



The Shiksa Syndrome

Laurie Graff

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Shiksa Syndrome

Laurie Graff

The Shiksa Syndrome Laurie Graff

Manhattan publicist Aimee Albert knows a good spin, but she's the one who winds up reeling when her gorgeous, goyishe boyfriend breaks up with her—on Christmas! For a stand-up comedian, you'd think he would have better timing. But Aimee's not about to let a man who doesn't even have a real job get her down. She dusts herself off and decides to seek companionship with a member of her own tribe. There's just one problem: all the shiksas are snapping them up!

So when the very cute, Jewish, and gainfully employed Josh Hirsch catches Aimee's eye at a kosher wine tasting and mistakes her for a shiksa, what's a girl to do? Hey, her heart was broken, not her head!

Unfortunately, the charade goes on longer than Aimee planned, and her life becomes more complicated than a Bergman film. To make matters worse, Josh and Aimee aren't exactly on the same page as far as their attitudes toward Judaism go, creating tension in the relationship. But as Aimee begins to discover that her identity isn't as easily traded as a pair of Jimmy Choos, she must decide if having the man of her dreams is worth the price of giving up so much of who she is.

Wry and witty, *The Shiksa Syndrome* is a by turns laugh-out-loud funny and disarmingly poignant.

The Shiksa Syndrome Details

Date : Published October 7th 2008 by Broadway (first published September 16th 2008)

ISBN : 9780767927611

Author : Laurie Graff

Format : Hardcover 336 pages

Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Literature, Jewish, Contemporary, Romance, Contemporary Romance

 [Download The Shiksa Syndrome ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Shiksa Syndrome ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Shiksa Syndrome Laurie Graff

From Reader Review The Shiksa Syndrome for online ebook

Ashley says

It took me awhile to get into this one, with all the Yiddish words being tossed around and references to Jewish culture. Graff included a handy "Yiddish glossary" in the back that I felt like I was flipping to every couple of paragraphs. This is nit-picky, but I didn't think there were enough pages separating the last few pages of the story and the glossary. While I'd be flipping to the glossary, I'd inadvertently catch a few words in the last pages and had pretty much figured out how the ending was going to do down.

"The Shiksa Syndrome" tells the story of Jewish New Yorker, Aimee. As the story opens, she's breaking up with Peter, her non-Jewish boyfriend due to their religious differences. Aimee feels as if she is under pressure to find a Jewish guy and is frustrated that they all seem to be more interested in "shiksas" or non-Jewish women. After an impromptu makeover, she meets Josh, who is seems to be the perfect Jewish guy. Due to her appearance and the way they initially meet, Josh thinks Aimee is a shiksa, a charade she knowingly keeps up. The story continues from there.

The book started dragging for me about halfway through. I thought the charade with Peter went on way too long. Aimee makes some important realizations about herself and her relationship with her religion as the story progresses, but they really lost a lot of their weight because while she knew what she should do, it took her forever to do it. I found her charade a bit off-putting as the story progressed; it escalated from a lies of omission to flat out whoppers when Josh surprises her with a trip to her "hometown" of Scranton. It also seemed like she enjoyed playing someone else too much, but was too selfish to stop.

I particularly liked the relationship between Aimee and her real shiksa friend, Krista. The juxtaposition of their situations was an interesting contrast and their relationship felt very real and natural to me. Krista's reactions to Aimee's situation were very plausible given their relationship and ones I could see happening in real life. I especially liked a twist late in the book regarding the two of them.

Overall though, this one was just ok. I feel like Graff could have delved deeper into the heavier themes of the book without taking away the overall lighthearted feel of the book. As it is, though, 2 stars.

Lisa says

It's all here: stereotypes, yiddish, interfaith dating, Jews who are barely Jewish, Jews who are culturally Jewish, etc - and in a light, easy read. A lot of it rings true. I do wonder about the shiksa phenomenon, though -- is it really happening? Unfortunately, the main character of Aimee isn't very sympathetic or likable because she pretends to be a shiksa for way too long, and it's obvious that the guy she's pretending to be one for is entirely wrong for her. I could tell where the story was going early on!

Melissa says

The premise sounded hysterical - New York Jewish girl can't find a nice Jewish boy because they all want the hot Shiksa (non-Jewish girl) goddesses... so after being mistaken for a hot Shiksa goddess, New York

Jewish girl decides to play along and catch the nice Jewish boy. Sounded hysterical. Unfortunately it kind of failed in the delivery. It ended up seeming to me like slapstick comedy. Everything that could go wrong did.

On the plus side, it was a fun, light read. On the negative side, the hoax lasted way too long and the author seemed a bit preachy at times (which I can't give examples without spoiling the book). Another plus - I learned a bit of Yiddish. That was fun.

