



## The Best of Enemies

*Jen Lancaster*

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***Bridesmaids* meets *The In-Laws* in a novel told from the alternating perspectives of two women who define the term frenemies—from *New York Times* bestselling author Jen Lancaster.**

Jacqueline Jordan knows conflict. A fearless journalist, she's spent the past decade embedded in the world's hot spots, writing about the fall of nations and the rise of despots. But if you were to inquire about who topped Jack's enemy list, she'd not hesitate to answer: Kitty Carricoe.

Kitty reigns supreme over the world of carpools and minivans. A SAHM, she spends her days caring for her dentist husband and three towheaded children, running the PTA, and hiding vegetables in deceptively delicious packed lunches.

Kitty and Jack haven't a single thing in common—except for Sarabeth Chandler, their mutual bestie. Sarabeth and Jack can be tomboys with the best of them, while Sarabeth can get her girly-girl on with Kitty. In fact, the three of them were college friends until the notorious frat party incident, when Jack accidentally hooked up with Kitty's boyfriend...

Yet both women drop everything and rush to Sarabeth's side when they get the call that her fabulously wealthy husband has perished in a suspicious boating accident. To solve the mystery surrounding his death, Jack and Kitty must bury the hatchet and hit the road for a trip that just may bring them together—if it doesn't kill them first.

## The Best of Enemies Details

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Author : Jen Lancaster

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## From Reader Review *The Best of Enemies* for online ebook

### Taryn says

*I received this book from Penguin Random House, in exchange for an honest review.*

Jack Jordan, a somewhat smug foreign correspondent, shares her best friend Sarabeth with the somewhat shallow stay-at-home supermom Kitty Carricoe. Jack and Kitty have been sworn enemies since a misunderstanding during college and the rivalry has escalated out of control over the last couple of decades. When Sarabeth's husband is involved in a fatal plane crash, Jack and Kitty rush to Sarabeth's side. They become suspicious of the circumstances of the husband's death and team up to investigate.

The chapters alternate between Jack's and Kitty's points of view. The main story takes place in 2014, but there are also lots of flashbacks. Before the story starts there is a series of invitations and hotel letters, which I think was a really fun way to start the book. *The Best of Enemies* really illustrates the importance of communication and how the littlest misunderstandings and assumptions can drive the biggest wedges between people. All of Kitty's and Jack's drama could have been avoided with a little communication and empathy.

I chose this book because of the comparison to *Bridesmaids* (which I loved) and *Big Little Lies* (which I liked). *The Best of Enemies* is this the deepest I have gone down the chick lit rabbit hole and the book was a little bit of a mismatch for me as a reader. I have to say, this is the first time I have come across the terms "amazeballs," "totes legitamittens," and "faboo" in a book! There is a lot of (tongue-in-cheek) modern lifestyle blogger lingo, texting speak, pop culture references and brand name/celebrity name dropping. I have never seen *Top Gun* or *Risky Business* (I know, I know!), so many of the references were lost on me. Those who were teenagers or young adults in the 1980s will probably get the maximum enjoyment from this book.

The alternating chapters technique is really effective for this story, because you get to read Jack's and Kitty's hilariously different interpretations of the same event! My favorite part of the entire book was when Jack and Kitty teamed up. The back and forth of their dialogue was really fun to read. I wished they could have partnered up earlier, because the introductions and set-up seemed to take ages. The first 200 pages seemed so slow and then a lot happened in the last 100 pages.

I think the author did a great job of making Kitty seem really unlikable in the beginning and then slowly making the reader want to be her friend! Jack was an interesting character as well and I really liked her close relationship with her family. All the other characters were a bit one dimensional. There is a lot of fun, snarky dialogue. Sometimes when the subjects got more serious, the dialogue was more stilted (a conversation between Kitty and Bobby discussing raising kids in the internet age and a scene at John-John's house). Things got totes ridic at the end! (view spoiler)

Even though this was just an okay read for me, I think it will be enjoyable for fans of the genre. I think it would make a really fun movie!

