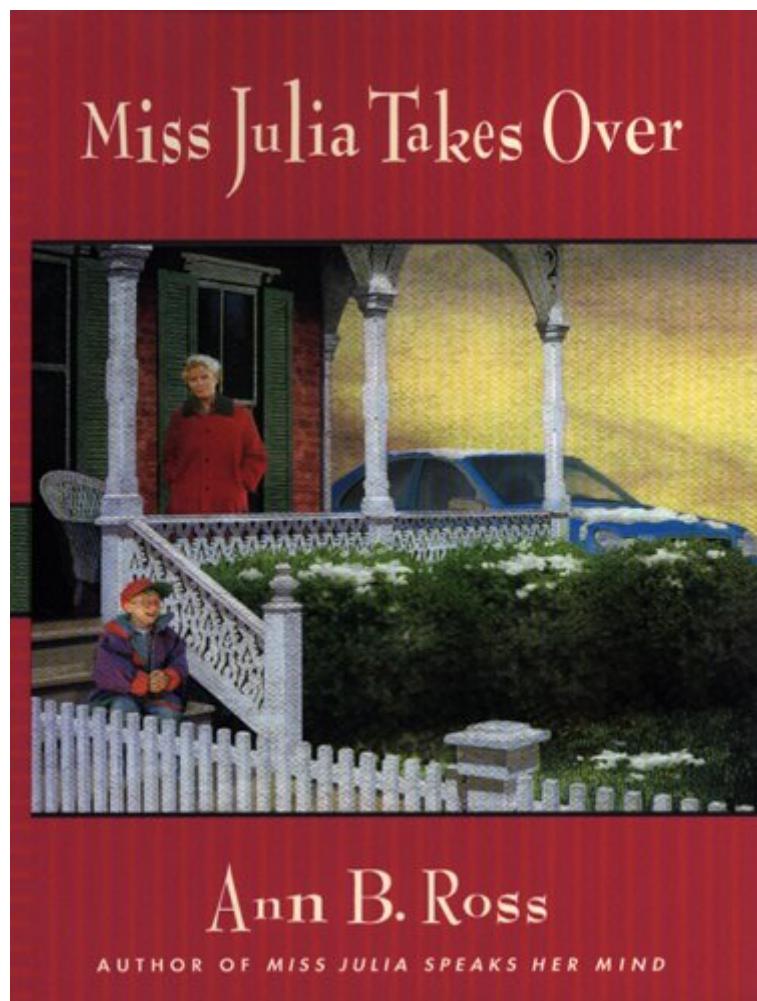


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Miss Julia Takes Over



Synopsis

When Miss Julia burst on the scene in her fictional debut, *Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind*, this proper lady of a certain age found her orderly world turned upside down when Hazel Marie Puckett appeared with her nine-year-old son, Little Lloyd, who looked disturbingly similar to Miss Julia's late husband. Now, in *Miss Julia Takes Over*, with her sharp tongue and iron backbone intact, Miss Julia must tackle another disruption when Hazel Marie doesn't return from a dinner date with a fund-raiser who, in Miss Julia's opinion, wears his shorts too tight. Frantic and unable to persuade the local police that Hazel Marie is in danger, Miss Julia hires J. D. Pickens to investigate, despite her reservations about his taste for beer and women. She and Little Lloyd help search for Hazel Marie, running into adventures ranging from a most indelicate display of fisticuffs to a high-speed car chase on the track of a NASCAR Speedway, all the while standing strong ...because if Miss Julia doesn't take care of things, who will? Fast paced, funny, and full of colorful characters you'll want to meet again and again, *Miss Julia Takes Over* is a zany race through the South you'll not soon forget. Look out for Ann Ross's newest, *Miss Julia Weathers The Storm*, coming April 2017 from Viking. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

File Size: 731 KB

Print Length: 338 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Reprint edition (April 30, 2002)

Publication Date: April 30, 2002

Sold by: Penguin Group (USA) LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B000OCXFX8

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #14,768 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #228
in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Humor & Satire > General Humor #298
in Books > Literature & Fiction > Humor & Satire > Humorous #435 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > Cozy

