



Lucinella

Lore Segal

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Lucinella Lore Segal

Intelligence turns me on.

Lore Segal's tour de force look at the New York literary scene was a hit when it was first released in the 1970s, winning the praise of the literary elite. John Gardner called it "magical." William Gass said it was "witty, elegant, beautiful." Stanley Elkin called it "a shamelessly wonderful novel, so flawless one feels civilized reading it."

It's been a cult classic ever since, and appears here in its full, original text, as fresh as ever: the story of the whimsical New York poet Lucinella and her adventures among the literati. It starts at Yaddo writers colony, where life is idyllic, meals are served to you in your rooms, and cocktails are ready at day's end ... and still the writers complain and compete. Then it moves back to New York City, where the pampered once again face reality, and wonder: Will a different husband ... or the right publisher ... or the perfect filing system ... put life in order?

Lucinella and her circle feel lacking and keep looking, busily going to parties and watching one another's lives closely for signs of happiness, love and despair.

Segal depicts it all with a perfect blend of love and malice. And at the center is Lucinella herself, so full of humanity and frailty that these divertissements do her to death. "Here," as Cynthia Ozick says, "is the enchanted microcosm, the laughter of mortality."

The Contemporary Art of the Novella series is designed to highlight work by major authors from around the world. In most instances, as with Imre Kertész, it showcases work never before published; in others, books are reprised that should never have gone out of print. It is intended that the series feature many well-known authors and some exciting new discoveries. And as with the original series, *The Art of the Novella*, each book is a beautifully packaged and inexpensive volume meant to celebrate the form and its practitioners.

Lucinella Details

Date : Published October 13th 2009 by Melville House (first published 1976)

ISBN : 9781933633794

Author : Lore Segal

Format : Paperback 160 pages

Genre : Fiction, Short Stories, Novels

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From Reader Review Lucinella for online ebook

Jakub Szestowicki says

3,5

Nicole says

I wanted so badly to love this. My spine shivered on the last page, but overall I had an intensely difficult time keeping a solid hold on my own attention here.

Christoaugust says

I really wanted to like this book but, at some point, it just lost me. It is short enough to read in a day so maybe I will give it another shot at some other point...

Susan Messer says

A strange little find--a novella (you don't see many of those on bookstore shelves these days). Pure Segal--a little surreal, a little odd, about a group of poets, all hungry for praise and attention. I adore her clever savvy about that need for acknowledgment and approval among writers, the darkness that hovers when they don't get it.

Justin says

I continue to find myself judging writers based on how I feel about their protagonist, and, particularly, if they (the writers, that is) are being too gracious to them (the protagonists). Such is definitely the case in Lucinella. There are some interesting passages, and Segal's prose is whimsical, if a little precious when she breaks the fourth wall (or whatever you'd call it in literature). But Lucinella is a disaster, and not in the great Ignatius Reilly way. She's frivolous in her craft, self-absorbed in her petty anxieties, indiscreet, disloyal, and trite. Her younger version has hope, which her middle-age and real-time version scorns. Thank goodness her future version can't seem to remember, or at least communicate, her thoughts on how she wound up.

Tex says

Read like I was being left out of a joke.

carrie says

"Despite my love of the publisher's curated collection of old-timey novellas and intriguing looking new ones, I was a bit worried about my choice. Lucinella is about a writer writing, a topic that seems to produce cold, nasty little books that have may superficial delights (especially is you hang with a lot of artists), but that often lack the heart that tends to endear me to books..."

Meredith says

I read it twice! It was charming, smart and sad both times.

Michael says

Parts of this novella (primarily the bits with Zeus) didn't really hold my interest, and I admittedly skimmed the last 30 pages, but there were some terrific set pieces that make this a worthwhile read. I could call this a scathing take-down of the insular world of literary figures, but Segal clearly has affection for all of them.

Nathan says

pretty great. really funny and super dense. if you read more than two sentences and don't find anything clever, funny, or playful go back and you'll find something every time. (happened to me about every other page.) reminded me a little of my favorite book of the zeroes, mary robison's "why did i ever."

Elizabeth Bradley says

Completely and utterly wonderful. Shockingly of-the-moment, considering that it's 30 yrs old... READ THIS NOW!

Jeremy Hornik says

I'm going a little crazy for Lore Segal right now. This is a sort of memoir, like all her books, and sort of a magical realist thing, and sort of a satire on the literary life. What she does is make these wonderful characters, full of emotions and needs, and moves them along at a pace that is completely unforced and natural. And they have the neat trick of being both unpredictable (you don't know what they'll do next) and sympathetic (you believe what they do, and empathize with them for doing it.)

Anyhow, this is the story of Lucinella, a poet. She meets a variety of other literary types: a boyfriend, younger and older versions of herself (both called Lucinella), celebrated old poets, adolescent young poets, Russian poets, black poets, little magazine publishers, critics, and a pair of Greek gods. She meets them at

retreats, and parties, and symposiums, and more parties. It's a bit precious, spelled out like that, and I don't imagine it's for everyone. But in the reading, it feels like the story of a life both deeply questioned and deeply felt, even at its most ambiguous.

Isaac says

Truly one of the funnier, odder, denser, slim little books I've read in a while. I've really enjoyed this series of novellas and aim to read them all.

Matthew Trevithick says

This nice book, in its funnier moments, accurately nails why it's best to remain wary of authors, poets, writers, and other so-called intellectuals... very amusing and well written.

Lauren Albert says

Hard to describe. Zeus and Hera are characters. Young Lucinella, Lucinella and Old Lucinella all play roles (often in the same scenes). Satirical and affectionate novel about writers.
