

## Lovereadings Reader reviews of If You Were Me by Sheila O'Flanagan

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereadings members.

### Phyllippa Smithson

***So refreshing to become absolutely absorbed in a story with whom the lead character I could totally identify. O'Flanagan has come up with yet another cracker.***

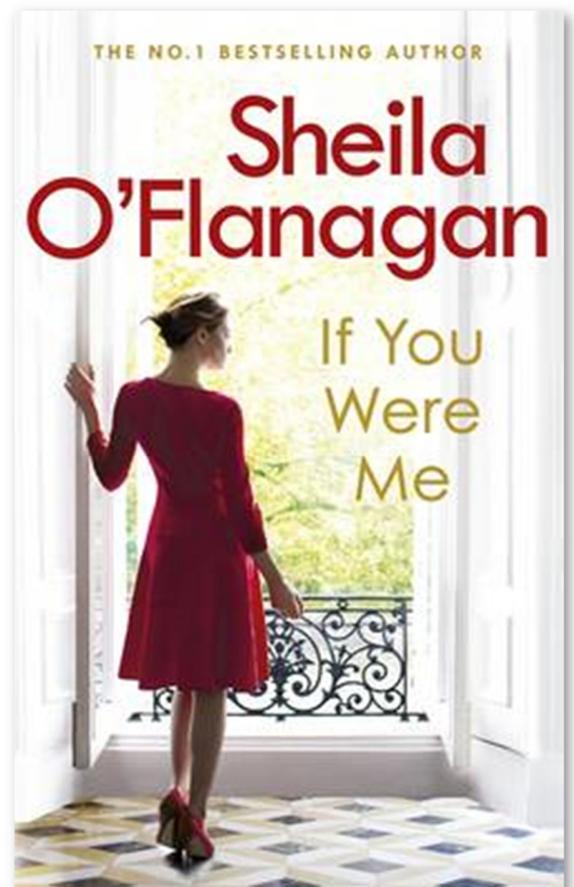
*'If You Were Me' is a perfect title for a book which has humour, intrigue, relationship 'stuff' and is largely set in two cities which totally support the mood of the plot, Dublin and Seville.*

*Carlotta, an ambitious and determined professional is engaged to Chris who himself is a leading business man on a very different career path.*

*With well-paced flash backs, we learn that as a child, Carlotta's best-friend was a boy, called Luke. Luke however was from a very different family background to Carlotta. His family was driven by material acquisition, always having the latest gadgets, biggest possessions, newest cars. Luke however, did not buy into the family ways, but was a teenager and not a complete rebel.*

*At 15, Carlotta and Luke's friendship was on the verge of moving beyond friendship. And then Luke suddenly disappears along with his family. As his story unfolds, through the eyes of the world and not his own, it seems the disappearance is the result of alleged criminal activities of his father.*

*That sudden loss had hurt Carlotta at the time and, a trigger of events whilst on business in Seville, leads her to realise that her adult self has still not moved on from that time not, despite Chris.*



*A perfect read for the holiday season.*

**Suzanne Marsh** [www.ireadnovels.wordpress.com](http://www.ireadnovels.wordpress.com)

***I knew that I was going to enjoy reading the book 'If You Were Me' by Sheila O'Flanagan as soon as I read the first sentence.*** *'When I open my eyes and focus on the clock beside the bed, I realise with absolute horror that I should of have been awake an hour ago.'*

*For some people waking up an hour late means it sets the day of going from bad to worse.*

*This is an exciting story about Carlotta O'Keefe who is happily engaged, and with her wedding to her fiance Chris Bennett all paid for. Carlotta is very focused about her future and very busy with her career.*

*As Carlotta has woken up an hour late in Seville she is now running late, which means she will now miss her train. And missing her train means missing her plane. Missing the plane means that Carlotta will be missing soon to be mother-in-law's Dorothea's seventieth birthday party. While Carlotta is in Seville, she runs into Luke Evans who broke her heart over eighteen years ago.*

*I highly recommend 'If You Were Me', it has some awesome twists for Sheila O'Flanagan fans. If you have not read a Sheila O'Flanagan novel I recommend that you get this novel and read it.*

*The story shows how muddled a woman can feel just before getting married when old an old boyfriend enters ones life just before the wedding.*

