



Gentlemen Prefer Blondes

Anita Loos, Candace Bushnell (Introduction)

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If any American fictional character of the twentieth century seems likely to be immortal, it is Lorelei Lee of Little Rock, Arkansas, the not-so-dumb blonde who knew that diamonds are a girl's best friend. Outrageous, charming, and unforgettable, she's been portrayed on stage and screen by Carol Channing and Marilyn Monroe and has become the archetype of the footloose, good-hearted gold digger, with an insatiable appetite for orchids, champagne, and precious stones. Here are her "diaries," created by Anita Loos in the Roaring Twenties, as Lorelei and her friend Dorothy barrel across Europe meeting everyone from the Prince of Wales to "Doctor Froyd" – and then back home again to marry a Main Line millionaire and become a movie star. In this delightfully droll and witty book, Lorelei Lee's wild antics, unique outlook, and imaginative way with language shine.

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes Details

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Author : Anita Loos , Candace Bushnell (Introduction)

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From Reader Review Gentlemen Prefer Blondes for online ebook

Susan says

This book was a lot of fun. It was recently brought to my attention by a fellow goodreads pal (thank you Paul) I was able to find a copy in our local library that had it stored in its basement. It included the original borrowing records showing it was 1st checked out April 1930 and completed with fabulous illustrations. The story is one long scream and left me very intreeged to improve my brain and find more writing by Loos, providing I can talk my maid into reading it for me.

TheSkepticalReader says

I honestly believed I would enjoy this book despite the 101 problems I had with the story after seeing the adaption, but I really didn't. The narration was boring and I much preferred the film to the book.

Dfordoom says

Anita Loos wrote *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* in 1925 as a kind of whimsical tribute to her friend H. L. Mencken, who had a weakness for blondes.

The narrator of this volume, Lorelei Lee, is a formidable member of the species. She's a dumb blonde who is not so dumb after all. She is in fact remarkably single-minded. Lorelei collects men the way some people collect stamps, and like a keen philatelist she is a discriminating collector. They have to be rich. They also have to be willing to part with their money, but that's no problem. All men suddenly become willing to part with their money when they meet Lorelei.

Lorelei hails from Little Rock Arkansas. She left that metropolis after an unfortunate incident with a male admirer. He was a little too ardent in his pursuit, Lorelei found herself holding a revolver, and as she puts it, the revolver shot her admirer. This could have caused her some inconvenience, but luckily the judge and the gentlemen of the jury were all very sweet about it.

Now Lorelei has been sent to Europe by another admirer to educate herself. Lorelei's ideas on gaining an education centre mainly on shopping, a subject on which she is an expert. She gains fresh admirers wherever she goes. There is some difficulty over a diamond tiara presented to her by one particularly keen admirer, the unpleasantness being caused by his wife who unaccountably raises objections about this little bauble. The lady despatches a father-and-son team of French lawyers to retrieve the gift, but luckily the two lawyers, once they meet Lorelei, are really sweet about the whole matter. So sweet that they spend a great deal of their client's money taking Lorelei shopping.

Lorelei is accompanied on her adventures by her friend Dorothy. Dorothy has some odd ideas about men. She fall in love with them. Lorelei has nothing against love but she considers it eccentric to fall in love with men who are not rich. Love doesn't always last, but diamonds are forever.

Lorelei's latest conquest is an American philanthropist who shares her interest in motion pictures, but while

Lorelei hopes to act in movies his passion is for censoring them. He is very concerned by the moral depravity of Hollywood. So concerned that he is willing to expose himself to the dangers of viewing the most risque scenes over and over again.

This is a wickedly funny little book. You don't expect a light-hearted romp about flappers on the make to have a recommendation from James Joyce on the cover but Joyce was a huge fan of this book.

notgettingenough says

How can it possibly be that only one of my goodreads friends has read this and yet James Joyce couldn't resist it?

In the 1920s, Anita Loos, a gorgeous intelligent brunette Hollywood writer became pretty well pissed off at the fact that the men around her preferred dumb blondes. This hilarious book is the result of her venting her spleen on the matter. It can be read on various levels, certainly as a biting satire of Western values both in America and Europe. It was a huge seller at the time, one of those books that appeal to all.