Karina says

As a Jew living in NY, I couldn't resist picking this up, but didn't know what to expect...or if I'd even like it: well, I did.

The premise is that a pretty, accomplished semi-observant Jewish female is tired of seeing all her non-Jewish friends and coworkers land the "nice Jewish" male, so when after a surprise birthday makeover she is mistaken for a "shiksa" (i.e., a non-Jewish women), by a nice Jewish guy she noticed before but who did not notice her, she plays along with his mistake...all the way to meeting his family, finding a church and learning about her supposed religion, and trying to keep her family from spilling the truth before she's landed him. Although things don't work out the way our "shiksa-wannabe" would have liked it to, it's a happy ending that is true to character and far more pleasing.

All in all, this was a fun chick lit worth reading...even if you're not a NY Jew :).

Laura says

It is rare, but sometimes I find myself reading a book so poorly written that I cannot bring myself to finish it. This is one of those books. The plot was decent enough to keep me interested for about half the book, but the author's writing kept me from wanting to finish it. Her sentence structure is very odd, and alternates between rambling sentences and sentences that seem to be missing some elements. In many places the scene completely changes between one paragraph and the next, with no transition and no separation. I was 142 pages in when the main character used a strong swear word, completely out of the blue. It wasn't the word that shocked me but the fact that there had been no indication for the first 141 pages that this word would be something natural for the character to say or think. While it is a story of the search for love and the hijix that go along with a mistaken identity, it seems the author also wanted this book to make the reader think about religion and tolerance, but the way she went about it made it seem like you are taking a break from the story to hear her opinions on those subjects. It isn't integrated very well with the story.

The only reason I gave this two stars instead of one is that it is an interesting plot, and the poor writing did not significantly detract from the story until about halfway through. I did flip to the end and read the last chapter, to see that it has a happy ending.

Hilz says

OMFG. Talk about a FUNNY book. Maybe it just hit home as a woman in my middle-30's who is in the dating scene. Maybe I can relate to there not being lots of Jewish men to date... or knowing that there are many Jewish men who want non-Jewish women.

Maybe I just needed something funny to take my mind off my own life.

All I know is that I truly enjoyed this book.

Judy says

Meaningless fluff, shallow characters, artificial situations in which some ongoing devices (like the main character's inability to drive) don't seem to really drive anything. Two primary challenges, one having to do with boyfriends, one rich and non-observant, the other not Jewish and poor, and the other with a product introduction campaign, are silly. We see lots of shopping and bagel-biting, manipulation, dishonesty in human interaction that don't really engage the reader. Situations seem artificial, as, would a corporate vice president really have to go to the headquarters to make sure the computers were properly turned off and to pick up baked goods? Is the layout of the woman's workplace of any interest, and since it's not mentioned again, who cares how many women and how many gay men work there? A cartoonish Yiddishe mama who lives in the woman's building offers a too-obvious foil from time to time. Only when the non-Jewish comedian boyfriend gets an unlikely "real" job does our lead character decided he's good enough, though her family eventually seems to have liked him from the beginning.

Molly Sender says

Here we have our classic story of a woman changing who she is to attract a man, letting herself be manipulated by "well intentioned but silly" friends, and then ultimately realizing she's PERFECT JUST THE WAY SHE IS!!!!

So quick synopsis: Main character is a single Jewish woman who lives and work in New York City (IMAGINE THAT REVOLUTIONARY PREMISE) and isn't meeting Jewish men who are worthy of the ultimate woman goal of marriage. She hears that Jewish men aren't interested in her because Jewish men don't want Jewish women. So she does what any sane Jewish woman would do, which is completely change the color of her hair, lie about her Jewish heritage, and fake being a "Goy", all to, OF COURSE, impress a Jewish man.

Perhaps I found it offensive because I am a Jewish woman wondering why the hell a Jewish woman can't be proud of who she is, and wondering for the thousandth time, why women must be portrayed as these idiotic bumbling dummies who wander around looking for marriage or their entire being will cease to exist. Or maybe it was just a bad book.

Sure, it throws in some cutesy Yiddish and occasionally funny situations, but overall, I found myself getting more and more angry throughout the book. Rather than feeling proud of my heritage, I was left disappointed and frustrated.

Monica says

This book was a fun and silly read, but at the same time offensive and dumb. I really didn't like the way that Jewish stereotypes were portrayed so literally. Also "shiksa" is an offensive word, which Jews avoid using

and shouldn't really be used anyway. Whilst stereotypes can be true to some degree, not every Jewish person behaves the same and looks the same. It implied that all Jewish women are bossy, controlling and unattractive, whilst shiksas are sweet, easily moldable and influenced and always attractive. Plus why do shiksas always have to be blonde??? There are many blonde Jews and semitic looking "shiksas".

