



Limelight

Melody Carlson

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Claudette Fioré used to turn heads and break hearts. She relished the glamorous Hollywood lifestyle because she had what it takes: money, youth, fame, and above all, beauty. But age has withered that beauty, and a crooked accountant has taken her wealth, leaving the proud widow penniless and alone.

Armed with stubbornness and sarcasm, Claudette returns to her shabby little hometown and her estranged sister. Slowly, she makes friends. She begins to see her old life in a new light. For the first time, Claudette Fioré questions her own values and finds herself wondering if it's too late to change.

Limelight Details

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From Reader Review Limelight for online ebook

Nanette says

Loved this book! The author deals with serious topics (greed, arrogance, forgiveness, aging) but uses humor throughout the story. Talk about a quirky main character. Melody Carlson has written so many teen and adult fiction books. I haven't read one I didn't like!

Christy Lockstein says

Limelight by Melody Carlson is an unusual and humorous book about a starting life all over again at 82. Claudette Fiore's life was one anyone would envy: wealth, fame, handsome movie director husband, beauty; the epitome of Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous, until her accountant paid himself instead of the IRS leaving her without a home or the kind of life she's lived for the last sixty years. At first, the news causes her to attempt suicide, but two weeks in a psychiatric facility has left her determined to live on her own again. With the help of her stepson, she returns to her hometown of Silverton, California to a house left to Claudette in her mother's will. Returning to the town she couldn't leave fast enough and the sister she hasn't spoken to in years will test her self-confidence, and she will have to find her new place in the world. Claudette's trials while trying to learn how to care for a home: washing clothes with dish detergent, starting a fire in the fireplace with a closed flue, and using her Crock-Pot as emergency bathroom facilities makes this book at times a laugh out loud riot. But there is also a powerful message about friendship and finding self worth outside of your gross income. Carlson is an outstanding author, her books for teens resonate strongly with the YA audience, but her voice in this book rings just as true. Claudette is a character I wouldn't mind visiting again!

April Suter says

Claudette Fiore, a 80 year old Hollywood socialite, is learning to live a new life without her husband, fancy house and money. Her stepson, Michael, comes from Hawaii to help her move to her childhood home in northern California. Here she has some laugh out loud moments dealing with everyday household chores. She also has a sister not speaking to her. Is she too old to learn? or is she just old enough to mend fences?

378 pages

Wrighty says

Claudette Fioré used to turn heads and break hearts. She relished the glamorous Hollywood lifestyle because she had what it takes: money, youth, fame, and above all, beauty. But age has withered that beauty, and a crooked accountant has taken her wealth, leaving the proud widow penniless and alone. Armed with stubbornness and sarcasm, Claudette returns to her shabby little hometown and her estranged sister. Slowly, she makes friends. She begins to see her old life in a new light. For the first time, Claudette Fioré questions her own values and finds herself wondering if it's too late to change.

My Thoughts:

I really enjoyed the nostalgia of this story. While Claudette is bemoaning her life now she reflects on the life she once led in Hollywood. Beauty and status once meant everything to her but was it real? This is a classic tale of finding out what's really important in life. It may have taken her 80 years and a tragic turn of events but Claudette has a revelation that maybe her life wasn't quite as perfect as she thought it was. While she may be stubborn she is also humorous and that makes her story even more interesting. Her snooty attitude is part of what got her through the tough times at home and in the hospital. While it provides a form of self preservation, she needs to look within herself to try to repair her relationship with her sister, renew her faith and get a fresh start in life.

These characters were quirky and often shallow but they are transforming and adapting to their changes. Their interactions are strained but evolving. The theme teaching a valuable lesson that it's never to late to try to make changes and find happiness. Taking control of your own life can be very empowering at any age.

Chocolate & Croissants says

Claudette Fiore was used to making men's heads turn. Married to Gavin Fiore, a Hollywood director, Claudette enjoyed the good life, expensive foreign vacations, 500 thread Egyptian sheet cotton sheets and a handful of servants to attend to her needs.