*Women will definitely enjoy reading this with the mother-in law to be with her designer clothes, the best friend chats, and the Spanish music.*

*And the beauty of this book it is the 22nd book by Sheila O'Flanagan. I could not put this book down. I will definitely be reading more of Sheila's books in the future.*

**Joanne Nuttie**

***Another new author for me, I will definitely be reading more of her books.*** *An Irish author whose story was based in Ireland. Great characters that were really brought to life, I especially loved Carlotta the main character, she was feisty and strong and I could really picture her, especially her trademark sparkly clip. I also loved the way the author portrayed Kieran the bullying ex work mate, her use of description was fab and really made you want*

*to punch him. Sive and Chris also came across very well and I could picture them both. Wasn't expecting them to get together so that was a twist I really enjoyed.*

***This was an easy light read, with a few twists and turns that made you want to keep on reading.. And as I hoped for a happy ending, I will recommend this at my book club as a holiday read and know most ladies there will enjoy it.***

*It will make them smile that's for sure.*

### **Emma Barton**

***This book follows the story of Carlotta, a thirty something business woman as she reassesses her life after a chance encounter with an old boyfriend from her teenage years.***

*This is the first Shelia O'Flanagan book I have read and if you are looking for an easy holiday read, this is the book for you. The story follows Carlotta, a thirty something business woman as she reassesses her life after a chance encounter with an old boyfriend from her teenage years.*

*At first glance, she seems to have a dream life. A loving fiancé, fulfilling career, financial independence and close family and friends. However, after bumping into her old boyfriend Luke, while on a business trip to Spain, old feelings are brought back to the surface and Carlotta begins to question if everything in her life is as perfect as she thought.*

*There are a few twists in the book that raise it above the average run of the mill female fiction genre but several elements are very predictable. After the first 50 pages, I felt the book improved and my opinion of it changed. It was an enjoyable read that makes you want to find out how the story ends (even if you may have already guessed!)*

### **Angela Rhodes @tessrhodes68@gmail.com**

*What would you do, if you were engaged to one man, who was smart, rich, and your wedding plans were coming together and then you bumped into a boy from your youth, a boy who was beautiful and now as a man, is just as beautiful? One kiss, that's all it takes, for Carlotta to remember Luke, who still has curly hair, that she can twist in her fingers, and the smile, that melts her heart..*

*Now Carlotta's life is a little confused, and to help matters along, her fiance's mother Doratheia, is like the evil queen from every fairytale. Just waiting for her to make a mistake.*

***I loved this, as it made me laugh, and feel for poor Carlotta, and ohhh Luke, I loved Luke, he reminded me of a boy I used to know, curly hair,, sigh,,,***

### **Jan Kirkcaldy**

*A modern setting for a good old fashioned romantic novel made this enjoyable from start to finish. A predictable pleasure to read with mostly likeable characters and certainly many of whom most people have come across whether at work or play. It was easy to feel a connection to high powered businesswoman Carlotta, her doctor fiance Chris and their respective families – even the difficult, potential mother in law to be, Dorothea, and of course Luke the unexpected blast from the past. Realistically covering today's lifestyle and events in Ireland or Spain the descriptive writing makes the story seem very real. Even if the scenario is improbable you begin to think it could all happen. It did go back in time a little, as do so many books these days, but it was quite relevant.*

***Not normally my sort of book but I really enjoyed it. Great escapism with a feel good factor. Ideal Summer holiday reading. I will certainly be reading other Sheila O'Flanagan novels.***

### **Sallyann Spittle**

***I was absolutely hooked on this book after just a couple of pages. It grips you from the start and you just have to continue reading. This is the first Sheila O'Flanagan book I have read but it will not be my last if this is anything to go by. The characters are colourful and enjoyable and the story line keeps you guessing right until the end. The plot flits back to the past to explain certain parts of the story and this is done perfectly – not too much past but just enough to explain things. The settings of the story (Seville and Dublin) are described in brilliant detail and you really think you could be in Seville. The main character, Carlotta, is a thriving and accomplished business woman and it is comforting to notice that she has the same problems that any woman would have – given her situations.***

***What a story – brilliant narrative and excellent storylines!***

### **Mandy Carver**

***Right from the start I was gripped by this book, I was willing the taxi driver to drive faster! I loved reading about Carlotta's teenage years and I was interested to hear Luke's side of the story too.***