*(How I define 2 Stars: It was OK. Forgettable. I started daydreaming about the next book I would read while reading it. If it is a subject/genre that you love, it might be worth a read.)*

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## **Kelly says**

[I cannot believe it ended with her quitting her job overseas because secretly she was afraid of love, but conveniently found her lost love (don't worry, he had secretly been pining away for her for the last 15 years), married him, and then of course she's pregnant. Because no woman can ever be fulfilled by an exciting career because BABIES. (hide spoiler)]

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## **Charlotte Lynn says**

If you have not read Jen Lancaster's books before you are seriously missing out. The Best of Enemies is a little different than some of her other books but it is just as good. I found this book to be just as quirky and fun but it had a mystery in it. Honestly, I had the mystery solved before the end but I was still thrilled with the ending. Just remember all is not as it seems.

The characters were all interesting. Jack (Jacqueline) is, of course, my favorite. I love that she is such a tomboy and knew it. She loved being one of the boys, although she becomes one of the boys almost by default of not having her mom around. Kitty was the wicked one of the book. I felt like she was always out to take someone for something. She felt she was very important and deserved more than she received. Don't get me wrong, I liked her. Even the bad girl isn't always bad. Finally, there is Sars (Betsy). She is the best friend to both Kitty and Jack. She is awkward in her youth and extremely successful when an adult. I felt that each character was developed well and had their own story line that was well written.

The storyline was interesting. When I started the book I was so confused. I didn't really understand all the invites and the bills that followed for the destruction. I will admit that I giggled at the chocolate fountain incident. It took me a few chapters in to really understand what was going on. I enjoyed that the chapters alternated between Jack's point of view and Kitty's point of view. I always find it interesting to see how two people who are experiencing the same thing can have such different opinions and views on how things happen.

I definitely recommend checking out The Best of Enemies. Jen Lancaster is an author that is on my must read list.

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## **Cathy says**

Jen Lancaster is a very funny author. Fact. But The Best of Enemies. Oh honey, no. TBH, this is a bit of a mess. I don't like throwing shade on my of my all-time fave authors, but...she's done better. The Best of Enemies uses not one, but two, writing contrivances popular in fiction today 1) alternating narrators and 2) skipping from past to present and in between. When you combine BOTH of these in the same book, it's a little confusing/chaotic, amirite? And that ending??? It's one thing to wrap things up tidily; it's another to warp the story altogether, which IMO is what happened. The Best of Enemies is still passable as a beach read, but since Lancaster has so many more gems out there, if you haven't read her before, don't start with this book.

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## **Kala Glass says**

Obviously, this is a book written for women. My issue is that it is written for a particular subset of women. I am not sure exactly who these women are, but I am not one of them. It is hard for me to find the humor in PTAs, blogging for business, and catty frenemy-ships (Is that a word?).

This book alternates between the voices of Kitty and Jack (Jacqueline), two frenemies with an overly dramatic past and a mutual friend - Sarabeth. There are occasional 'inserts' throughout the book – such as invitations, blog comments, book reviews – which works well to put our characters in context. However, I wish the stuff at the beginning of the book was in another place. It is difficult to care about these things or understand their significance when I have no clue who these people are in the story. I went back to the beginning after I finished the book and things made a heck of a lot more sense. But at that point, I really did not care.

The story is sometimes funny – especially Kitty – but otherwise predictable. And I have to say, these characters are very stereotypical, which made it difficult for me to care too much for them. If you want a lighthearted, somewhat humorous, beach/vacation read – this will probably suit you fine. But long story short, this is about a bunch of ladies that I'm pretty sure I would never be friends with and the dirt bag/idiotic men in their lives.

\*\*I received an advanced copy of this book from Penguin's First to Read\*\*

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## **Renee says**

The Best of Enemies starts out with a fluffy chick lit feel, which was all I was expecting when I picked it up. I enjoyed the little snippets of flashbacks showing how the two main characters relationship had developed over the years. Somewhere in the middle, the story twisted and became more of a mystery. The plot thickened, the pace picked up and I found it difficult to put down. Although the two main characters didn't like each other, I liked both of them and was glad I wasn't caught up in their feud. I'd hate to have to choose sides.