The story is about publicist Aimee Albert who after breaking up with her non Jewish boyfriend, Peter decides to date a fellow Jew but is worried about the competition as Jewish men apparently prefer shiksas. She is mistaken for a shiksa by gorgeous Jewish guy Josh and happily plays along and pretends to be a "shiksa" in order for Josh to like her.

I just found the idea ludicrous!! How can a grown woman whose almost 40 be that dumb and play along to such an extent and extreme? I didn't like Aimee much especially as she was an asshole to her friends and family in the process. I thought she was just incredibly stupid and why go to so much effort for some guy who is so narrow minded and shallow? I hated Josh, I thought that his attitude was disgusting, especially his harsh and unchangeable stereotype of Jewish women. He just wanted a meek woman who would look good on his arm and would go along with his extremely secular and limited version of Judaism.

This was a light hearted read, although I just felt embarrassed for Amy most of the time. It's one of those books which I could imagine being made into a chick flick. It was well written and there was a lot going on so it kept me wanting to read more and see how far Amy will go. I liked Krista, Aimee's sensible "shiksa" friend who wants to become Jewish. This book is good for if you want to read something light, but I did find it offensive and completely unrealistic. I give it 2.5 stars.

Grade : C-

Mark says

Man I want to rate this book higher but the awful writing prevents me from doing so. I felt like - buried within the manic writing and the despicable miasma of lies the protagonist selfishly weaves - there were some good questions raised.

Aimee Albert is a publicist working in Manhattan who is super Jewish and just can't seem to find a good Jewish man to settle down with. She visits her hairstylist and gets an Accidental Makeover! which turns her normally black curly hair straight and bright red. She also loses weight because she's been so stressed about her bad breakup with her Christian boyfriend. Then, while attending a Jewish singles mixer, she accidentally passes herself off as a Shiksa (a non-Jewish woman) and is suddenly super desirable to all the men there.

Aimee then finally bags the man of her dreams but has to suppress her strong and beloved Jewish identity in order to keep him. Hijinks ensue as her weirdly probing boyfriend keeps asking to see her hometown and her Christian church and all the other Non Jewish parts of her manufactured past.

It was interesting to read about the cultural insecurity amongst Jewish women over the allure of the shiksa. There was good discussion in our group about this, as we've heard this outcry in other minority groups where the men find non-minority members alluring. There was also some disagreement about whether Josh - the boyfriend who doesn't want to date Jewish women because they're so controlling - is anti-semitic or not.

The book raised some surprisingly good questions amidst all the poorly written silliness. After (view spoiler)

One of the more enjoyable NSFW books we've read in a while, but I could not recommend it to someone as good reading.

Kim says

2.5 stars

Laura Cobrinik says

Laurie Graff's novel "The Shiksa Syndrome" is a somewhat fast-based plot. Quite stereotypical--but I liked the tone of New York...An enjoyable read and a tour de force as Graff ends the novel with somewhat of a surprise. It is hard to believe that anyone would take away who they are--and choose to live with a lie...I would recommend it to a friend who is going on a "beach vacation." I liked the Yiddish words that popped up here and there.

Laura Cobrinik,
Boonton Township, NJ

Jennifer Willis says

It's been two weeks since my conversion to Judaism became complete. Coincidentally, I was invited to join a bus tour of Jewish Portland this morning, and our very first stop was the same mikvah where I'd been exactly fourteen days earlier to meet with the Ben Din and then immerse in the ritual bath.

Later in the afternoon, I was on the phone with a friend in New York City. He told me that when he'd mentioned my conversion to one of his co-workers, the man had replied, "Cool! Is she single?"

My friend thought this was hilarious and couldn't wait to tell me about it. I laughed with him, then told him about my experiences trying to date Jewish men.

There really weren't that many. Some I met through websites like Match, JDate and OK Cupid. Others struck up conversations with me at Jewish singles events in town. Not a single one of these suitors lasted beyond a first date.

Maybe I was meeting the wrong people, but I found a few too many who were too interested in my conversion activities. One guy pushed hard to tell me what he thought I should believe, how he thought I should be practicing, and what directions in life he thought I should be taking.

Yeah, it was pretty creepy.

Then, about a year into my relationship with Mike, I joined a Jewish Women's Book Club. One the books on our list was The Shiksa Syndrome, a novel by Laurie Graff, in which the main character is an unmarried Jewish woman who is mistaken for a non-Jew by a Jewish man she very much wanted to date. So she keeps up the charade, hiding her own Jewish-ness from a fellow Jew, all in hopes of winning him over.

