

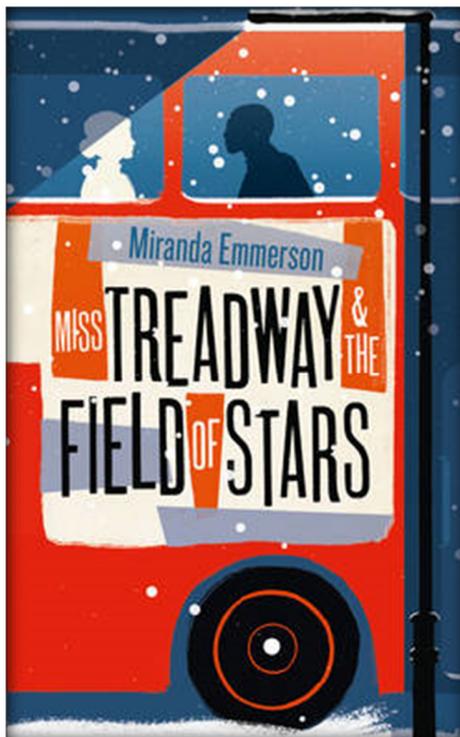


Helping you choose  
your next book

4<sup>th</sup>

## LoveReading Reader reviews of **Miss Treadway & The Field of Stars** by Miranda Emmerson

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



**Phylippa Smithson**

*This is a story of the hunt for a missing actress and so much more. Racism, sexism, childhood, loss of respect for The Institutions once held sacrosanct and so on. Great read.*

*Set in 1965, Anna Treadwall is a dresser for a leading actress performing on the London stage. She lives alone above a Turkish cafe where she was once a waitress having arrived with nothing but attracted to the hopes of so many, that the London streets were paved with gold.*

*Anna's role is dresser to Iolanthe Green, an American in her 40s who is trying to stay at the top of her career before age sees her replaced by the inevitable young actresses*

*vying for fame and success.*

*When Iolanthe disappears a police investigation ensues but believing their investigation is somewhat half hearted, Anna determines to make her own enquiries.*

*And as she chases from one report after another of seeing the actress, the cultural idiosyncrasies of the time are exposed leaving you with a feeling that life may not make perfect sense 50 years later but boy has it got better.*

*Very intriguing and well written reflection of modern history.*

**Elisabeth Thomas**

*A super read - highly enjoyable and thought provoking.*

*Anna Treadway is a dresser at the Galaxy, a small London theatre. Anna's current 'charge' is the American actress Iolanthe Green. One evening after a performance, Iolanthe and Anna exchanged parting pleasantries saying that they would see each other again on Monday but after that Anna never saw the actress again.*

*Frustrated with the police's lack of interest in the case, Anna takes it upon herself to do some investigating herself. Having led a fairly sheltered life, Anna finds that the glossy 'swinging sixties' appearance London gives to the outside world has another side, a dark side that has jazz clubs, backstreet doctors and institutionalised racism – certainly not the London that is portrayed to the outside world.*

*The story had me hooked right from the very start. The story is not only a mystery but in my opinion a story about self – discovery and that things and people are not always what they seem. The theme of re-invention is important and sometimes people need to re-invent themselves in order to move on and escape their past. Some part of the books shocked me – particularly the racism and the stigma of single parenthood, seeing that the book was set only 50 years ago. Other parts of the book will moved me and other parts will stay with me for a long time.*

*I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this to other readers particularly those who enjoyed novels such as 'Britt Marie was here', 'The love song of Miss Queenie Hennessey' and 'The Pilgrimage of Harold Fry'.*

## **Emily Wright**

***This evocatively descriptive debut brings to life swinging sixties London in glorious technicolour. I felt instantly at home with Miranda Emmerson's style and phrasing, akin to reading a novel by a much loved, established author.***

*When stage actress Iolanthe Green disappears Anna Treadway decides to search for her friend, enlisting a disparate group of helpers all united in one common goal. However, the biggest fictions are not played out under the bright lights of the stage; they are an integral part of the daily lives of all the characters involved.*