Rest here:

<http://alittleteaalittlechat.wordpress...>

Marti says

Although the plot differs quite a bit from the movie, it is impossible not to imagine Marilyn Monroe as the narrator. Packed off on a whirlwind tour of Europe by her benefactor ("The Button King of Chicago"), Lorelei seeks to become "educated." However, she notes, in London "they make a great fuss over a tower that is really not even as tall as the Hickox building in Little Rock Arkansas." The only things that can impress a world class Gold Digger with a sense of historical reverence are the Cartier and Coty shops in Paris (along with the various Ritz Hotels populated with Americans who actually like to spend money). Finally, on the eve of Lorelei's impending nuptials to a Main Line Aristocrat, she and her pal Dorothy (Jane Russell) decide that Lorelei deserves a coming out party -- catered by Joe Sanguinetti of the Silver Spray Social Club of Brooklyn.

Lots of smart satire in the guise of stupidity.

Alex says

Here is what Edith Wharton called the Great American Novel, and when it showed up on the Guardian's Top 100 English Novels list it was suggested that perhaps she was being sarcastic. But when one nominates the Great American Novel, one is defining America at least as much as the Novel, yes? And I'm going to venture to suggest that it may not have been the Novel that Wharton was feeling sarcastic about.

There's a straight line between Gentlemen Prefer Blondes' Lorelei and Marilyn Monroe and Madonna, just as there's a line between Dorothy Parker and Sylvia Plath and Lena Dunham, and you can see why Dorothy

Parker found it necessary to rebut this book with her short story *Big Blonde*; these are different archetypes here, and they don't go to the same parties.

But Lorelei is an archetype, one of the great characters, an American Becky Sharp, and this book makes an impact, despite its often preposterous plot. (You know where else Freud makes a personal appearance is *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*.) Anita Loos (her real name, surprisingly, not a dirty joke you didn't get) knows exactly what she's doing. Lorelei's ditzily unreliable narration packs a ton of information in between its lines.

And it's *funny*. Like, super funny: one of the funniest books I've ever read.

I'm writing this on Thanksgiving, and the news today is filled with breathless anticipation of tomorrow, which we call Black Friday because people are most likely going to actually die in pursuit of discounts and yes, sure: Lorelei is the Great American Hero we deserve.

Duane says

Anita Loos (1889-1981) was a successful playwright, screenwriter, and novelist, but she is best known for her best selling book, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. Loos released her novel in a period when some of the great American authors were writing books like *The Great Gatsby*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Main Street*, and *The Age of Innocence*, whose author Edith Wharton referred to *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* as "the great American novel". There may have been a little sarcasm in that, but I think she was impressed with what Loos accomplished. And having lived in New York and Paris, she probably got a laugh out of Lorelei's escapades through those cities.

Don't be mislead into thinking this is a shallow book, pandering to a sex crazy, Jazz Age, male audience. No, Anita Loos aims a little higher than that, with a parody of the female stereotypes created by the Hollywood film industry of the 1920s. And along the way she creates Lorelei Lee from Little Rock Arkansas, one of the truly iconic characters in 20th century American literature. Her character was later immortalized by Marilyn Monroe in the film by the same name. While I got a laugh out of the story and characters, along the way I may have learned something about human nature and single minded determination.

LittleSophie says

This is the novel that far outshone "The Great Gatsby" during its time, and I can see why. Funnier and light hearted, this is a different story of social ambition, delivered in the voice of a barely educated but ruthless and cunning girl from the Middle West. Full of absolute shameless wit, the slim novel picks apart the era's hypocrisy until you have to cheer on Lorelei and Dorothy while they bend the rich men to their will and collect their rewards.

Leslie says

Review of the audiobook edition:

This Audible edition starts with an introduction and a preface (I guess) which are labelled as Chapters 1 and 2. If, like me, you prefer to skip introductions, then start with Chapter 3!

Patrice O'Neill's voice was excellent for this novel; a bit reminiscent of Marilyn Monroe in the film version but not overly so.

Scott says

Decades before Marilyn, Madonna or Holly Golightly, the 20th century's first Material Girl was Lorelei Lee, from Little Rock, Arkansas. Outrageous, illiterate, but utterly self-assured, Lorelei is the essence of a Roaring Twenties gold digger. Her motto has become an advertising icon: 'Kissing your hand may make you feel very good, but a diamond bracelet lasts forever'. She records this and her other *pensées* – 'I seem to be thinking practically all of the time.' – in a diary of airy confessions that could have made Ovid blush.