Customer Reviews

I really enjoyed the first book, *Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind*, so I was looking forward to reading this one. Ann Ross has hit the nail on the head again with a great follow-up. In this story, Hazel Marie and Little Lloyd have moved in with Miss Julia, and they have formed quite the family unit...much to the chagrin of the community and the church. The story has much of the same hijinks as the first one...Pastor Ledbetter trying to get Miss Julia's money for the building fund, Brother Vern trying to get hold of Lloyd and his inheritance, and gossip, gossip, gossip. This story sends Miss Julia off on a search for Hazel Marie when she's been kidnapped by the crooked church fund raiser hired to make more money for the building fund. She hires a private investigator and demands to be part of the search. Mr. Pickens, the PI, can't stand to have her and Little Lloyd with him, but of course it makes for hilarious situations...one after the other. Ann Ross has a way with words, and she's just as sharp with her tongue in this book. I just can't describe how hilarious she is. *Miss Julia* is a hit!

Obviously a sequel, this book should have just been called *Miss Julia II*. And I find that it lacks the charm and the "AHA!" moments of the earlier book, when Miss Julia was figuring it all out and learning to do things her way. This story was really more a *Miss Julia* meets the *Keystone Cops* kind of foolishness, and really found nothing especially interesting this round. The new family unit of Miss Julia, Hazel Marie & Little Lloyd is interesting, but descended into slapstick this go round. If you just loved the first *Miss Julia*, and really need another fix, go for it. But otherwise, I'd recommend waiting for the paperback.

There are enough other reviews here so that I certainly don't need to spend time summarizing the plot. I will just say that I was a little disappointed with this book. I read the first *Miss Julia* and enjoyed it quite a bit. Although there were a few improbable incidents in the first book, I thought that in general the author did a good job of fleshing out her characters (at least the main ones) and moving the plot along quickly. In this book, however, I found the emphasis to be on action, action, and more action, with very little attention paid to developing the characters. And yet with all that action, things actually seemed to move along rather slowly. There were so many times when the characters seemed to spend an endless amount of time talking about how worried they were and what they should do, without actually doing anything! And at some points, the action seemed slapstick and overly dramatic. There is a scene where many of the characters are gathered in Miss Julia's house and someone knocks on the door. You would think from everyone's reaction to that knock that a dinosaur from *Jurassic Park* was about to enter the room. There were many similar

parts of the book which just seemed overdone and tiresomely melodramatic to me. I thought I was going to enjoy this series more than Jan Karon's Mitford series because initially I preferred Ms. Ross's writing style, but I'm now thinking that the quieter, more realistic, less frenetic pace of the Mitford novels appeals to me more.

This second book in the Miss Julia series is an amusing, quick read. Miss Julia is a fairly recent widow, who is quietly glorying in the freedoms that widowhood has brought. In defiance of her stuffy neighbours in a small Southern town, she has refused to be bullied into handing over the control of her quite substantial fortune to the elders of her church and also horrified them by taking in her late husband's mistress, Hazel Marie and her son, Little Lloyd. Under her care, they have both blossomed and the three of them have formed a close family unit. When Hazel Marie's scheming uncle plots to have Little Lloyd given into his care, the better to gain control of the child's inheritance, Hazel Marie is kidnapped, forcing Miss Julia to hire a private detective to find her. It does tend to become a touch farcical at this point with plots littered with crooked racing car drivers, shonky church fund raisers and Miss Julia driving around a Nascar circuit and out-driving the professionals. I didn't think that this book was as good as the first, but hopefully, M/S Ross will be back to form with book 3.

Miss Julia is as delightful a heroine as you can imagine. Prim, proper, and Presbyterian, she has an opinion about everything and does her best to oversee the sometimes unacceptable behavior of those around her. To her friends, though, she is as loyal as can be, as evidenced by her frantic search for her housemate, Hazel Marie, in this second book of the series. Hazel Marie is on a date with a church fundraiser and fails to show up back at their house. She manages to make quick, frantic phone calls to Miss Julia which fail to give adequate information as to where she is, and just deepen the perky Presbyterian's concern. Miss Julia decides to hire a private investigator, J.D. Pickens, and she joins him in searching for Hazel Marie. Throw in a race-car driver, an elusive lucky charm, and the crooked evangelist, Uncle Vern, and you get some idea of the kind of wacky story this is. It's all in good fun, and is recommended reading.

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