*Those whom Anna asks to help her search for Iolanthe are all immigrants, who have come to London seeking better lives. However, far from finding a capital willing to embrace diversity, each has found it necessary to conceal aspects of*

*themselves in order to be at best grudgingly accepted and at worst vilified and abused. These inherent prejudices and racism are all the more shocking and saddening because they are mirrored in today's society.*

*The author writes with such emotional intelligence that I felt I was searching for her characters' motivations and histories as much as for the missing actress. This transforms what could have been a jaunty mystery into something much deeper and more vibrant.*

*Miss Treadway and the Field of Stars celebrates the hand of friendship which we all have to offer, and the kindness of kindred spirits which can help us all on our way to discovering what is missing.*

### **Ann Peet**

***An engrossing, enjoyable story about the disappearance of an actress set in 1960s London.***

*This is a really enjoyable and well-written novel. To start with it has a good plot and is a real page turner - we want to know what has happened to Lanny, an American actress who goes missing. Then there is the setting of 1960s London. The author catches brilliantly the mood and feel of the period. Actually this is rather the dark side of that time when racism and prejudice abounded, abortion was illegal and there were plenty of seedy bars and nightclubs. And although Lanny's disappearance is the main mystery, most of the other characters are also hiding secrets. Anna, Lanny's dresser, who takes up the search is a cleverly drawn and very sympathetic character with her own secret history but we also find out about the Turkish Cypriot family who run the cafe where Anna has a flat, the Irish policeman and the black accountant who become involved in the search. Their lives and stories intertwine to make a fascinating read.*

### **Cheryl Kinney**

*Interesting Mystery.*

*This novel is set in the 1960's, an era I haven't read that much about. It was really interesting to see how London was back then and the attitudes to different cultures.*

*The main story is a mystery however all the characters seem to have their own secrets which adds to overall mystery. I really like the main character she was relatable and you cared what happened to her.*

*How society felt about unmarried mothers and different races was really thought provoking especially to see how things had changed and how some things haven't!*

***Really enjoyed the story and it was very well written. Look forward to reading more from this author.***

You can follow Cheryl on Twitter: @cheryl\_bookworm

### **Sue Broom**

*I had expected this to be a straightforward mystery, the hunt for an American actress who goes missing after a show in London, but it is so much more than that. Wonderful characters and we really get to know them intimately. None of them was born in London, they all gravitated there looking for a new life and, just as importantly, shedding an old life and as we follow their search we discover their stories. The anonymity of the big city has not turned out to be the answer to their problems and none of them has found quite what they were looking for. As I came to like them all very much I hoped they would. The book also shows us Britain at a very particular time, the 1960s, with its new music, new fashion and new aspirations but we soon see that the old and often repressive values about race and illegitimacy, for example, persist under the surface. I particularly liked the way it didn't end too neatly. Highly recommended debut by an author I'll be following closely from now on. **An exceptionally well-written debut by an author I'll be following closely from now on.***

### **Kathy Howell**

*This book evokes the London of 1965 so well that some of the events and comments are really shocking, but this does not detract from the main story line.*

*Anna Treadway is living in London above a Turkish cafe and working as a dresser in the theatre to an American star, Iolanthe Green. After the performance one evening, Iolanthe walks away and disappears. Several days pass and Anna becomes worried that no one is looking for her. This is the story of Anna's search for the missing actress. Along the way she meets Detective Sergeant Hayes who has his own back story, and Aloysius, an accountant from Jamaica. The search takes her around London, to Essex and finally to Wales, where she does not realise how close she is to finding her friend. The research*

*that is done by Anna and Aloysius takes them around London, while Hayes' research goes farther afield and Iolanthe's past is filled out and the stories that she has told begin to unwind.*

***This a really well written book and I found it hard to put down. I will certainly look out for more by this author.***

### **Angie Rhodes**

*Anna Treadway lives in a little two bedroom flat above a Turkish Cafe on Neal Street. She is young, happy and loves her job as a dresser for American actress Iolanthe Green who is starring at the Galaxy Theatre.*

