

"A comic love letter to journalism
and literature." —Julie Schumacher

CHRONICLES OF A RADICAL HAG



(WITH
RECIPES)

LORNA LANDVIK

AUTHOR OF PATTY JANE'S HOUSE OF CURL

A BOOK DISCUSSION GUIDE

for *CHRONICLES OF A RADICAL HAG (WITH RECIPES): A Novel*
by Lorna Landvik

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

“A comic love letter to journalism and literature, Lorna Landvik’s newest novel is smart, funny, and intimate, with a terrifically memorable cast of small-town characters. Read the book, then head for the kitchen and start baking. Delicious!”

—**JULIE SCHUMACHER**, author of *The Shakespeare Requirement*

“With a sprinkle of some very special Minnesota magic, Lorna Landvik has once again created an absolute delight on the page. *Chronicles of a Radical Hag* is a tribute to hardworking journalists, the power of feminism, and, as always, the importance of friends and family. Book clubs will be gathering with platters of Almond Crescents and coffee as they talk long into the night.”

—**PAMELA KLINGER-HORN**, Excelsior Bay Books

“At a time when local newspapers are nearing extinction, and reporters are deemed enemies of the people, Landvik’s smart and lovely paean to journalists is a welcome reminder of the important role they play in the lives of those who depend on newspapers for more than just information.”

—**BOOKLIST**

“Landvik uses wisdom and her trademark humor to encourage readers to have a thoughtful response to the world and the people with whom they share it. A pleasure to read.”

—**KIRKUS REVIEWS**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

LORNA LANDVIK is the author of twelve novels, including the bestselling *Patty Jane's House of Curl*, *Angry Housewives Eating Bon Bons*, *Oh My Stars*, *Best to Laugh* (Minnesota, 2015), and *Once in a Blue Moon Lodge* (Minnesota, 2017). She has performed stand-up and improvisational comedy around the country and is a public speaker, playwright, and actor most recently in the one-woman, all-improvised show *Party in the Rec Room*. She lives in Minneapolis.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

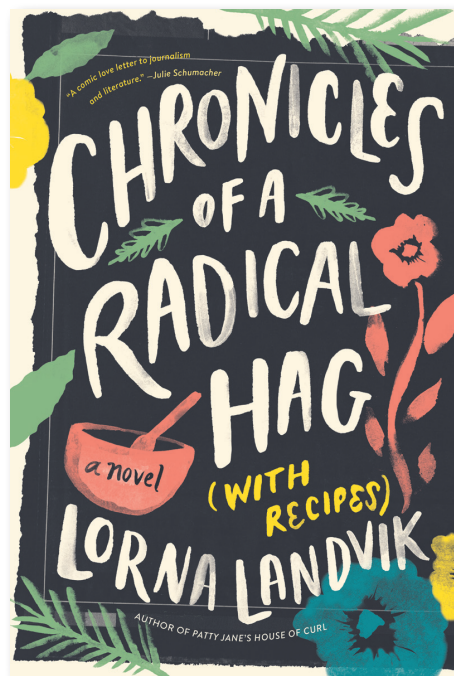
The curmudgeon who wrote the column “Ramblin’s by Walt” in the *Granite Creek Gazette* dismissed his successor as “puking on paper.” But when Haze Evans first appeared in the small-town newspaper, she earned fans by writing a story about her bachelor uncle who brought a Queen of the Rodeo to Thanksgiving dinner. Now, fifty years later, when the beloved columnist suffers a massive stroke and falls into a coma, publisher Susan McGrath fills the void (temporarily, she hopes) with Haze’s past columns, along with the occasional reprinted responses from readers. Most letters were favorable, although Haze did have her trolls; one Joseph Snell in particular dubbed her “liberal” ideas the “chronicles of a radical hag.” Never censoring herself, Haze chose to mollify her critics with homey recipes—recognizing, in her constantly practical approach to the world and her community, that buttery Almond Crescents will certainly “melt away any misdirected anger.”

Framed by news stories of half a century and annotated with the town’s chorus of voices, Haze’s story unfolds, as do those of others touched by the *Granite Creek Gazette*, including Susan, struggling with her troubled marriage, and her teenage son Sam, who—much to his surprise—enjoys his summer job reading the paper archives and discovers secrets that have been locked in the files for decades, along with sad and surprising truths about Haze’s past.

With her customary warmth and wit, Lorna Landvik summons a lifetime at once lost and recovered, a complicated past that speaks with knowing eloquence to a confused present. Her topical but timeless *Chronicles of a Radical Hag* reminds us—sometimes with a subtle touch, sometimes with gobsmacking humor—of the power of words and of silence, as well as the wonder of finding in each other what we never even knew we were missing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Haze had a hard time thinking of her column name—what would yours be, and what would the focus of your columns be?
2. Are you a newspaper reader, or do you rely on the Internet for your news? Do you think one's better than the other?
3. Who are some columnists/bloggers whose work you regularly read, and why?
4. What do you think of Haze's love affair and how she justified it?
5. Susan and Sam were shocked by the revelations of Haze's love affair—have you ever learned of a family secret that's shocked or surprised you?
6. Sam's teacher begins a "Radical Hag Wednesday" to interest her students in Haze's columns and the opinions expressed therein. What did your favorite teacher do to interest the class in the subject they were teaching?
7. What do you think the role of a free press in today's society is, and what do you think of our American media?
8. Susan's high-powered career had a role in her marriage troubles. In your own partnership, how is work life/home life balanced?
9. Sam and his friends are inspired by Haze's words to fight for their future. Are you hopeful for young people's future? Why or why not?
10. One of Haze's readers, Joseph Snell, often writes the paper to disparage her columns. Why do you think some people are threatened by others whose opinions differ from their own?
11. Today's online trolls, protected by anonymity, can be vicious. Have you had experience with any of these trolls in your social media postings, and if so, how do you deal with them? What do you think has contributed to the deep decline in civility?
12. What are some of your work experiences dealing with the -isms Haze has to deal with: sexism and ageism?



MORE INFO:

z.umn.edu/radicalhag