*The book makes you think about your own teenage years and wonder what sort of adults your teenage friends have become. I love Sheila O'Flanagan's style of writing, she kept me interested with snippets of interesting info from Carlotta's past. There were some surprises along the way and the story never went the way I thought it would right up to the end! This book will be recommended in my reading group!*

### **Jenny Heardman - Overworked and Underpaid Book Group**

***A light, easy to read book with some great characters, interesting plot twists and a beautiful Spanish setting. Perfect to take on holiday.***

*Carlotta is a successful, independent career woman with a loving fiancé, Chris, and is looking forward to her wedding. However, having slept in on a business trip to Seville, she misses her train home and ends up bumping into her childhood love, Luke.*

*Her reignited feelings for Luke make her question her whole relationship with Chris and leave her confused as to what she really wants from her life.*

*I enjoyed this book. It was light and easy to read with some interesting, well-developed characters. Carlotta was a strong lead and I especially liked the difficult relationship between her and Chris's family with her mother-in-law-to-be constantly picking faults.*

*The setting switching between Dublin and Seville, fantastically described with its seductive flamenco dancing, scenery and nightlife, make this book a perfect holiday read.*

### **Sarah Harper**

*'If You Were Me' contains all of the ingredients for a great romantic read. Carlotta is a modern, sassy heroine who's done well for herself since her teenage years in Blackwater Terrace. She has an eidetic memory and a successful career in a consultancy firm which she loves. She also has a fantastic, rich fiancé who adores her. And, when she bumps into her first real boyfriend again,*

*18 years after he ran out on her, she has trouble. But Carlotta is happy, isn't she? Meeting Luke again shouldn't have any effect on her life but she needs to know why he, her best friend during those formative years, abandoned her and she needs to know what might have happened if he had stayed. Combined with unrealistic pressure to be 'perfect', as dictated by her matriarchal future mother in law, trouble at work and a breakdown of relations with her best friend Sive, Carlotta is pushed to breaking point and something needs to give. All she really needs to do is forget Luke but the trouble is, Carlotta's someone who remembers, not forgets.*

***A really lovely, effortlessly romantic read. Sheila O'Flanagan is a master storyteller and 'If You Were Me' does not disappoint.***

### **Wendy Stubbs**

***I knew that as soon as I had read the first page, I was going to enjoy this book. I was absorbed in the storyline, the characters and the settings from page one.***

*The fact that the storyline flits backwards and forwards in time and between two settings (Dublin and Seville), helps you relate with the characters, rather than cause any confusion in the storyline.*

*The relation between the past and the present and the difference in the characters is so plausible and you can relate to all the ups and downs and twists and turns in the relationships.*

*The places visited and the descriptions of the main characters and their intricate relationships are so realistic. You feel that you can relate to many parts of the story.*

*Carlotta, is a very successful business woman, however, is not successful in love. Luke, her first love, comes back into her life to show her that maybe she just hasn't found the right man.*

*A great story, lots of twists and turns, so easy to read and a great ending.*

*If you haven't read Sheila O'Flanagan before, you won't be disappointed.*

### **Carla Senior**

***'If You Were Me' is the first Sheila O'Flanagan novel I have read. I had high expectations with the beautiful cover and heartwarming dedication inside but was very disappointed with the book.***

*Carlotta, the main character, was not a very likeable person, constantly boasting and boosting her ego. The story lacked plausibility and pace and was a chore to read. It is set in Seville and Dublin, two beautiful, historic, romantic cities each with their own unique culture and charm but I was left with no yearning to visit either and I think a big opportunity was lost, given the length of the book, to give more of the atmosphere of these places.*

*The story was very predictable and there was no crafting of the words to engage the reader's intellect. Every chapter had intriguing musical titles and maybe reading this book whilst listening to these pieces of beautiful music would lift this book a bit. If you are a Sheila O'Flanagan fan then give it a go, otherwise I would advise you avoid this book or look at reviews of her earlier work if you want to give this author a try.*

### **Jane Nicol - Overworked and Underpaged Book Group**

***First love is always special but is it enough to change your life? Put your feet up and escape into Carlotta's story, we all deserve a treat.***