*One evening after the curtain has gone down Iolanthe Green goes missing. She walks out of the Galaxy Theatre, turns a corner and vanishes. This is London in the Swinging Sixties, the papers are full of speculation, along with the headlines of The Moors murders this is big news but just as quickly as it's hot in the papers, it now dies down and the only person to keep looking is Anna. As she looks she uncovers secrets that make her look at her own life and the secrets she has kept hidden for years.*

***I loved this book*** with its simplicity, the story, the way it is written, the feel and descriptive writing is excellent. ***One to be read slowly just so it takes longer to finish!***

### **Beverley Davenport**

*When Iolanthe goes missing, Anna goes in search of her. During her search Anna is drawn into the lives of the people around her, the people she meets and the life of an England which she didn't know existed. As the story unfolds, so do the stories of the searched for, the searcher and those involved in Iolanthe's disappearance. The trail takes Anna into a world full of people from different walks of life, experiences and ethnicities, which is at times exciting, privileged, sad and lonely. As the search deepens, so do the characters and their own histories and traits, together with their own search for happiness or peace. England and the people finding themselves living in it are exposed to reveal their internal battles against selfishness and selflessness, racism and tolerance, desire for peace and the brutality violence. As the search progresses, so does the pace and all its intricacies. ***A wonderful exploration of human nature and life for some people living in England in the 60's, people who you want to succeed and find acceptance and forgiveness, if only****

*within themselves.*

### **Katie Hoare**

*The heroine in this story is Anna Treadway who is investigating the disappearance of an actress of Iolanthe Green, and is set in the 1960s London, and is written in a cross between a diary and headed chapters which gives clues about the some of the issues that happened in this period, and where the investigation and storyline is going.*

*Anna is supported by her friend Aloysius, who has come to live in London from Jamaica, and assists her in her investigation. However, there is a parallel investigation run by Detective Sergeant Hayes, which runs between London and the US. You are taken through some of London's underworld in the search of clues leading to some additional trouble and misunderstands and racial issues. Along with raising more questions of exactly who Iolanthe was and whether her first name was Yolande.*

***This is a well written story which keeps the reader wanting to find out more and guessing.*** *As well as the chapters setting the scene transporting you back to the 1960s London and watching the characters investigating the story.*

### **Linde Merrick**

*I found myself becoming more and more absorbed with this entrancing story. Young dresser Anna Treadway's involvement with the search for actress Iolanthe Green starts gently but has far-reaching consequences, with everyone gradually reassessing their lives and the faces that they present to the world. Secrets unfold, actions, reactions, thoughts and dreams all intermingle to maintain the drama. In addressing the question "how do you find a missing actress in a city", Miranda Emerson has created an intriguing cast of believable characters and really captured the essence of the Swinging 60s in London with her debut novel. The multicultural layers provide a tantalising undercurrent to the interactions of the protagonists and poignantly illustrate "the landscape of prejudice in 1965". ***This is a well-crafted, thought-provoking novel which should be on everyone's reading list.****

## **Shriya Khambhaita**

### ***An unusual read in a good way.***

*Debut novelist Miranda has written a quirky mystery, love story that will capture 1960's, theatre and it's culture vividly to the reader. I look forward to what's next.*

You can follow Shriya on Twitter: @Shriya\_Kham

## **Humaira**

***I liked the characters and plot but it just lacked something for me. I liked this book. It isn't the type of book I would normally go for in a shop but I feel as though I still wouldn't. It was an okay read and that's it. I liked the characters and plot but it just lacked for me.***

## **Trilby Humphries**

***A fabulously immersive book which drags the reader on the snowy, seedy streets of 60s London on the hunt for the glamorous Iolanthé Green. An absolute must read for this winter.***

*'Miss Treadway and the Field of Stars' is a fabulously immersive book which drags you on to the dirty, snowy streets of a very culturally different London than the one we know today. The apparently innocent Anna Treadway is thrown into the dark underworld of Soho life and music hall culture in search for her friend the glamorous, beautiful and somewhat elusive film star Iolanthé Green. On her journey, the reader learns about the culture of prejudice, racism and class divisions in London during the 1960s.*