This was the first of Jen's books I've read and I'd be interested to see what else she has published. I listened to the audiobook edition. The narrator was fantastic.

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## **Melissa says**

I loved Jen Lancaster's take on the concept of "frenemies." She really made both Kitty and Jack sympathetic characters, even when they were brutal to each other. It was interesting to see them through the other's eyes and impossible to hate either, even when they were at their worst. I loved seeing how their differences played out and how they made them work to their advantage when it came to helping their mutual best friend. The dialogue was snappy and witty and I laughed out loud more times than I could count. I even got teary-eyed a few times. The dialogue was great and I even enjoyed the banter with the supporting characters, such as Kitty's mother-in-law and Jack's brothers. There were even some clever twists that I didn't see coming and

kept me on my toes.

My only criticism is that some of the minutiae (such as all the flashbacks) seemed to take away from the main point of the story, slowing it down a bit for the first quarter of the novel, but other parts made it fun to see where and how things unraveled. I wish I could have seen what really went down to entail the damages listed in the letters in the beginning of the book. I know they hinted at things, but all the action was never played out in the flashbacks.

Overall, it was an enjoyable and memorable story that will keep readers entertained.

Of course, I had to cast this for Hollywood consideration...

Kitty: Abby Elliot (<http://imdb.to/1YkpXY8>) After seeing her in *Odd Mom Out*, she's the only one I pictured in the role.

Jack: Cobie Smulders (<http://imdb.to/1I3GZR6>)

Sarabeth: Anna Camp (<http://imdb.to/1HcFMMP>)

Bobby: Dax Shepard (<http://bit.ly/1Xembgx>)

Teddy: Stephen Amell (<http://bit.ly/1QygHOY>)

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## Jennifer says

DNF @ 45%

### August 2015:

I'm a fan of Jen Lancaster. I find her absolutely hilarious. This book started out with multiple laugh-out-loud moments for me but I'm struggling now. I'm not ready to DNF, but I am going to pause it (45%) for a little while. Hoping it's just a mood thing on my part and I'll laugh again once I pick it back up. We shall see...

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## OpenBookSociety.com says

<http://openbooksociety.com/article/th...>

Review brought to you by OBS staff member Andra

From the beginning I felt that the book was kind of frivolous and hard to get into. The back and forth with the chapters did not work so well in the electronic format for me this time. AND...The actual conflict is not spelled out until about 40% through the book....so I was confused for the beginning portion. The present / past and not so recent past continuum was confusing. Luckily for this reader, once I was past this ...the book and my enjoyment level increased exponentially....whew....so I persevered and quite enjoyed the book in the end.

I enjoyed the interactions between Jackie and Kitty – Whitney University, Central Illinois October 1994 – when the girls were getting ready for rush. The story about the blue pantyhose (when Jackie dressed as a smurfette for Halloween) and how it is affecting Jackie's ability to be comfortable wearing nylons now is priceless.

“I can’t put my finger on how or why, but I feel like this exchange has somehow brought up to a new level in our relationship, and that makes me so happy. Despite how we differ, Jackie’s awesome and I want us to be friends forever. And very soon, sorority sisters.”

‘Nairgate’ did have me chuckling. And the chocolate fountain incident had me in stitches. The ensuing antics to get back at each other was quite humorous, until Jackie went too far (sleeping with Kitty’s boyfriend. That is when the friendship developed the big divide.

Nana Baba is wise “All’s I’m saying is sometimes you have to forgive your enemies.” Is it so true that nana’s always give sage advice!

