

Family Acts: A Novel

Louise Shaffer

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Louise Shaffer follows her beloved novels The Three Miss Margarets and The Ladies of Garrison Gardens with an unforgettable tale of poignancy, wit, and high drama.

Katie Harder and Randa Jennings live on opposite coasts, have never met, and have almost nothing in common—except that they're both named after Shakespearean characters. Everything Katie has ever done or possessed—her New York City co-op, her career as a writer for a daytime drama—was given to her by her late mother, in her day a flamboyant soap opera queen. Randa, on the other hand, has escaped the trappings of a difficult past and forged a life as a single mom, juggling her work as a Hollywood business manager with the needs of her precocious eleven-year-old daughter.

Life takes an unpredictable turn for these two strangers when they jointly inherit the century-old Venable Opera House, a stately but run-down theater in small-town Georgia. Puzzled at this peculiar legacy, Katie and Randa are at first eager to unload their white elephant. But as they spend more time in the old theater, they come to realize that a rich heritage is at stake. A line of strong women–starting with Juliet Venable in the late nineteenth century—has been responsible for keeping the grand old place up and running. In the face of huge obstacles, including a dying theater culture and their own personal struggles, these singular women have gone to drastic measures to keep the opera house in the family–including burying a devastating family secret that could destroy the carefully cultivated Venable legend forever.

Now, as a local contractor seeks to tear down the landmark, Katie and Randa must decide not only if they want to unravel their mysterious connection to the theater and maintain its tradition but if they have what it takes to keep the Venable family legacy alive.

A sprawling page-turner about maintaining family honor and lifelong dreams, Family Acts is Louise Shaffer's most powerful and assured novel to date.



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