



The Ex-Debutante: A Novel

By Linda Francis Lee

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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.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The latest tongue-in-cheek blusher from Lee (after *The Devil in the Junior League*) finds that coming out in Willow Creek, Tex., society has its snags. At her own debut, Carlisle Wainwright Cushing failed to execute the Texas Dip—a deep full curtsy where a girl sinks so low that she touches her forehead to her skirt—properly. Now almost 30 and a successful Boston divorce attorney, Carlisle is summoned home to represent her diva mom Ridgely in her latest divorce. Carlisle is also asked to rescue the troubled Hundredth Annual Willow Creek Symphony Association Debutante Ball, and to teach seven iffy deb-to-be the Texas Dip. But the attorney representing her mother's soon-to-be-ex is Carlisle's old heart-throb, the former bad boy Jack Blair—who is the brother of the ultra rich Hunter Blair, and father to India, a spoiled deb-to-be. Can Carlisle deal with all the challenges while allowing her renewed feelings for Jack to come out? Lee depicts Carlisle and the antiquated debutante tradition with equal parts chagrin and tenderness. (Apr.)

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Review

Praise for THE EX-DEBUTANTE by Linda Francis Lee

“Original with fresh sparks of wit, Lee offers a story about the importance of family, unconditional love and looking beyond the false surface of perfection. The Ex-Debutante battles the impossible need to both leave home and return home—and in the process she teaches us something about the grace of looking beyond image and embracing the messy imperfections of love, family and home.” –Patti Callahan Henry, bestselling author of *Between the Tides*

“I adored *The Ex-Debutante* and seriously read it in one don’t-interrupt-me-on-penalty-of-death sitting. Linda’s voice is so lively and vibrant and fun—and the story was completely compelling.” –Beth Harbison, bestselling author of *Shoe Addicts Anonymous*

“*The Ex-Debutante* is fun, witty and totally *fabulous*.” –Rachel Gibson, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Tangled Up in You*

Praise for *The Devil in the Junior League*

“Not even the requisite happy ending can blunt Lee’s deliciously sharp jabs at Texas blue bloods.”
–*Entertainment Weekly* (Grade: A-)

“Lee’s details about how the blue-blood women dress, talk, decorate, entertain and conduct themselves...keep the pages turning.” –*USA Today*

“Wickedly funny.” –*Booklist*

From the Inside Flap

Carlisle Wainwright Cushing, of the old-moneyed Willow Creek, Texas, Wainwrights, is the daughter of larger-than-life Ridgely Wainwright . . . Cushing-Jameson-Lackley-Harper-Ogden. Given her mother's predilection for divorce, no one is surprised that Carlisle becomes a divorce lawyer and runs far away to Boston, where no one, including her fiance, knows she's an heiress. But now, three years later, Carlisle is

lured back to Texas to deal with her mother's latest divorce and the family-sponsored 100th annual debutante ball which is on the verge of collapse.

Suddenly the determined lawyer is weighing the merits of beads versus crystals on ball gowns and teaching eighteen-year-olds to balance books on their heads, all the while trying to figure out how to tell her deeply Southern mother that she is engaged to a Yankee. Things go from bad to worse and soon Carlisle's afraid she'll never get back to Boston, especially when good ol' Southern boy Jack Blair shows up on the opposite side of the divorce court, making her wonder if the man is going after her mother in the proceedings, or her.

Carlisle's trip home challenges her sense of who she really is and forces her to face the secrets her family has tried to keep, well, secret. Funny and smart, poignant and true, "The Ex-Debutante" is a story about the risks one woman must take if she stands a chance of finding herself, real love, and her place in that crazy thing we call family.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Raymond Garza:

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