??Anita Loos' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes: The Illuminating Diary of a Professional Lady* (1925) began as a series of short sketches printed in *Harper's Bazaar*. Loos found her inspiration one day as she watched a bombshell blonde turn the iron man of American letters, H. L. Mencken, into a jiggly lump of jelly. Like Mencken, the men in Loos' novel – Gus Eisman the Button King, Sir 'Piggie' Beekman, Louie and Robber (a father & son team of Parisian *avocats*), the Prince of Wales, and even Sigmund 'Froyd' – don't stand a chance against Lorelei, whose charming antics open wallets and set loose an amaranthine stream of champagne, orchids, diamonds. After all, 'A girl with brains ought to do something else with them besides think'.

??For all of its fun, the book takes a little bit of patience. After three chapters of tripping over Lorelei's curious but unvarying cant, I was just about to chuck it. But then I bumped into a masterpiece, and the masterpiece was Paris. It took Loos 90 pages to get warmed up, but here at last she begins writing a book with a story as enchanting as her characters. After Paris you can count on another 100 pages of tittering delight. When Lorelei's chatter gets to be a little too grating, her traveling companion Dorothy will let fly one of her zingers (some of the best lines in the book) that resurrects the humor and spurs on your reading. So don't give up on it early; it gets better and better as it goes on.

??This first edition earns an extra star for the brilliant illustrations by Ralph Barton.

Karen Beth says

I have never laughed so many times in one sitting in my entire lifetime of reading than I did with this book. Nor laughed so hard. It probably helps that I have traveled a lot, and to the same places these women were traveling, but I recommend this book to EVERY female on the planet. It will tickle you pink.

Jonathan says

Wonderful, witty, linguistically experimental in all sorts of unusual ways, and way more intelligent than you

may have been led to believe...just like its main character.

I mean, is this not like something from Stein?

"So Mr. Spoffard spends all of his time looking at things that spoil peoples morals. So Mr. Spoffard really must have very strong morals or else all the things that spoil other peoples morals would spoil his morals. But they do not seem to spoil Mr. Spoffards morals and I really think it is wonderful to have such strong morals."

and

"I am going to stay in bed this morning as I am quite upset as I saw a gentleman who quite upset me. I am not really sure it was the gentleman, as I saw him a quite a distance in the bar, but if it really is the gentleman it shows that when a girl has a lot of fate in her life it is sure to keep on happening."

or

"So Mr. Jennings helped me quite a lot and I stayed in his office about a year when I stayed in his office about a year when I found out he was not the kind of gentleman that a young girl is safe with. I mean one evening when I went to pay a call on him at his apartment, I found a girl there who really was famous all over Little Rock for not being nice. So when I found out that girls like that paid calls on Mr. Jennings I had quite a bad case of hysterics and my mind was really a blank and when I came out of it, it seems that I had a revolver in my hand and it seems that the revolver had shot Mr. Jennings."

Neri. says

2.5. Basically, this is a guide book for baracudas. Watch the movie instead.

Lauren says

Originally published in 1925, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* was a bestseller decades before Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell starred in the now more-famous screen adaptation. I didn't even know it had been a book until I saw a stray comment about it in Bill Bryson's *One Summer*. So thanks, Mr. Bryson.

It's been years since I've seen the movie, but I don't remember it being this smart (or Lorelei being, for all intents and purposes, a professional mistress this side of a prostitute). The book, told from the grammatically-troubled perspective of Lorelei Lee, is a biting satire. I loved it. Lorelei is both stupid and brilliant. She's deft at manipulating the men around her even as they use her, and the book is written in a way that smoothly glosses over the darker subtext of some of the events. She's an unabashed social climber, and I both hated her and wanted to cheer for her. What a fun read. Highly recommended.

Kate Tooley says

I had such a fabulous time reading this book. Alone at my Aunts house, I liberated it from the back of a bookcase and spent the next two hours giggling hysterically on the sofa. My family came home and thought I'd gotten into the liquor cabinet.

