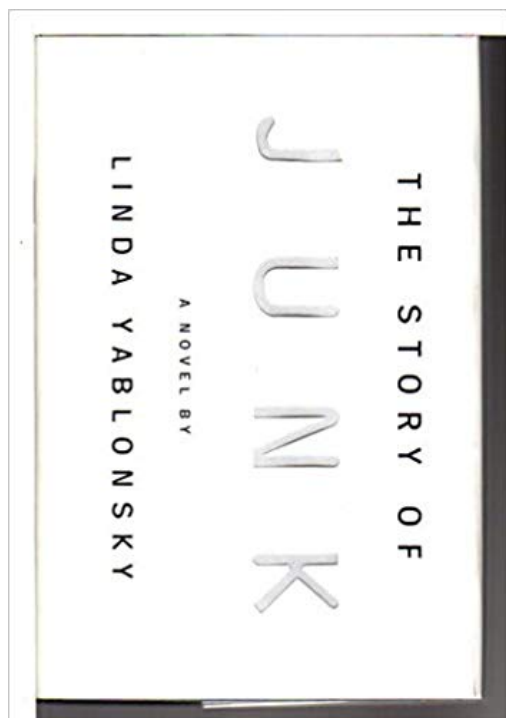
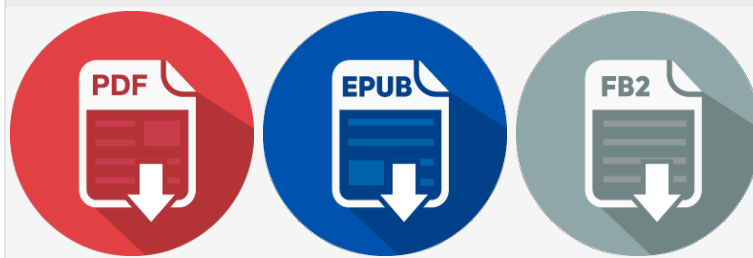


The Story of Junk: A Novel *by* Linda Yablonsky



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A New York City junkie and heroin dealer re-evaluates her life when one of her associates reveals her identity to a DEA agent



Reviews of the *The Story of Junk: A Novel* *by* Linda Yablonsky

Fenius

I decided to give this book a try after I saw some people talking about it in one of my book clubs. I really wasn't sure what to think as I first dove in but I'm so glad I gave it a try. All throughout the book as you're following her life in this junkie world as an outsider looking in you know it's wrong. She's making terrible decisions and ruining her life but at the same time as it's being described I felt drawn into this world and why it was so beautiful to her and completely understood why she continuously made these horrific decisions. The writing was off the charts and I loved every word. Dreladred

a former teacher of mine wrote this and she was the best teacher i ever had in college here in nyc.

she took us on outings of various important cultural events and had us write editorial reviews on the events. i expected her to be no less honest in this book and my feeling was she was.

Malahelm

Great read.

Ces

Received it with no problems and in fine shape! Thank you so much! Rebecca

Vrion

Dull, repetitive story that has been told so much better by so many others.

Anicasalar

The narrator of this book answers the door expecting the mail man but it turns out to be a narc swat team. The DEA agent, a seductive character portrayed very sympathetically, gets her to turn informer and trade her supplier for her freedom. The opening scene is harrowing and authentic. The rest of the book describes long involvement selling and searching for junk culminating in a pretty good smuggler's yarn about a trip to Bangkok returning with anally stored smack. Narrator still seems like a junky, untrustworthy, unselfaware, no affect, no conscience, no commitment even to her rocker girlfriend who is presented as a nutcase anyway--they've probably broken up by now. Book is all retrospect but lacks hindsight: for instance, while dealing, she rationalized it by calling it "taking care" of her customers, rather than destroying them (and herself)--she should have gone to medical school. Question what her deal with DEA was is never answered so you end the book feeling like you've been hustled, another junky routine, snookered into reading several hundred pages by someone who would fink on her friends so she doesn't have to do time in the big house, understandable while strung out and dealing but we want to know just how many people she had to sell out and what kind of probation she got and whether she's on the vice squad now. Big disappointment, a hole in a well-written and fairly evocative book about a scene that seems completely yesterday in spite of how recent it was. She write good prose. Could be good Billy Friedkin movie, but on second thought French Connection I and II are more rewarding. Author photo by Nan Goldin so she's still cool.

Lemana

In this promising first novel, Linda Yablonsky paints a humorous, off-beat picture of New York's elite drug culture in the 1980s. The narrator/protagonist is adrift in a world in which who you hang out with matters more than how much money you make. A would-be writer, she's an aimless thirty year old druggie who works as cook in a chic downtown restaurant. Her natural hipness makes her a favorite of the "in" crowd and gradually she's drawn to the glamour of an aristocracy which, as a middle class Jewish girl from the burbs, doesn't reflect what is familiar to her. Adopting the vices of the elite, she finds a role she can cop--drug dealer to artists, models and entrepreneurs. Spurred on by her reckless girlfriend, a marvelous rockster named "Kit" whose helpless charm and deviant life style are brought vividly to life by Yablonsky, she is soon buying and selling heroin for them. An endless stream of people herd in and out of their apartment, and she observes everything that goes down with the deadpan humor of a cynic and the naive detachment of someone who has nothing to lose. Her anxiety increases as she places herself further and further at risk, betraying the tough veneer she presents to the world. Surprisingly, when she gets busted her life calms down--the crisis enables her to acknowledge a number of issues she's been avoiding since her arrival in New York: her total lack of identity and her desire to become a writer. At this juncture, Yablonsky attempts to take on bigger issues to do with drug addiction and destructive behavior and, in my opinion, she takes a wrong turn. She struggles to link the character's pathology with the history of the Holocaust and her heritage as a descendant of survivors, for example. It doesn't come across and a strict editor would have told Yablonsky not to go there.

At the end of the story, she is stunned and confused, but has managed to change the imprisoning architecture of her life--no small feat for a human being, and a huge task for a novel to make both authentic and interesting. It's enough in a first novel (and an autobiographical work) to describe the transformation the character goes through and acknowledge the issues raised as a result of the

character's experience. Neither Yablonsky nor her narrator need to know all the answers, but one of them should ask the right questions--and then leave it at that. Since the book is based on personal experience, it's possible Yablonsky rushed it to completion--who can afford to wait a decade or two to digest life's experience?

The author's eye for detail and ironic sense of pathos make for a tale which is both exotic and urbane. Despite her immersion in a chaotic, intense world, there's a soundness to the narrator's voice which inspires trust in the reader. As an outsider, she's adopted a New Yorker's consistently sarcastic, humorous attitude but, in contrast, has an underlying helplessness and sincerity which suggests she is more of a human being than she likes to admit. I liked her character a lot and look forward to more novels by Yablonsky in the future--a second is long overdue!

Devoid of the stream-of-consciousness rambling that accompanies many stories in which drugs are at the forefront, Yablonsky's narrator gives us the straight dope (pun intended) about how a regular girl might come to use heroin, begin dealing, become a junkie, and get busted. The book is fascinating and realistic, which leads me to believe Yablonsky might either be very close to her story or be extremely skilled at research. The writing is very matter-of-fact, and our unnamed narrator could be anyone. The reader identifies and empathizes with her. The consequences of her use are neither minimized or exaggerated. Very well-written and engaging.

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