

LoveReading Reader reviews of If You Go Away by Adele Parks

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Phylippa Smithson

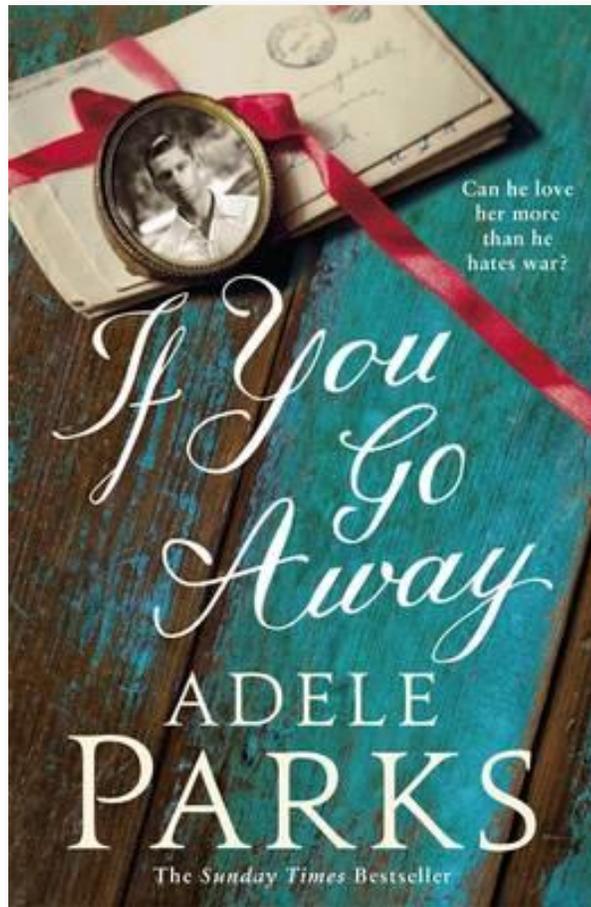
Set in the WWI years, this is a stylishly written account of how far we have come in bringing equality into the lives of not just women, but also those of men.

At the opening, Vivian has just 'come out.' She is now old enough to marry and having spent her childhood and teenage years being educated/manipulated by her mother into how to attract the 'right' man – poaching comes to mind – we get to meet a very obsessed and aggressively determined young lady in high society London. Nothing less than marrying into the wealth and standing of Sir Robert

Thorpe family, via his son, Nathaniel, would be acceptable.

In a parallel life, Howard is a renowned London play-right who is attracting stardom despite his early 20 years. He aspires to be respected by those of influence, and wealth. But he is evidently a fair and morally minded individual.

Through events that neither could have foreseen, their understanding of their wants out of life and the ways of the world in 1914, are turned upside down. He, as a conscientious objector faces the wrath of the brain-washed masses who are blind to the terror of the war around them – society at that time did not allow for self-thinking and rejection of what those in seniority decree as 'the wa'.



She breaks the code of what is expected of a woman of her standing, and is banished to a loveless marriage and a life in the remote countryside of Bakewell.

We have come so far in bringing equality into the lives of us all and Adele Parks brilliantly conveys just how absolutely far that road has taken us. Thank you for such a thought provoking and challenging read.

Ann Peet

WWI setting for a compelling story about a love affair but also exploring other issues of the period.

There are a lot of novels set during WWI around at the moment and this is a very readable one. In 1914 Vivian is a young debutante, a rather silly and naive one because of her upbringing, who is pushed into a marriage because of some scandalous behaviour. When war breaks out, her husband enlists and she becomes a more interesting character as she tries to manage their estate. Alternate chapters are about Howard, a clever young playwright, who goes to the front with a friend who is reporting on the war and witnesses the horror and inhumanity.

The main theme is the love story but the war scenes are portrayed uncompromisingly and there is also an exploration of the beliefs of conscientious objectors. Sometimes it seemed plot rather than character driven and so I never really felt involved with Vivian and Howard. I think this was partly to do with the writing - both the style and the dialogue didn't always feel to be of the period as they do in the best historical novels when you feel transported to the setting. However, it is an interesting and original story which I enjoyed and which I'm sure will please all the many fans of Adele Parks.

Joanne Baird – www.portobellobookblog.wordpress.com/

A passionate romance set during a time of war - another great story by Adele Parks.

This novel really became compelling for me when Vivian, trapped in a loveless marriage and Howard, a conscientious objector, meet. His mother persuades Vivian to take him on for farm work, saving him from a court martial. The growing attraction between them is evident and is not surprising given Vivian's disappointing and loveless marriage. Unable to resist their growing desire, they become reckless and impulsive. I felt conflicting emotions while reading. Vivian

and Howard are so obviously passionate about each other and yet she is a married woman in a time when divorce was a scandal. I almost found myself (like Vivian) wishing her husband some harm! It is so tense waiting for their relationship to be revealed as you feel it inevitably must.

This book is perhaps a slow burner to start with but is definitely worth persevering with. Adele Parks writes so well about friendships and relationships. To paraphrase, she has really captured 'the love, the passion, the power and the accompanying anguish that escorts love throughout a war'.

Edel Waugh - www.edelwaugh.blogspot.com

The story begins in 1914 and the main character is a young woman called Vivian who comes from a well off family that hope she will marry well. After disgracing herself she marries someone her family deem very suitable and she begins life as a married woman to a man who is about to join the army.

Leaving her family behind she moves to the country where she is lonely, knowing few people she makes friend with a neighbour woman called Enid whose son, a playwright, has also joined the army.

