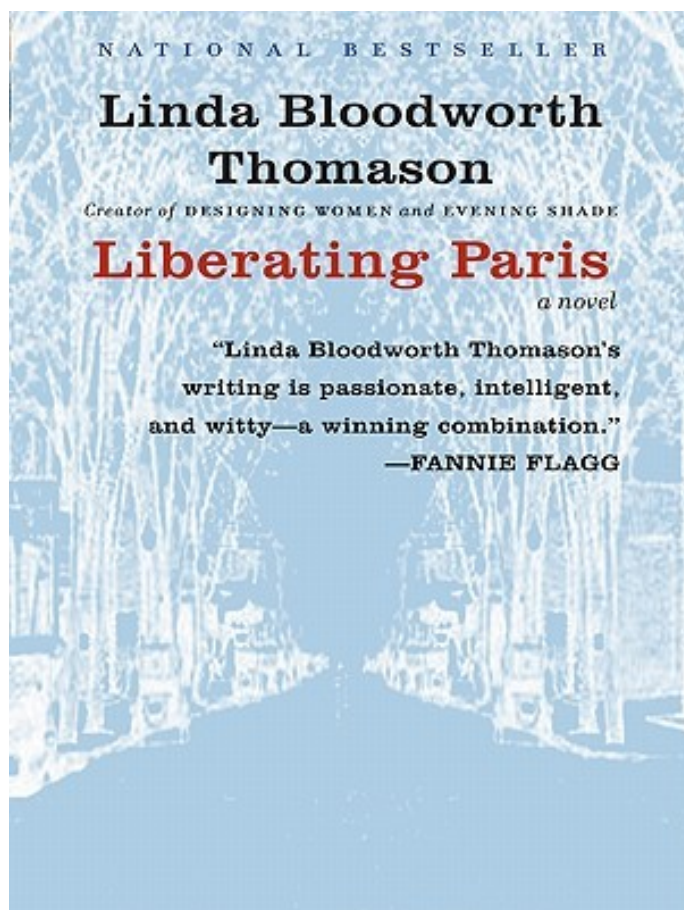

Linda Bloodworth Thomason

Liberating Paris



Title: Liberating Paris

Author: Linda Bloodworth Thomason

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Description

From renowned producer and writer Linda Bloodworth Thomason, creator of the beloved hit television series *Designing Women*, comes *Liberating Paris*, an audacious, poignant, and endearing debut novel about love, memories that won't fade, and holding on to your dreams. Set in small-town Paris, Arkansas, it is the story of six best friends who have just passed their fortieth birthdays and now must come to terms with the past in order to move forward with their lives.

Woodrow McIlmore, the town's golden boy and local gynecologist, is married to his beautiful high school sweetheart, Milan, and seems by all appearances to be leading the perfect life with his two children and extended family and friends. But when Wood's daughter announces that she is smitten with a college classmate and intends to marry him, her parents are stunned. Their daughter's beloved is none other than the son of Wood's lost love, Duff--romantic chemistry has repeated itself in the next generation!

The impending wedding will lead the free-spirited Duff, now an IHOP waitress, to return to the town and the man she left behind, for the first time in twenty years. As Wood's and Duff's reckless behavior progresses, they are forced to question whether their rediscovered passion is worth shattering their children's future and Milan's faith in her husband, and abandoning the friendships and values that they have clung to since childhood. As one of the group says to Wood, "See, it's not just you having an affair. Now we're all having an affair."

During this one tumultuous year, there is a revelation of sexual identity, an unexpected death, a birth, and a wedding, bringing about as many changes as the national discount superstore that is destroying the very heart of the town. The six friends will be forced to decide what in their lives is worth keeping and what needs to be thrown away, and how they can save for their children not only Main Street, but the things that were learned there.

Insightful reviews

Mandy: This was like two stories smashed into one. There was one funny, heartwarming story that made me cry.. Then there was another story full of heavy-handed bleeding heart liberal bullshit that made me want to throw the book across the room. I'm sorry if Wal-Mart (or Fed-Mart, as you want to call it, Ms. Bloodworth-Thomason) ruined your idea of small town life, but there is no need to shove it down our throat in such a Hollywood way. Ughh. So, if I could get the abridged version of this with all of the Fed-Mart crap taken out, I would enjoy this book a whole lot more.

Clif Hostetler: This is a good book and well written. It contains a unique combination of humor, pathos, wisdom, folly and symbolism. The writing is filled with little gems worthy of being quoted (see examples at the end of this review). However as with most novels, some improper activity is required to create a crisis that needs to be overcome. The improper activity I'm referring to in this case is numerous and varied, but most significantly includes marital infidelity (which I don't approve of). But readers of this book who persevere through to the end are rewarded with a

surprise, but happy, ending.

