man charged with strangling to death his latest mark. At first, as Lee explains to us, the case seems routine, the evidence overwhelming. Norman--manly, magnetic and morally reprehensible--is a man who crisscrosses America looking for patsies for his cruel marriage scam: Love 'em, liquidate their assets, leave 'em. Clearly, he murdered Bobette Frisch, the dumpy, sour 50-something bar owner who had fallen madly in love with him. But just as Lee is resigning herself to the inevitable "Guilty!" verdict, she begins to have doubts. What, after all, was Norman's motive? Why not do what he had done for the last 20 years: run and leave behind a broke and brokenhearted victim? Lee starts to wonder if her client is not only not guilty but also covering for the real killer and, in doing so, performing the first selfless act of his life. As the Torkelson case unfolds, a second narrator chimes in to tell us the story behind the story: the tale of Lee's life. Born Lily White, Lee is a smart, pretty and privileged child coming of age on Long Island. Her parents have little time for her or her younger sister, devoted as they are to the pursuit of shallowness. Her mother, Sylvia, who looks like Lauren Bacall's twin sister with a mild eating disorder, is busy with the exhausting work of keeping up her wardrobe. Her father, Leonard Weissberg--Weiss--and finally White, is consumed by his chi-chi Manhattan fur salon, his model-bookkeeper mistress, and his obsession with the family next door, the old-money, oh-so-social Taylors.

When Lee marries Jazz Taylor, the scion of these blue-bloods, her life seems blessed. Suddenly she has her mother's approval, her father's love--and a sublime husband. No matter that she has to give up her dream job in the Manhattan DA's Office to move back to Long Island with him; that's what marriage is, a series of compromises made in the name of love. Isn't it?

"Lily White" masterfully interweaves the depths of deception surrounding the twisted Torkelson case with the stunning betrayals that devastate Lee's own life. With the characteristic intelligence and delicious, razor-sharp wit displayed in her previous bestsellers, such as "After All These Years" and "Compromising Positions," Susan Isaacs has crafted an extraordinary novel about social mobility -- about what is phony and what is real. "Lily White" is the seamlessly executed story of the crimes committed in the name of the good life and the victims of these violations: Those like Bobette, who do not survive, those whose spirits are crushed, and the few, like Lee, who fight back--and find something better.

Lily White Details

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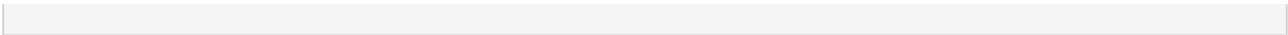
Author : Susan Isaacs

Format : Paperback 656 pages

Genre : Fiction, Mystery, Novels, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit

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From Reader Review Lily White for online ebook

Lois Duncan says

This was a fascinating book for numerous reasons, but what makes it truly unique is the way it's constructed. Lee White, a criminal defense attorney, narrates the story of her defense of a career con man, charged with strangling to death his latest mark. That story is intriguing in itself, with many unexpected twists. But every other chapter is written in third person, describing Lee's life from birth, with all the elements of family and romantic relationships that have caused her to become the person she is today.

Two parallel stories -- yet no feeling of division as you read them. I am very impressed by the fact that Susan Isaacs was able to pull this off so seamlessly.

Lahli Shahin says

So far the story is unimpressive. The book was recommended by a friend as an example of juxtaposition. In the copy I have, there are two distinct POVs which are in different font....so there is no need for the author to challenge herself with creative, clever transitions, which is lazy IMO, and pretty cheesy.

It's not a challenge to read, either, but I'm not sure I'll finish this one.

Margaret says

Lily "Lee" White is a Long Island attorney who is defending a con man named Norman Torkelson, accused of killing his latest mark. As the case unfolds, so does Lee's personal history, in a double narrative, alternating chapters (in different typefaces); Lee narrates the present-day chapters as she investigates Torkelson's case, while the chapters describing her earlier life are told in the third person.

The style does take some getting used to, but both narratives are sufficiently compelling that I never found myself skimming through one to get back to the other (which has happened to me before while reading less skillfully written books). The Torkelson plot offers a penetrating portrait of the con man and his partner in crime and a sharp look at the American justice system, while following the thread of Lee's history reveals an engaging, determined, and sassy heroine and her struggles to deal with her family.

Ellie Syverud says

Decided I didn't like it so did not read it.

Pewterbreath says

Don't ask me where I was when I read this---what a wierd book to pick up. It was an easy read, not very deep, but easy, and I found it stangely enjoyable. Particularly because I'm certainly not the audience intended

for this sort of book. (It seems to be for 40 something female middle management sorts in airplanes on a business trip).

Dodie says

Pulled this from the back of my book shelf. I *think* I'm enjoying it, but probably not enough to keep my attention. I like the dueling stories, one modern, one in the past...alternating chapters and fonts. Unfortunately, I think I like one plot line better than the other, so maybe that's my hang-up.