*These two women form a strong bond made all the stronger when Vivian needs her advice on so many things. When Enid calls on Vivian for help her friend is happy to help in any way she can, never knowing the places that it will lead her to, and the way her life will alter. **I am a big fan of Adele Parks and this book has made me even more so. Captivating and tender, a must read for all Adele Parks fans.***

Cathy Small

A fascinating read that shows what the Great War was like for those on the frontline and those left behind.

Adele takes us into the life of Vivian and we watch her love life take a poorly judged turn which forces her into a marriage to save her reputation. She has no time with her husband as war breaks out immediately. We also then have Howard, the writer with a love for the theatre and a hatred for war but he still ends up at the frontline twice - once for the love of a story and once for the love of a woman. We see the story of Vivian and Howard entwined with the effects of the war for individuals at home and those at the front. Amongst all this is their love story and affect it has on them, their outlook on life but also their friends. I really enjoyed this book and was captured by the storyline all the way through.

Jenny Heardman

'If You Go Away' is a gritty and thought-provoking love story set during the First World War. A fantastic read that had me gripped right through to the end.

'If You Go Away' is a book set at the time of the First World War. It involves Vivian, a young girl who is rushed into a loveless marriage after a scandal, and Howard, a young playwright who, after seeing the horrors on the front whilst reporting out there, becomes a conscientious objector. Howard escapes execution by agreeing to work on Vivian's farm.

I enjoyed this book. It was a little slow starting but once I got into it I became involved with the characters and their plights and found Howard's views as a "Conchie" interesting, not having read any books on the subject before.

The book covers some difficult and controversial topics in a way that makes you question what side of the fence you might have instinctively sat on and doesn't shy away from depicting the full horrors of the war.

This is the first Adele Parks book I've read and I'll be looking up some more of her books in the future.

Christine Phillips – twitter: @Chrisph48

Vivian and Howard's friendship is beautiful; the war brings them together but will it tear them apart?

It is 1914 and Vivian Foster is a debutante with options, but something happens to change her position. She marries, but not for love. Her husband is a traditionalist who joins up as soon as war is declared. This leaves Vivian alone on a Derbyshire farm, far from the bright lights of the London she knows.

Howard Henderson is a brilliant young playwright. He travels to France to report on the war, but what he sees makes him want no part of it. Killing is not for Howard, but what other choices has he?

The story of these two characters is so beautifully written. The changes war brings; I really felt I was there experiencing their thoughts and feelings. War changes everyone; this story demonstrates this perfectly.

There are lots of emotions running through this book. I recommend this to you.

Suzanne Beney

A beautiful, if some what predictable, love story that addresses prejudices in World War I.

I really enjoy Adele Parks' books, and this one didn't disappoint.

The story starts just before World War I and takes you through on a journey with the various characters right through to 1923. Parks has a great way of enticing you into a story, so that you feel like you are right there with the characters.

Like most novels of this type, it's fairly predictable in it's format. Two main characters that have no connection at the start, cross paths, and fall in love. But, the various elements of their lives that Parks add to the mix mean you don't feel like you've read it all before.

There are times thought, that I felt it was a little unnecessarily repetitive and perhaps could of been edited. Not that it stopped me enjoying the story.

I would certainly recommend this book for those that enjoy romance novels.

Joan Sidwell

I haven't read any of Adele Park's contemporary books but have read her previous book set after the First World War and this is an excellent follow up for her new departure. To cover up a scandal Vivian, a debutante, marries Aubrey, a man she doesn't know very well, on the day of the First World War. Aubrey soon goes off to the Front and Vivian is left behind in remote Derbyshire to run Aubrey's family farm.

Howard, a Pacifist, is a playwright in London who goes to the Front with a journalist friend to see for himself what is happening in the early days of the war and to gain inspiration for his writing, but what he sees fills him with horror and he returns to England, unable to write.

As Howard faces the authorities in his refusal to conform to the laws of conscription he meets Vivian and a great love story begins.

Every word, every phrase of this book is perfectly placed and matters to the story. The sense of period and the detail makes this time of great conflict and change come alive. Adele Parks' characterisation animates the people in the book and makes them real and believable. It is also a story of the emancipation of women who are forced to

face challenges and take on responsibilities in the absence of their men.

This is a book to get lost in, to revel in the history of a time that changed the course of the 20th century.

Allison Batten

Having never previously read any books by Adele Parks I really didn't know what to expect with 'If You Go Away'.

Any doubts I had were quickly laid aside as I started reading this wonderful, thought provoking book.

It's long at nearly 500 pages but it is a thumping good read from start to finish and the kind of book you can curl up in a chair with and spend a whole day reading!

Set in WW1, Vivian, a former debutante who is stuck in a loveless marriage, falls in love with Howard, a young playwright and a Conscientious Objector.

It certainly brings to life the horrors of the War but it is also a passionate love story as well.

I will definitely be reading more books by Adele Parks and am so glad I was able to review 'If You Go Away'.

I certainly recommend it to all fans of historical fiction.

Kathryn Whitfield

I loved this book, amazing story, Adele Parks is such a talented writer.

This is a fantastically written love story set during world war one. I loved the details of history in the story. Adele depicted the horrors of war perfectly. It was a heartbreaking read at times, powerfully written, but there was also happy moments during that time with community coming together to do their bit during the war at home. I loved and hated all the characters at some point during the book as they grew and changed over the years.

I would definitely recommend this book if you like romantic historical fiction. I will definitely recommend any book by Adele Parks.

You can follow Kathryn on Twitter: @kathryna

Cheryl Kinney

Gripping read! I look forward to reading more from this author.

I have read a few of Adele Park's novels but this is the first of the historical ones I have read. I really enjoyed it, as the characters were well written and I could relate to them.

I really enjoy books that are set in this period and loved the details as they made me feel like I was in the era when reading this book.