Jeffrey Keeten says

"So when I got through telling Dorothy what I thought up. Dorothy looked at me and looked at me and she really thought my brains were a miracle. I mean she said my brains reminded her of a radio because you listen to it for days and days and you get discouraged and just when you are getting ready to smash it, something comes out that is a masterpiece."

Beauty can be born just about anywhere. It can appear in blue stocking families, or come from hard working blue collar families, or it can even occur in a trailer trash family from Little Rock, Arkansas. Genetics are puzzling and unpredictable, sometimes giving unattractive kids to attractive parents or cherubs to parents who are mystified how symmetrical features ever found their way into their family tree. Lorelei Lee from Little Rock is one of those mysteries of nature. She is pretty, but not just pretty, she is a vava voom beauty.

And as Dorothy says in the quote at the beginning of this review, Lorelei Lee has an unusual mind, a brain that on the surface seems as vibrant as a bag of hammers, but as I read her diary, the more I start to understand that she has a single minded purpose. People who are able to focus all their brain power on one desire become very cunning in the narrow focus of achieving their goal.

Dorothy, played so well by Jane Russell in the movie, is attracted to a different sort of man than Lorelei.

When I was going to college, I experienced frequent bouts of poverty, not Grapes of Wrath poverty, but I certainly had many moments where all the money I had in the world was jingling in my pocket...and not very loudly. I decided that I was going to do what I could to never be poor again. I didn't have my Scarlett moment: *"As God is my witness, as God is my witness they're not going to lick me. I'm going to live through this and when it's all over, I'll never be hungry again. No, nor any of my folk. If I have to lie, steal, cheat or kill. As God is my witness, I'll never be hungry again."* I decided to go with more of a solemn oath to myself and left God out of it. He, after all, left me a world of plenty. It was my job to figure out how to get my fair share. Lorelei takes a different path to security than I did.

Lorelei Lee is mercenary in the ways of love. She doesn't see the sense in her friend Dorothy hanging out with tennis champions *"or going around with gentlemen who do not have anything."* After all, isn't it as easy to love a man with money as it is to love a man with none? *"...because kissing your hand may make you feel very very good but a diamond and safire bracelet lasts forever."*

This is expanded upon in the movie in the song written by Gordon Martin that Marilyn Monroe sings. *"A kiss on the hand may be quite continental, / But diamonds are a girl's best friend. / A kiss may be*

grand, but it won't pay the rental on your humble flat. / Or help you at the automat. / Men grow cold as girls grow old, and we all lose our charm in the end. / But square-cut or pear-shaped, these rocks won't lost their shape. / Diamonds are a girl's best friend."

I bring up Marilyn Monroe because it is impossible to read this book without hearing her sultry, soft voice in my ear. Anita Loos, the author of this book, also worked on the screenplay for the movie by the same name. While researching this book, I learned just enough about Loos to realize that I need to discover more about her. She was a jack of all trades and successful at all of them. She wrote books, screenplays, and even acted in films. Recently, I watched *San Francisco* (1936) starring Clark Gable and Jeanette MacDonald without ever really putting together the fact that Anita Loos wrote the screenplay. When she finished writing this book, she took it to her friends and acquaintances who laughed, but at the same time felt the book was too scandalous, after all she was making fun of sex. They suggested that she serialize the book in Harper's Bazaar, where it would be lost among the ads.

Subscriptions to HB tripled.

When the story was published in book form the first edition sold out in two weeks.

Reporters liked Anita Loos because she was always good for an off color quote. In this case, she shared some wisdom regarding women's lib. *"They keep getting up on soap boxes and proclaiming that women are brighter than men. That's true, but it should be kept very quiet or it ruins the whole racket."*

Lorelei Lee, at the suggestion of one of her rich male friends, is sent to Europe on a tour to improve her mind... on his dime of course. This doesn't keep her from weighing the men of Europe to see if any of them are a better catch than the one she has. If you have seen the movie, then you are familiar with Piggie. He shows up in the book but is woefully in need of some training. **"Because I always think that spending money is only just a habit and if you get a gentleman started on buying one dozen orchids at a time he really gets very good habits."** The matter of a diamond tiara gets Piggie in all kinds of trouble. I don't think he has ever had so much fun getting in hot water in his whole life.