Sumi Tamang says

Have read this more than 5 times, honestly. I must have been 14/15 then.

Santa Cyopik says

Loved this book! It had a little bit of everything....murder and mayhem, relationship issues, childhood flashbacks to a dysfunctional family plus a surprise ending.....can't get much better than this....and easy to read as well. Will definitely look for more books by Susan Isaacs.

Leanna says

Picked this up completely randomly and started reading because I'm a sucker for hard-boiled female protagonists involved in the criminal justice system. While this book is replete with many cliches from the genre, the writing and plotting were much better than they had any right to be and the characters were surprisingly nuanced. Solidly enjoyable.

Sharon says

Continuing my Susan Isaacs kick. This was a great story about a lawyer and a con man. The chapters alternated between first person and third person, which took a bit of time to get used to. I figured out some of the plot twists, but not others. The narrator was the daughter of a furrier, which was a nice tie-in with the last book I finished: "The Outliers."

Pam says

[no, a gay man wouldn't marry a straight woman and they would live happily ever after (hide spoiler)]

Marti says

I read this book in July of 2004 so cannot remember much about it. In my journal I noted that it was not a paperback that I would save. Susan Isaacs is an author I have read in the past, which is probably one reason that I chose this book at a book sale.

Maureen says

Meet Lily White, Long Islands criminal defense lawyer. Smart, savvy and down-to-earth, Lee can spot a phony the way her snooty mother can spot an Armani. Enter handsome career con man Norman Torkelson, charged with murder; to wit, strangling his latest mark after bilking her out of her life's savings. As the astounding twists and reverses of the Torkelson case are revealed, so too is the riveting story behind Lee's life.

Read this one (finally) as part of the 2005 ABC Author challenge; I found it funny, touching, distressing, surprising and a highly recommendable read. Lily was a joy to get to know. I really enjoyed Isaac's writing style, and the storyline grabbed me from the first page. I'll definitively read others by this author (did I mention how I LOVE this challenge??!!

Zoe says

Interesting book with 2 different plots: One, the story of a bright criminal defense attorney(formerly with DA's office) who is handling the case of a long-time con man accused of murder; The other, the story of her life... Daughter of Jewish immigrants, wealth in fur industry, Ivy League graduate during hippy period, love with "the boy next door"...love, addiction, pretense, betrayals, family dysfunction, etc. At times, a little long, but, interesting overall.

Melissa A Comer says

Alternating chapters, told in first and third person, make up the 'two stories' that are this book's content. After adjusting to this format, I realized that this was a genius way to tell this story which has so many facets to it. Susan Isaacs, a witty story teller as always, created an entertaining back and forth chronicle about very human winners and losers but my money was always on Lily (Lee) White.

Sarah says

[The story revolves around Lily "Lee White." She is an attorney representing a con man. While she deals with this fellow, Lee takes us back to her past. We discover her upbringing, her seemingly wonderf

Kiri says

I read this under extreme duress, but I was definitely pleasantly surprised. I was fully expecting some horrible chick lit novel, but if all chick lit was written this intelligently then I would read a lot more of it.

Greg Lewis says

I read this back in the 90s when the author was going through a time of particular popularity given *Shining Through* being adapted into a film. I was surprised to see in what could have been total fluff, the book had a surprisingly compelling storyline and was touching to boot. Almost from birth, Lily White (nee Weissman, then Weiss, then White) is a fish out of water. Among her photogenic but vapidly superficial family, among her classmates in school and later among her colleagues. Her life told via flashbacks in a double narrative style alongside the present day case she is investigating of a con man accused of killing his latest mark. Driven by her sense of integrity the reader will be in for a roller coaster ride of triumphs and betrayals in both Lily's personal and professional life as an attorney. Though the ending is a bit much to swallow, it still is well worth the readers time to get to know Lily White.

Julie says

This is my second time reading an Isaacs novel. Like the first, this one was a nice read, just not a gripping page-turner.

I really enjoyed the story of Lee White; her upbringing, her relationships with her family and friends, her attitude. The plot describing her representation of Norman Torkelson, the con man, was interesting. And the character of Norman's girlfriend, Mary, was really written well.

What I didn't care for was the flow of the story. One chapter was dedicated to describing her childhood and then the next chapter was present day. I didn't like this alternating pattern, and it continued throughout the entire book. I thought the book would have been fine written in chronological order.

Aside from that though, I did think this was a good book. I liked the outcome of most of the plot points. I was disappointed that Norman got away. And I was bummed about her husband's infidelity. But I really enjoyed her friendship with Will Stewart.

Becca says

I loved Susan Isaac's writing but not enough to get past the lack of flow in the story structure. I called it quits after around page 150. I actually loved the unconventional structure at first, switching between first person and third person--even different fonts for the different perspectives! But eventually I just wanted more forward movement in the plot and felt bogged down.

Too many books on my to-read list to push through this one.

