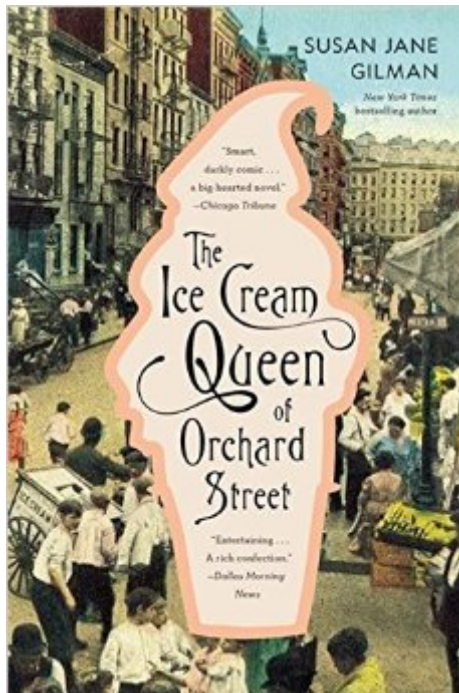


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# The Ice Cream Queen Of Orchard Street: A Novel



## Synopsis

Bestselling author Susan Jane Gilman's IndieNext Pick novel about an immigrant girl's transformation into an indomitable businesswoman in early 20th century New York. As a child in 1913, Malka Treynovsky flees Russia for New York with her family--only to be crippled and abandoned in the streets. Taken in by a tough-loving Italian ices peddler, Malka survives. When she falls in love with Albert, they set off together across America in an ice cream truck to seek their fortune; slowly, she transforms herself into Lillian Dunkle, "The Ice Cream Queen of America"--doyenne of an empire of ice cream franchises and a celebrated television personality. Spanning 70 years, Lillian's rise--fraught with setbacks, triumphs, and tragedies--is inextricably linked to the course of American history itself, from Prohibition to the disco days of Studio 54. And when her past starts catching up with her, her world implodes spectacularly.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A good story about a young girl, Malva Treynovsky emigrating from Russia in the early 1900's for... where? They start to go for South Africa but thanks to the father and a little unwitting help from Malva they end up in New York. She goes from being crippled and abandoned due to a street accident to being a very, very rich woman in the early 1980s as the queen of an ice cream empire. I admit to having had a romantic view of immigrant life in New York in the early 20th century. That view has been thoroughly dispelled. The best part of the book is the unrelenting look at the squalor and poverty of that time. In Russia there was the prospect of murder at the hands of the ruling class during the pogroms. In New York City there was the prospect of death because you just couldn't

make it: you get sick or injured and there is no hand up. When (if) you read "The Bully Pulpit" by Doris Kearns Goodwin you'll have a better appreciation of Theodore Roosevelt crusading efforts to make life better in the tenements. It's said that money can't buy happiness; this novel shows how true that can be. Malva becomes Lillian Dunkle and though she marries her sweetheart and becomes impossibly rich, she is never really happy. Indeed, she is miserable and makes most people around her miserable. I want to be careful and not rate the book lower just because the protagonist is so disagreeable. My biggest problem with the book is that the Jewish/Italian/New York dialect comes and goes; we get way too much "so sue me, darling" juxtaposed with otherwise 6:00 news anchor language. In the end, this is an okay summer read to catch the arch of American history from pre-World War I through the Reagan administration. You'll learn some things about the entrepreneurship spirit as well as ice cream making.

A special thank you to Grand Central Publishing and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review. *THE ICE CREAM QUEEN OF ORCHARD STREET*, a rags-to-riches historical fiction, of a Jewish immigrant, Malka Treynovsky, a determined six-year old girl from a poor childhood, set in 1913---flees Russia with her family, searching for the all American dream. What a ride! An exciting journey and fate of one driven, complicated, determined, yet colorful and troubled protagonist ----- encountering misfortune on her way to the dream she yearns for, and then some. . . A heartwarming novel full of crazy, yet engaging humorous characters with a mixture of romance, history, and suspense. Within three months of arriving in New York, her Papa abandons her, and her mother blames her for their misfortune-- Malka gets trampled by a horse, leaving her crippled. Abandoned by her parents, fate steps in---the man steering the horse takes pity on Malka, welcoming her into his home and world, where she becomes part of the family. This poor, unattractive, smart, yet sarcastic and crippling Malka soaks up everything from Catholicism, and embraces the family business, while at the same time excels at school, and her life begins to change drastically for the better. Fueled by her grief and abandonment, she begins to redefine herself as Lillian, The Ice Cream Queen of America. (Lillian Dunkle) Lillian, driven and savvy, creates quite an empire with determination and tenacity, taking Dunkle's ice cream from a broken down truck to a household name, with her own TV show. But beneath the strong exterior, Lillian is still the crippled outcast of Malka-- abandoned, and bitter---can she believe in herself? She does whatever she needs to do to survive (seriously), and assure that her company remains on top. Playing the caring, motherly Ice Cream Queen in the public while scheming, lying and drinking too much in private can only last so long, as the two worlds collide, forcing Lillian to take a good hard