But to be fair, I need to warn social conservatives that the ending is probably not to your liking. This book does a reasonably good job at capturing the spirit of a typical small American town. However, most small towns have not been liberated in the manner described by this book.

With reference to the book's title; We're talking Paris, Arkansas, not the other Paris. And the word, "liberating," is not referring to World War II. I was surprised to learn that the author didn't use a fictitious name for the town's name. There actually is a Paris, Arkansas, population 3,700. I wonder what people who live in Paris, Arkansas think of this book. The downtown business district of the Paris described in this book contains mostly boarded up store fronts because all commerce has moved to the edge of town where the big box "Fed-Mart" (think Wal-Mart) store is located. I wonder how that compares to the actual conditions in the real Paris, Arkansas. The author is a native of Poplar Bluff, Missouri and a graduate of MU. Which makes me wonder, why did she pick on Paris, Arkansas? As far as I know this is the only novel that Linda Bloodworth Thomason has written. She is obviously a good writer, and has written numerous screen plays for television. I hope she decides to write more books.

The following are some quotations from the book:

This is the reflection on the life of an old man who is about to die:

"The boy and his horse had once set out for the sun and quickly learned what others had tried to put into words---that becoming is probably better than being, that there is only one thing in between and that is the ride. *The ride is everything---not* the arrival at some distant or imagined spot of light from which you would probably just see another spot of light and then another until you didn't know where you were or maybe you would even fall from the sky like Icarus for flying too near the sun or end up floating facedown in your swimming pool like Gatsby, who had worshipped too closely to the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. No, there was no question about it: *Forget about the light, Just keep you head down and stay on the ride.*"

These are the complaints of an older woman about the new big-box super store located at the edge of town:

"This is everything we don't wish our little town to be---ugly, impersonal, and, frankly, based on the Communist assumption that larger and undistinguished is better. I personally do not care to join the hoards of slack-jawed strangers overflowing their rubber thongs while steering pushcarts filled with T-shirts, plastic junk, and babies who sneeze Popsicle juice on you."

These are the musings of a traditionally built woman wishing the world would appreciate her body type more:

"What Mavis wanted to see waddling down the catwalk was a huge, happy, honking three-hundred-pound "you can kiss my fat ass" kind of gal, with cellulite forearms and

hamhock thighs draped in some fabulous designer togs."

The following is advice offered by a Holocaust survivor to a newly widowed woman who is suffering from depression:

"Keep moving. Have a goal, One day you will arrive at a place that is better than the place where you were, even if it is only in your head."

Here is a description of the puzzlement of the inhabitants of the old folks home regarding the strange new ways of the outside world:

"They felt they didn't understand the world anymore or anything in it. This strange new place where rules took precedence over common sense and committees were formed to deduce things that children would know. Where people told all their secrets on national talk shows and appeared on the covers of magazines, not for their strengths, but their weaknesses. Where even criminals had no honor now, but killed people just for the fun of it and destroyed things simply because they were there. These old people were glad to be going deaf so they couldn't hear the songs that no one could hum. They were happy not to have cars, because there was no one left to put the gas in. And they seldom made phone calls anymore, because what they mostly got were recordings."

The following short review is from the 2007 PageADay Book Lover's Calendar:

Beach Reads

Paris, Arkansas, is a small town, but Thomason makes it grand with a memorable cast of townspeople dealing with some sticky situations. Thomason created the hit television show *Designing Women*, whose wisecracking Southern smarties have a lot in common with her Parisians. "Poignant, welcoming and warmly funny, this is an irresistible page-turner," raves Publishers Weekly.

LIBERATING PARIS, by Linda Bloodworth Thomason (Harper Paperbacks, 2005)

Monica: A "good read" - pleasant story and likable characters. Fairly predictable but with a few gems of beautiful descriptive writing interspersed.

Jill Simm: Witty yet ran out of steam through the end.

Lisa: This tale is much too clichéd for my liking. the writer attempted to include each small city stereotype she may perhaps arise with. there have been loads of major characters and as the personality improvement used to be fairly weak, I simply by no means felt a lot empathy for any of them. It additionally rambles in such a lot of areas that i discovered my brain wandering after which scrambling to meet up with a few ordinary path the writer had taken. I caught via to the top and was once rewarded with an unfulfilling and extremely predictable outcome.

Mark: i actually loved this one alot. this is often the second one novel i have learn via a tv author this year, yet i've got a miles better opinion of this one than the other. LBT does pretty much as good activity of making actual characters in a unusual Southern town. i may have refrained from any of the intercourse scenes. someone who is familiar with me is aware i am not a prude, yet

they did not look worthy and virtually forced. That said, I loved how in truth this publication portrayed a few really madcap (yes, I stated madcap) characters.

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