

What I'm Reading: Lilli de Jong

I've been using my Hoopla account a lot. So much so that I'm coming to the conclusion that I don't think I am going to renew my Audible membership when it comes up. I'll still buy a book from Audible here and there but I don't think I need to keep a membership. Hoopla has enough books to keep me content and when I want the new blockbuster, I'll just order without a membership. We'll see. I'm still thinking on that.

The latest book I got from Hoopla was Lilli de Jong. I'll admit, I judged a book by the cover. I loved the cover picture. Immediately I could tell the book likely took place in days gone by. So without reading the summary of the book, I picked it. Oh my. That can get a girl in trouble...



...but this time it didn't.

I liked the book a lot. I'll admit that a time or two I was very thankful for a "break" from the book. The premise is that in the late 1800's Lilli gets pregnant after a promise of commitment, then on her own, has to deal with a pregnancy. As we all know, getting pregnant without being married at that time, was terrible. The book shows the view of just how terrible it was...and occasionally, I needed to turn the book off for a bit. Don't let that deter you from the book though. It's good.

I take this all a little to heart as I was pregnant before we got married. I know some of the shame and guilt associated with that. Thankfully I never knew anything like Lilli did.

The book is written in journal form in first person which I love.

Here's what Amazon had to say: *"Philadelphia, 1883. Twenty-three-year-old Lilli de Jong is pregnant and alone—abandoned by her lover and banished from her Quaker home. She gives birth at a charity for wronged women, planning to give up the baby. But the power of their bond sets her on a completely unexpected path. Unwed mothers in 1883 face staggering prejudice, yet Lilli refuses to give up her baby girl. Instead, she braves moral condemnation and financial ruin in a quest to keep the two of them alive.*

Lilli confides this story to her diary as it unfolds, taking readers from a charity for unwed mothers to a wealthy family's home and onto the streets of a burgeoning American city. Her story offers a rare and harrowing view into a time when a mother's milk is crucial for infant survival. Written with startling intimacy and compassion, this accomplished novel is both a rich historical depiction and a testament to the saving force of a woman's love."

Amazon readers gave the book 4.7 stars. I think I would have to agree. I highly recommend this for a book club book. Many discussions can arise after reading the book. The book is noted to be *Library Journal* Best Historical Fiction 2017. I don't always take note of an acclimation such as that but this time well deserved. Do read this book if you get a chance. As a women, I often feel like it's my duty to read about the struggles women had before there was a replacement for mother's milk, before there was birth control, before we had so many of the rights we enjoy today. I know we have a ways to go, but this book will remind you of how far we've come.