Illustration of Piggie by Ffolkes from the Folio Edition

By chance, the movie *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) came on the other night. I put it on intending to watch just a few scenes, but ended up watching the entire movie again. It is that kind of movie. This time I payed close attention to Marilyn Monroe (as if anyone can take their eyes off her when she is on screen) because I'd been spending time with the literary Lorelei Lee. Monroe's performance is really extraordinary. What she does may look easy, but the ease with which she portrays the role, like a second skin, is really impressive. In my opinion, she should have at least received an Oscar nod. Jane Russell does a wonderful job playing the second best looking girl in the room. If you haven't seen the movie, please put it on your list. It is truly a marvel to behold.

Anita Loos, beautiful and smart, and very not blonde.

I laughed many times while reading this book. The humor pounces unexpectedly. Lorelei will say something that sounds perfectly normal; but then, when your brain has a chance to break down what she said into parts, you start to realize that she snuck a Lorelei-ism that shouldn't make sense.

"And so I really think that I can say good-bye to my diary feeling that, after all, everything always turns out for the best."

I never doubted that Lorelei would get what she wanted. She says it best: "I can be smart when it is important."

If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com>
I also have a Facebook blogger page at:<https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten>

aconeyisland says

Romanzi di viaggi di oceano Ebbene dimenticavo di ricordare che il signore inglese che scrive novelle sembra aver preso un grande interesse per me non appena ha scoperto che sono un tipo letterario. Dirò che ha telefonato tutti i giorni e che sono stata due volte con lui a prendere il the. Così mi ha mandato per il mio compleanno un intero pacco di libri di un certo signor Conrad. Sembra che siano tutti su viaggi di oceani, sebbene non abbia avuto che il tempo di dare loro un'occhiata. Ho sempre preferito i romanzi di viaggi di oceano fin da quando posavo con il signor Christie per la copertina di un libro su viaggi di oceano del signor Mc Groth, perché dico sempre che una ragazza non fa mai abbastanza figura come sul ponte di un battello...

Colleen says

I probably would have given this 5 stars if it wasn't for the fact it was written by Anita Loos, who from all I've read of her makes my skin crawl. I'm surprised her autobiography *A Girl Like I*, is rated so highly on Goodreads, because I thought that was easily one of the most meanspirited books I've ever read.

I think that takes a bit of the fun from *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* for me. Since the entire book (supposedly) was a joke against her mentor HL Mencken (I don't like him much either actually) and his fondness for scheming blondes.

But this follows the noble tradition of such books as *Shamela*, and it is very, very funny. It's a pity Jean Harlow never did a film version of this, because it fits more with her character than Monroe (and yes, Loos DID write dialog for some of the most classic Harlow films).

Manny says

March 5th

Today I went to a place called Goodreads, it is a kind of literary salo which is useful for a girl that wants to improve her mind like I do. So I wondered how I would be a social success there it is quite different from New York but luckily I met a gentleman called Mr. Paul Bryant who took an interest in me and wanted to help me improve my mind. Mr. Bryant said it is very very easy you just post a review that is a bit riskay and has an artistic picture at the top. I said I did not know how to do artistic pictures but Mr. Bryant said you just

borrow one from another review like from Miss Lisa Jayne who is very very popular. I said isn't that stealing but Mr. Bryant said no it is an act of ommadge and she will be delighted.

Then I said what do I write under the picture and he said you just be yourself and you will see the votes come rolling in, like I said it is very very easy. So I copied out what I wrote in my diary for today and Mr. Bryant gave it to his friend Dr. Rayner to post and they said I would be an Internet celebrity before I knew it. I said that was very very interesting but was there a place on the Internet where they could buy me an emerald bracelet since a girl doesn't want to waste her time. But Mr. Bryant said that unfortunately he was to busy today to go shopping.

I like the Internet very very much but I think I will go back to New York because the gentlemen there know how to treat a lady.

Paul Bryant says

Driving to school to pick up Georgia only 45 minutes ago! (how up to the minute is this review?), on the Radio is "Brain of Britain 2013", a general knowledge contest. One of the questions :

Who wrote Gentlemen Prefer Blondes?

Contestant ponders, then says

"Henry James"

Now, wouldn't that have been something? Anita Loos gets the idea for "The Wings of the Dove" and Henry James gets the idea for "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes : The Illuminating Diary of a Professional Lady"... I'd buy them both.