*I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I had equal love and hate for the characters and particularly loved reading it at the same time of year that the book is set. A absolutely must have read for this winter.*

## **Lisa Keast**

***An absolutely fantastic book that I would recommend. Much more than a crime story but a look at the lives of others living in a prejudiced London in the 1960s who are all trying to find Lanny.***

*'Miss Treadway and the Field of Stars' by Miranda Emmerson was a fantastic read. What a brilliant book, it wasn't the sort of book I would normally pick up*

*to read but will be looking forward to any sequels in the future. it was one of the best books I have ever read. A gripping story of an actress Lanny who goes missing in London in the 1960s and the story of the people who are drawn in by different means of trying to find her and the trials and tribulations they face in a prejudiced London. Great characters who all have different backgrounds that leads you into a multitude of diverse worlds. It gives you a compelling story of their difficulties and their struggle to fit in. A great insight into their lives and how they faced every day, all in different ways.*

*I connected to all the characters and was riveted by the story from the beginning. A very cleverly written book which is much more than a crime thriller, I loved it from the very first chapter.*

*The book leads you on a journey and has lots of surprises and twists right up to the very end.*

*An absolutely brilliant book which I would recommend to everyone.*

### **Edel Waugh**

*The story is set in London and centred around a dresser for the theatre called Anna. Anna becomes very concerned when the actress she has been taking care of suddenly goes missing one day after her work in the theatre. Seemingly the only one who cares, she takes it upon herself to find the mysterious Lanny.*

*Although the story is mostly about missing Lanny and Anna's journey in finding her, it also deals with the lives of those who become involved in later searching for her.*

*If you like a story that does not give up its secrets easily then this is the story for you! Anna and her friends adventure in finding Lanny takes you to unforgettable places, having unforgettable experiences and generally keeping the reader on its toes. **Sometimes sad with plenty of mystery, it's sure to keep you up to the small hours of the morning in the search for answers!***

### **Rosie Watch**

*I have to say that when I started this book I didn't think I was going to like it. I have to care about the characters to want to continue and I confess I didn't warm to the character of Iolanthe Green. However, as I read on, I realised that the book was more about the characters looking for her, than about her herself,*

*and from then on I was hooked.*

***The insight into London in the 60's was fascinating, both the fashions and the atmosphere but also the attitudes to race, class and colour.***

*The relationship between Anna and Aloysius was quite touching and insightful. Miranda Emmerson has a very subtle way of writing about attitudes to race and colour without ramming a message down the reader's throat, but in a way that you could empathise with them.*

*It was **an enjoyable read** although I am not sure into which genre you would characterise it as it covers such a spread.*

*Thank you for letting me review it.*

**Val Rowe**

***An intriguing, unputdownable novel revealing the darker side of the Swinging Sixties.***

*When Anna Treadway embarks upon an attempt to trace the whereabouts of the missing American actress, Iolanthe Green, for whom she has worked as dresser, she enters into an unknown world of violence, prejudice and the seedier side of backstreet London life. Believing that the police and the media are not doing enough to pursue the case, Anna's journey enables her to discover more about life, relationships and even love.*

*Two things immediately struck me whilst reading this fascinating novel. Firstly I found myself rereading Emmerson's descriptive paragraphs as they were so visually striking. Secondly, having grown up in the sixties, I admire her decision to use language that would have been used in the increasingly multicultural society London was becoming. As Emmerson herself notes in her acknowledgements, her intention is to "underscore some of the ways in which we have progressed in the past 50 years .... and the ways in which we have not."*

*Written in a modern style and using a unique plot, I think this novel will particularly appeal to those readers who have experienced the Sixties, together with those who have an idealised view of this idolised era. Younger readers may be quite shocked by the level of racial violence that sadly existed at times. I found it gripping and enjoyed trying to unravel snippets of evidence as they became obvious to the reader.*

*My only slight criticism is that I found some aspects of the dialogue a little stilted and unnatural at times. However, in retrospect, Emmerson seems such a skilled writer that I wondered whether this was deliberate as her novel seems so well researched.*

*I look forward to further novels from this author with great anticipation.*