*Carlotta seems to have everything, a rewarding job, good friend and the perfect fiancé. Why then when she meets up unexpectedly with her first love does she begin to question her life?*

*I found myself drawn into her story and really caring what the outcome would be.*

*The perfect summer read.*

### **Joy Bosworth**

***Up to her usual standard, Different but real people.***

*The heroine isn't a silly, thoughtless girl but is, instead, a sensible career woman. Had she not been she would have thrown it all away to trace an old love and create a new persona for herself. But when a sensible career woman can't stop wondering about what might have been - she is forced to decide. Having done so, even then nothing is resolved.*

*I love Sheila Flanagan's books. Her people are real. Good guys say the wrong thing and chances do get missed, just as in real life. Even at the end, the final line is not drawn, instead the reader can see a career path and plan a future which continues long after the book.*

**Linda Bear - The Bell Book Club No1, Evercreech**

*Read the book in two days whilst sunning myself in the garden - **perfect holiday read although even though I thought it was a bit flimsy and predictable.** Characters came over well but found it lacked any depth and found myself skipping the pages at times - not good! It is the sort of book I would read between other "heavier" books for a bit of light relief.*

**Janet Rundle - The Bell Book Club No1, Evercreech**

*I've just finished 'If you were me' and **although it's an easy, holiday read, I wasn't impressed.** I thought it was very predictable and the characters weren't convincing - the main character wasn't very likeable either which didn't help. I thought there was far too much petty detail which detracted from the story - do we really want to know what colour bread she had with her prawns, or which blouse she was wearing with her suit and how it felt and where she bought it and why she liked it? And I thought her obsession with Nutella was a bit overdone! I would like to go to Seville though.*

**Margaret Ashworth - The Bell Book Club No1, Evercreech**

*I've never read this author before, **easy read but not a 'page turner' for me.** I hated the main character -Carlotta. She thought herself relaxed and carefree, but was controlling, obsessive, narrow minded, selfish, inflexible and so few friends? Because I found her so irritating, I found the book hard to read.*

*Confused by Chris, ophthalmic surgeon so under his Mother's thumb.*

*Would love to visit Seville, and have already been listening to the music references especially Rodrigo y Gabriela.*

*Probably won't read another by this author.*

**Jaci Elliott - The Bell Book Club No1, Evercreech**

***An easy summer read, which makes me want to visit Seville.***

*A new author for me. An easy summer read, which makes me want to visit Seville. Apart from Luke, I thought the men were shallow and the women were struggling to 'have it all'. What was so attractive about Chris? Still very much under his mother's direct influence and what was so great about an ophthalmic*

surgeon working in sight correction a private sector. The only 'real' characters were Carlotta's parents.

Not inspired to read another by this author.

### **Daryl Issitt - The Bell Book Club No1, Evercreech**

*I haven't read any of her books before. **It was a very light quick holiday read, I found it quite enjoyable, but the characters were a little weak and the outcome predictable.***

*If looking for an unchallenging quick read on the plane it would be perfect.*

### **Charlie Pritchard-Williams - The Bell Book Club No1, Evercreech**

***I started this book whilst on a coach to London, which kind of helped me to identify with the main character - Carlotta, she too was also traveling for work at the beginning, but I worried I was going to miss my coach!***

*I did quite like Carlotta but she seemed rather 90's with her glittery hair clip and her resistance to social media.*

*Although I liked the sound of pretty-boy Luke, he seemed a bit of a weak character who was possibly living on his looks, the fact that he never seemed to keep a girlfriend made me wonder how long she'd last with him, would she in actual fact regret giving up dependable Chris after all and fight to win him back?*

*I did really like the fact that it was set in both Ireland and Spain, it gave it an extra variation, but I have come away assuming that she'll end up giving up her job and moving to Spain to be with Luke which seems slightly predictable.*

*This was an easy read that I thoroughly enjoyed and would be fab whilst sitting on a beach sipping a margarita.*

### **Lyn Crisp - The Bell Book Club No1, Evercreech**

***I quite enjoyed the book.** I liked the main characters but found the chance meeting in Seville a little hard to accept.*

*The way in which Carlotta seemed to miss read her future in law family acceptance of her was portrayed in a way that was believable.*

***All in all, a nice holiday read.***