look at her life or risk losing it all. After meeting and falling in love with the gorgeous, kind and illiterate radical Albert, ---the two set off across America in an ice cream truck to make their fortune as business partners. With the changing events, we see Lillian and Albert struggle through poverty, wars, movements of the sixties, as linked to the Prohibition, to the disco days of Studio 54. our changing economy, and the overall competitive ice cream business---- Revolutionizing production, franchising, marketing and christened as the "Ice Cream Queen of America" by Dwight D Eisenhower. Coming from a family without a penny when stepping off the boat---to tax evasion, a wrongful arrest---many enemies---a life changing experience for one special needs girl, on a sweltering day, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan with a kind peddler, a horse drawn cart, and a man named Salvatore Dinello, where readers follow Lillian's journey step by step. A well-researched book, inspired by real life events with a compelling protagonist, as Susan Jane Gilman, notes---the invention of soft-serve, credited to Tom Carvel (American-immigrant rags-to-riches saga), who began selling melted ice cream after a tire on his truck went flat. As the ice cream industry was directly affected by the greatest events of the twentieth century and American history, parallels as Lillian's own life is shaped and her motivations for some of the things which led her down certain paths. (loved the ice cream flavors, interesting facts, and research about the entire industry). Susan Jane Gilman created Lillian, likable (not always), and one which readers will feel empathy for (I was totally rooting for her)! As the author referenced, THE ICE CREAM QUEEN OF ORCHARD is a love letter to New York City and to the American dream, and for all those who have worked so hard to attain their place in society. I loved the author's note: "In my daily life, I'm generally obsessed with three things: Sex, New York City, and Ice Cream. (choosing the latter two) for her masterpiece. I enjoyed a Conversation with Susan Jane Gilman at the end of the book, sharing of her inspiration, thoughts, and process for the writing of this special story, which offers readers a more personal and real connection with the author and her characters---her passion is truly reflective through her writing! A mixture of past and present, a realistic story of hard work, scheming, the good/bad, and determination of one girl/woman's life spanning over seventy years---expanding upon the way women are often portrayed in our culture with disabilities "pushing the boundaries (reiterating, "well behaved women rarely make history"). An immigrant fleeing the pogroms to leading an ice cream empire "a life broadened in unimaginable ways---shared with sensitivity and humor. I found the research very informative, and enjoyed the reading group guide and questions for discussion (ideal for book clubs). Highly recommend, THE ICE CREAM QUEEN OF ORCHARD STREET for anyone enjoying humor, strong women characters, and historical

fiction--very entertaining! I look forward to following this newfound and talented author.

Finish Time: 7 nights. So good to be back to historical fiction. My favorite genre by far. I feel smarter! And what a great story to get back into it! I was a tad disappointed that the story was in fact not real. It was loosely based on the Carvel Ice Cream story, according to the Q & A with the author at the end. A very much appreciated segment, as it answered many questions I had leaving a historical novel such as this. And also so good to give a book a 5-bone rating. I loved it. It had everything. A good old rags to riches, striving for the American dream, immigration story. Romance, suspense, thrill, crazy characters, and let me tell you about the main character. Born Malka Treynovsky, with a few names in between, our leading lady is Lillian Dunkle, aka the Ice Cream Queen, not only of Orchard Street, but America, is quite the character. Victim of awful parents, and really an awful society, Malka fights her way through life. Doing whatever she has to to survive. Not all is right but she is clever and the reader can understand the choices she makes. The defining point of her life is when she gets run over by a horse and is crippled. During a time of rampant illnesses, many times it is mistaken for polio, which later on in the book is used to her advantage, both for good and bad. Never knowing who she can trust and being let down time and time again, her actions make sense, as she is the true definition of a fighter. The book jumps between past and present (the present of the book being the early 1980s), to tell Malka's transformation into Lillian Dunkle, the Ice Cream Queen. And then her on trial for tax evasion and for another crime, not that it's a huge spoiler, but it's a bit humorous so read the book to find out! Along the way she meets the love of her life, Albert Dunkle. Both her husband and business partner, their story is so sweet. What I'm assuming are facts about the ice cream industry are also found throughout, different flavors, processes (the invention of the soft serve machine), presentations (invention of the cone), competitors, among others. While probably not credited to the correct person, they were very interesting and really helped the story along. Faces from her past pop up throughout the book and I loved reading how Lillian handled all of them. Surprises were at every page-turn, and it was just that, a page-turner, until the very end. I really loved it. Really. Check it out when it comes out in June, I hope you enjoy it as much as I did! The book was provided to me free through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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