Suddenly at the age of 82, the glamorous life of Hollywood comes crashing down on Claudette as she is forced to learn the tasks of life, many of us perform routinely on a daily basis. As a widow, Claudette finds herself almost penniless due to her accountant's swindling.

What is a diva to do? Move back to her hometown in Northern California where she swore she would never return to.

Limelight is a quick, witty and enjoyable read. As an 82 year old Claudette does not have many endearing qualities. Used to being pampered she has difficulty adjusting to the lifestyles of the not so rich. Having spent most of her life in Hollywood Claudette is overly self conscious about her looks. By the end of the book, I found myself liking Claudette. Life in a small town makes her realize that at the end of the day all that is really important are the people that you surround yourself with.

The book has an assortment of quirky characters, Claudette's gay step-son-who works magic with her new home. His enthusiasm and appreciation of life is contagious. Bea, her nosy overly friendly neighbor has no fashion sense but will not be deterred by Claudette's snobbery. In her first week in town, Claudette meets the senior liaison lady, a fan of imitation handbags, an art dealer and a clerk from the hardware store.

Author Carlson, weaves together a fun story of life in a smaller town. She brings to life everyday events that we can all relate to, locking yourself out of your house and overflowing toilets. At times the book had me laughing out loud reminiscing about my own bad luck situations. The book also made me wonder what my life would be like at eighty-two.

Janna Ryan says

What a unique book. This book is about a Hollywood has-been in her 80's that is suffering from a case of... if I can't have what I want, then I'd rather die! So she tries to... die that is. After a failed suicide attempt we meet Claudette Fiore in a mental hospital trying to figure out how she is going to leave when she has nowhere to go after a recent visit from the IRS, which is what led to attempt in the first place. She calls upon her step-son Michael for help and he comes to her rescue. Only one problem, with the Beverly Hills mansion sold for back taxes that leaves her with her mother's old house back home in a town that she swore she'd never go back to. Could death be worse than this? Claudette doesn't think so. Can Michael change her mind and help her see that her life isn't over yet?

What does she do to take care of herself and her new little bungalow without the staff that has waited on her hand and foot for the last 60 years? Heavens, Claudette doesn't know how to do the dishes, wash clothes or make a bed - how is she ever going to stay alive let alone clean? When people from her past start popping into her life how will she ever survive the humiliation?

Can you really teach an old dog new tricks? Come take a journey with Claudette and see.

I really enjoyed this book and seeing how the other half lives, and I don't mean the rich and famous, I mean the elderly! Good book coming from an author who writes a lot of young adult books, it was kind of nice seeing a different side.

John Rose says

This is an entertaining light read. Very funny at times. I enjoyed the book.

Briard says

I didn't realize at first how old Claudette was. I don't think I've ever really read a book where the mc was drastically different from me in age. It was most definitely interesting. I was worried I wouldn't be engaged because of the difference, but that was not the case. I find Carlson has a way of sucking me into a story and I always enjoy her books.

I would have liked a bit more in the ending, but the book is still very good and tells a complete story.

Sara Marsh Billiet says

I really enjoyed this book! I am currently so tired of reading about whiny 24 year olds who don't know if they want a man or not. This story was so different and refreshing. This story is about Claudette Fiore, an aged Hollywood actress who has lost her fortune. The main character is deceptively one-dimensional at first, but as we learn more about her - we begin to understand her better and better.

Cindy says

Claudette Fiore' is one pampered, spoiled rich woman. Perhaps the better way is to say she was rich. A dishonest accountant, has avoided taxes on her husband's wealth and the IRS has stepped in and taken nearly everything. Not used to being destitute, and having everything she wants, Claudette is depressed, mean and hateful. If ever there was a main character you really wanted to dislike, and perhaps smack some sense into, it is definitely Claudette Fiore'.