When Kitty and Jackie start working together to solve the mystery of Trip’s death I really liked how they interacted. “Our tentative truce holds while we compare notes and form our plan of attack.” Slowly they were able to realize their friendship was precious and get back to what they were about as friends all those years ago. While the mystery was somewhat predictable, there were a few moments that were a surprise. While this read got off to a rocky start for me, I thoroughly enjoyed the story once I reached the half way mark. The humor in the book was what saved it for me.

\*OBS would like to thank the publisher for supplying a free copy of this title in exchange for an honest review\*

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### **Hilary Grossman says**

Although I've loved every book that Jen Lancaster has written, I have always preferred her memoirs to her fiction. However Best of Enemies totally changed my mind... I LOVED this book! The characters were terrific and kept me laughing out loud from the first page to the last. There were so many twists and turns. I wasn't able to put the book down and I think I am going to re-read it again - that is how much I enjoyed it!

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### **MB says**

I love this author so much that I’m always eager to read any piece of writing she creates even if it appears on a dirty napkin. Unfortunately, as much as I try, I don’t love her novels as much as her memoirs. I keep trying and will continue to do so because I believe in her writing. For instance, Here I Go Again, an earlier foray into fiction, was much better – it was humorous, entertaining with funny characterizations and a good plot.

While I read The Best of Enemies, I found myself bored and somewhat disappointed. It’s funny here and there but not laugh out loud which is usually the norm. Since I like Jen Lancaster’s style of writing and think she’s quite skilled at it, I could dismiss how banal the story turns out to be. Again, I feel like I’m telling a friend that she looks too fat in pair of jeans which makes me feel terrible. Only my sister and I would critique each other that severely, but I must be honest.

Anyway, three women – two who are sworn enemies from college and polar opposites – journalist Jack Jordan and stay-at-home mom Kitty Carricoe – come together for the funeral of the newly deceased husband of the third, Sarabeth Chandler. Essentially, Sarabeth is the unlikely glue between the three, much to the chagrin of Jack and Kitty. Both ladies suspect that Sarabeth’s husband is not dead, so they set off on a madcap adventure to seek out the truth. Oddly, Sarabeth does not accompany them or know about this road

trip.

One of the main problems is that it takes too long to get to the bulk of the story. Although Lancaster introduces the characters and scenarios through humorous memos and letters, the plot is too predictable. She usually peppers her writing with fun 1980s references that are accurate and apt to the story, but the excessive Top Gun references overwhelmed the book to the point of eye-rolling. If she toned them down or eliminated a few, they would have been more effective. Regarding the use of slang, she was right on (my 1970s example) with present day terms, but it filters in to the flashbacks which just don't fit.

As for the characters, I disliked Jack who was too dry and serious. Once the book nears its conclusion, her personality suddenly shifts, and I couldn't buy it. I couldn't successfully believe Jack changing by observing Kitty's vastly different lifestyle. Jack's "acting" skills in pulling off a few capers seem implausible even beyond the suspension of disbelief in fiction. Also, in retrieving information during their spy missions, it was too easy and didn't really employ Jack's expertise to great effect.

However, I loved her character Kitty and not because I'm a blogger and stay-at-home mom like her. Despite her flaws, she's likable, believable and so much fun. Lancaster could build a series on Kitty and continue with the outrageous stories of suburbia, she's that appealing. But in keeping Sarabeth, who goes by two different nicknames in maintaining how diametrically opposed Jack and Kitty are, under wraps, I didn't sufficiently grasp her present day character. When she is finally featured, it doesn't make sense. Her past was painted with broad strokes but didn't gel for today.

I found Jack and Kitty's eventual bonding forced and not a real meeting of the minds. How could they truly accept each other and say they're now best friends? I cannot imagine either one changing due to their reformed association. Sure, they could forgive each other's past transgressions and learn to be civil but friends? One simple road trip isn't enough.

What don't really work are the twists at the end and that the story wraps up too neatly. There's not enough adequate foreshadowing to believe it or be shocked enough to amp up the ending. Scooby Doo cartoons echoed during the climax which spun out of control. I could almost hear the villain grumbling that "I would have gotten away with it if it hadn't been for those meddling kids." Maybe if Lancaster posed the ending in that framework, it would be an awesome parody and another throwback to days gone by.

