Clarion Review

General

The Friday Night Club
Jacob Nelson Lurie
BookSurge
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Four Stars (out of Five)

The Friday Night Club can't quite be called a coming-of-age story, as the characters are half a dozen years beyond college, but it is certainly a tale about confronting maturity. Davis Robertson must face his fears of children, responsibility, and monogamy if he is to settle down with his fiancée Pamela. It's three days before his wedding, and he is still contemplating running away with the stripper he's been cheating on Pamela with. Davis explains, "You know how some engaged couples who have already been having sex try to abstain a month or so before the wedding? My take on it was to stop fucking around on Pamela a month before the wedding. It was killing me."

Author Jacob Nelson Lurie has a bachelor's degree in English and a master's in screenwriting. His command of the language is phenomenal. The writing is fresh and witty, albeit ribald in places to a degree that might offend sensitive readers, with brilliant insight throughout. For example, in describing a bar scene, Lurie writes, "This is a perfect illustration of how, as testosterone mixes with adrenaline and alcohol in the male body, the mind turns into Cream of Wheat. From joy and witty banter to exchanges of 'fuck you' and posturing like roosters. Next up, brought to you by Stupidity, The Male Gene, is a dumb fight."

Portions of the book are deep and truly memorable as well, such as a phone conversation that Davis has with Joanna about dealing with a parent who has been diagnosed with cancer. That one will stay with readers long after the book is done. Unfortunately, despite the exceptional prose and clever dialogue, portions of the book strain credibility. Davis simply isn't believable as a history professor; the two degrees of separation between him and Peter, the movie star, seems contrived; and Ike, the RV smuggler, is downright outrageous.

Further, the structure of the work does not lend itself to readability. There are far too many characters, a challenge that comes from basing things loosely on real life, and with

numerous flashbacks, the story really doesn’t coalesce for the first 113 pages or so. In fact, its organization makes this story seem better suited for a movie than a novel.

All in all, however, *The Friday Night Club* is a worthwhile read. The author’s wit and wisdom outweigh his unfortunate choice of organization, making this is a worthy first novel from a talented author.