Totally a me, type personality, she does not understand why her sister dislikes her. Why everyone thinks she is a snob. And she does not like having to leave Beverly Hills for her hometown of Silverton. Her stepson, graciously helps her set up her new home, and leaves her to settle in, with lists of how to do things, and things that need taken care of immediately.

Follow along as she blunders her way through. There are some hilariously funny and some very sad moments also. This book was awesome. I was thinking at the beginning, a book about a rich selfish woman, and then as I got into the book I was drawn in by how Melody Carlson worked out the character of Claudette. A book to read and share, group discussion questions at the end. 378 pages \$US 13.99 4 stars.

This book was provided by Multnomah for review purposes only, no cash or payment was received for this review.

Heidi says

Ok, grumpy, haughty 82 yr. old Claudette is finally making me understand her a little now that I've finished the book. But I have to say...if that life of wealth and ease make people like her then I'm glad for my little unwealthy but quite satisfying life :)

Sara says

What a disappointment, I recommend this book for anyone seeking a sadness that can only be fixed by a double-dose of paxil and a year of therapy. I'd read the description and thought that I'd enjoy the tale of a once rich and fabulous gal who is coming of age. The main character is in her 80s, a bit late to be coming of age-- but that is not the problem. The problem is that the main character is a snobby, snotty, stubborn hot-mess with no personality. She has no friends and her husband has left her in IRS woes. The reader can empathize with being poor and alone, but cannot relate to someone who won't let anyone in, who is utterly unlikeable and difficult. If someone lives to be of this great age, I would hope that she'd have some redeeming qualities, but I don't want to know her if she doesn't.

Claudette is a beastly and selfishly rotten individual, don't waste your time on this one-its a dark hopeless trajedy that is extremely painful to endure.

Sandra Stiles says

I am quickly becoming a fan of Melody Carlson. I have read this book and a teen book she has written and have already made a wish list of her books to be placed on my shelves at school.

In "Limelight" I found a book that could make my emotions ride the rollercoaster. It is the story of Claudette Fiore, an 82 year old former actress. After her husband passes away she finds that his accountant was paying himself instead of their taxes. The IRS does not look favorably on this and has therefore seized most of her assets, including her beautiful home in Beverly Hills. She sees everything as lost and hopeless and attempts suicide. Her step-son flies in to save the day. As a set designer he is used to making lists and working the lists to make magic happen. He sets Claudette down and the process begins. It is then she tells him she owns a home in Silverton, California. He thinks that is terrific. Even when she tells him about how poor she was growing up, he sees the silver lining in all of it. He drives her back to Silverton and turns her mother's former house into something she can feel comfortable and cozy in. She had always had servants around to do everything for her and without that help she as helpless as a baby. With the help of friends she had left behind when she fled Silverton, she manages to survive and actually thrive.

I loved Claudette. She was a snob at the beginning of the book. She trampled on people all of the time and her character made me angry. Then when I saw her situation I felt bad for her because I figured she wasn't going to make it. The problems she has after moving in to her house just cracked me up. The fact she didn't know how to go shopping for the simplest of items just blew me away. Her attempt at doing laundry made me roll on the floor. I knew by the time I had finished the book and I was laughing and crying that I would have to recommend this book to all of my friends. It was a real pleasure to read and review this book.

Carol McCracken says

Loved it...very entertaining. I haven't read something this original in awhile. Who would have thought that the main character of age 82 would be so interesting. It shows hope that we can all mature no matter what stage of the game we are in.

Renee says

I feel this story had great potential. Melody Carlson did a fantastic job describing the difficulties that Claudette had fitting into small town life as a broke elderly woman after having spent most of her adult years a wealthy woman in Hollywood with a houseful of servants. The tensions grew, the difficulties mounted and then BAM!! It was all resolved in a very short time. The resolution was too quick, too short and too pat. It made this book go from being very good to just okay.