For some reason, the antics and capers the characters engaged in never elicited laughs for me. I know Lancaster can deliver the laughs – please read her memoirs! – but this novel didn't do it. Having been apoplectic with laughter while reading most of her books, not even able to hold the book while in hysterics and veering into tears, I think things can only get better, and I do commend Lancaster for branching out into fiction. She has the chops for it.

More Reviews of Jen Lancaster's Books:

<http://jerseymomsblog.com/2011/08/wha...>

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## **Brandice says**

*The Best of Enemies* is the second book I've read by Jen Lancaster. It's the story of three women - Two (Jack & Kitty) who are not friends with each other - they're actually enemies due to a series of events in college,



but are both friends with the third, Sara Beth (aka: Sars or Betsy, depending on which friend is referring to her). Jack and Kitty have wildly different personalities but find themselves having to come together after a tragic event to help their mutual friend.

Lancaster incorporates a fair amount of pop culture references into the story, which is modern, even with several flashbacks to college scenes from the 1990s. I enjoyed the varying viewpoints of enemies, Jack and Kitty.

This is a quick, light read with a somewhat predictable yet entertaining story. I thought the ending was a little “neat” but overall, I knew what I was getting into reading this one, and I enjoyed it.

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### **Pam Asberry says**

From inside the dust jacket:

Bridesmaids meets Big Little Lies in a novel told from the alternating perspectives of two women who define the term frenemies - from New York Times bestselling author Jen Lancaster.

The central characters of this story are Jacqueline Jordan, a hardcore journalist who has been in the Middle East for the past ten years, and Kitty Carricoe, soccer mom extraordinaire. The only thing these two women have in common is their mutual best friend Sarabeth Chandler, and their differences turned into mutual hatred back in college when Jack "accidentally" hooked up with Kitty's boyfriend.

But their love of Sarabeth is greater than their differences, so both women drop everything to be with their friend when they learn that her wealthy and powerful husband has died in a suspicious plane crash. Eventually, they decide to put aside their differences and go on a road trip together in order to solve the mystery.

I will admit that I had a bit of a hard time getting started with this book. I found the prologue to be a bit confusing (albeit hilarious) and the first chapter was written from the point of view of the shallow and snobbish Kitty Carricoe. I wouldn't choose to spend time with her in real life and wasn't sure I would be able to stomach her personality in fiction. But I'm glad I stuck it out. This turned out to be a great women's friendship story, with the author using both humor and sarcasm to portray the challenges of a three-way friendship. In the end, this book was highly entertaining, with plenty of laugh-out-loud moments and enough plot twists to keep me up until the wee hours to find out the truth about the plane crash. Turns out Jen Lancaster is as gifted a fiction writer as she is a memoir writer. I can hardly wait to dig into her backlist!

NOTE: I received a copy of this book for FREE in exchange for a written review. There was no expectation that this review be either positive or negative, and I was not given any financial compensation to read the book or write the review. This information is disclosed in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 [...] Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.

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### **Read In Colour says**

The first half was extremely long & drawn out. The action picked up from there. Not sure why I continued to read it as long as I did. Lancaster's memoirs continue to be much more entertaining than her fiction and that's

not saying much.

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### **Melanie Johnson says**

I'll be honest. I didn't think she had it in her. I knew that Jen Lancaster can be fantastically funny but mystery writer?? However, she does a solid here with this story. You know how three friends can't ever really be "best friends"? There is always one who feels left out? Well, this is what makes this story so much fun. Sarabeth is the math whiz who is the childhood friend of Jacqueline "Jack" Johnson. Jack is the tomboy in the neighborhood. As they go off to college, they meet Kitty, a girlie-girl who divides their friendship as she also tries to keep them together. They begin their in-fighting, which is where the story gets juicy. A great read by Lancaster. I will be recommending this one to my girlfriends!  
Thank you to First to Read program for the Advanced Copy.

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