When I sat down with several members of my book club to discuss the novel, they all rolled their eyes. They'd seen the same problems that I'd been experiencing — Jewish men who want converts as wives, to keep a Jewish household without bringing all the “baggage” of a Jewish upbringing to the table.

It actually didn't make a whole lot of sense, until I thought back on that conversation with the guy who was trying to convince me that I really did want to have children, and I wanted to send them to *this* Hebrew school and take them to *this* synagogue.

Control freak, much?

I've also met some lovely Jewish men — all married, of course — who seem to embrace the power and vitality that a born-Jewish woman brings to the table.

I used to lament the apparent lack of compassionate, non-jerky single Jewish men in my area. And then I began to more fully appreciate how good I've got it.

I'm settled with an atheist — raised Episcopalian — who has no input into my spiritual or religious life. He participates when I ask him to. He's come to synagogue with me a few times for Shabbat, Sukkot, Shavuot and Simchat Torah. When I choose to involve him, he lights candles with me on Friday nights and shares challah bread and grape juice with me. I love his participation.

But he doesn't tell me how to be Jewish. He doesn't direct my observance or criticize my choices. Mike figures that being Jewish is my path, and while he's happy to come along for the ride, he doesn't get in the way of my explorations or try to turn me in a particular direction.

I can't imagine trying to squeeze myself into someone else's mold, as Graff's main character does, not to mention the dishonesty required and the sheer exhaustion that would result.

I might have enjoyed having a Jewish partner, but I very much appreciate having a significant other who allows me to be in charge of my own spirituality. I feel less self-conscious about my choices, and I'm in no danger of deferring to a partner who would be able to hold the “born Jewish” card over me.

When I explained all this to my friend on the phone today, he again burst out laughing.

“Oh, man,” he chuckled. “Can you imagine someone who actually tried to tell you what to do or who to be? Yeah, that would just NOT WORK.”

So I am the Jew in this interfaith relationship. I'm the one who makes the matzo and lights the candles and knits the kippot, all under my own direction. I get to be the authority on what I believe and what I do, just as Mike is in charge of his path. That's the way it should be anyway, I believe, though I've seen many couples where one is clearly the religious expert to whom the other yields. Or maybe the latter is more normal and I'm the one with the unique dynamic. Whatever. It works for us.

Cheryl says

Aimee Albert works as a publicist in Manhattan. She also is very faithful to her religion as a nice Jewish woman. She and her boyfriend, Peter have been dating for a while. Yet Aimee is ready to start a family and

doesn't know if Peter is the one. One... he is a Presbyterian and two...he isn't ready to settle down like Aimee is. Peter can't take the pressure and he ends things between them.

Krista is Aimee's friend and also a shiksa. A shiksa is a non Jewish person. Krista and Aimee go to a party at Down. Aimee observes Krista getting all the attention and coming away with phone numbers and dates. Aimee meets a guy at Down. His name is Josh. He seems nice and someone Aimee would like to get to know but he seems to be only interested in non Jewish women.

For Aimee's birthday, Krista gives her a make over. Aimee couldn't look any more opposite from a Jewish girl. Krista also shares with Aimee how to act and talk like a non Jewish person. Krista and Aimee head out again to Down and this time Josh shows an interest in Aimee. They go out, all the time Josh under the impression that Aimee is non Jewish. The thing is that Josh, himself is Jewish. Oh what is a girl to do?

I liked the concept of this book and thought it sounded like a fun chick lit but unfortunately I found it middle of the road just ok. While I thought Aimee seemed like a nice person, I was a little disappointed that for someone who believed in her religion so strongly would give it up for a guy. I was really turned off by Josh. I found him to be very judgmental, considering the fact that he was Jewish and he didn't want to date girls that were. The rest of the characters were kind of boring. Overall, I liked the concept but could have been better and funnier.

Chelsea says

This is what I get for grabbing a book off the shelf since the book I REALLY wanted wasn't there...sigh. I thought it would be funny, kind of like My Big Fat Greek Wedding-esque except with the main character being Jewish. And while there was nothing I really DISliked about the book, but not that much TO like. I thought the entire middle 100 pages could have been taken out without losing any real plot. It bothered me that the main character stayed SOOOOOO long in her charade and was obviously not falling in love with her boyfriend...who wasn't very lovable as a character, so you didn't really care about him anyway, so why did she keep trying? Lame! But, there were a few things that touched me and kept me reading to finish it. Plus, the author would jump weeks to months at a time between paragraphs without any warning, so suddenly you were confused as to what happened and what was going on. AS you can tell, not highly recommended...
