

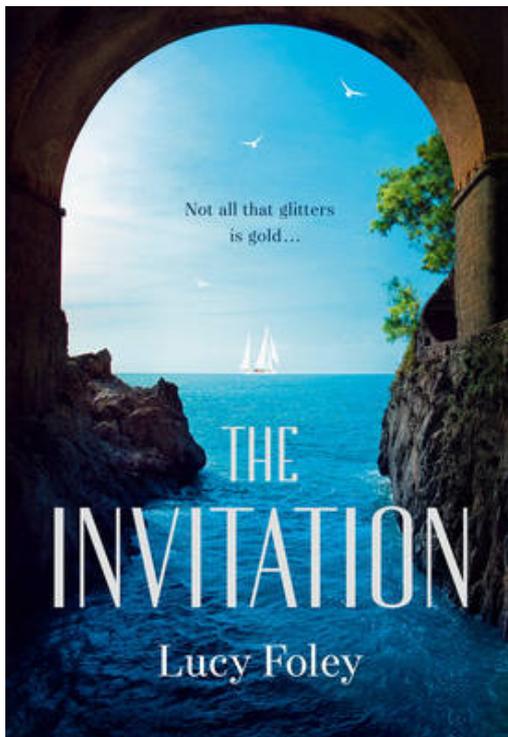


Helping you choose  
your next book

## LoveReading Reader reviews of **The Invitation** by Lucy Foley

 HarperCollins Publishers

**Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.**



**Victoria Whish**

***Please accept this invitation to a wonderfully beguiling summer read set on the Italian coast in the 1950's. It's a love story with a twist that you won't see coming.***

*This is a captivating book that has stories within the main story of a young journalist and his invitation to join the party on a luxury yacht in 1950's Italy as they make their way to the Cannes film festival. Hal has met Stella an enigmatic fellow passenger and the book is largely concerned with their lives and relationship. I can't remember being so enamoured and shocked by the ending of a book for quite some time so stick with*

*the story when it slightly flags halfway through.*

*This is a gorgeously descriptive book and I loved some of the asides along the way, especially a theory as to why the houses of a coastal town are all painted a different colour (so that a fisherman can spot his house from sea and maybe even spot whether his wife has got company while his back is turned!)*

*The book has a very filmic quality which mirrors the fact that the guests of the Countess on the yacht, are going to show the film that they've made at the famous film festival. There are lots of interconnections throughout the book and it's cleverly constructed. This book has already been likened in theme and style to Victoria Hislop and I can think of no higher praise.*

*This summer, you're invited to be swept along with a love story that intrigues,*

*enchants and haunts.*

Follow Victoria on Twitter: @VicKWhish

### **Emily Wright**

***'The Invitation' is a heady combination of mystery and romance. Picturesque locations provide an idyllic backdrop for the unveiling of a wealth of secrets, lying dormant beneath the gilded surface of the 1950s glitterati.***

*A who's who of elite society is gathered aboard a yacht sailing the Italian coastline to promote a film. The passengers include Hal, a journalist, and Stella, the perfect society wife. Keeping a watchful eye on proceedings is the Contessa, whose naval ancestor inspired the film. Within the battered pages of the sea captain's journal is a story which begins to mirror Stella and Hal's own journey.*

*Setting the narrative on a confined yacht creates a feeling of intimacy; as though I as a reader was also invited aboard. The vividly evocative descriptions of the ports of call drew me in to the novel. The small cast of disparate characters that are together for a fixed period of time, along with the era, reminded me of Death on the Nile, but without the murder!*

*A melting pot of emotion simmers aboard the yacht: romance, jealousy, freedom and loss. Slowly, the events which have shaped character are shared. From a young woman escaping war torn Madrid to the torment of forbidden love, years of secrecy and survival lay at the heart of The Invitation. Lucy Foley creates an air of mystery around each passenger, with Hal becoming a trusted confidante, who is curious to uncover their hidden secrets as the yacht charts its fated course.*

### **Jane Pepler.**

***As a huge fan of 'The Book of Lost Found' by Lucy Foley, I had high expectations of her second novel, 'The Invitation'. I was not disappointed. The novel was full of fantastic descriptive writing about Italy in the 1950's.***

*Hal Jacobs, a journalist, is recovering from his experiences in the Second World War and a relationship break up, by working in Rome. He is given an invitation to a glamorous party and by attending this party his life is changed by an unforgettable evening with a beautiful yet mysterious woman.*

*A few years later, Hal is invited by the Italian Contessa to cover the voyage of a yacht heading for the Cannes film festival. The yacht's passengers all need help in some form or another.*

*As the yacht makes its way along the beautiful Ligurian coast, Hal comes across a journal with a story that seems to mirror that of his own. The evocative language used by the author conveys the glamour and beauty of Italy in the 1950's.*

*I loved the story and read the book very quickly as it was difficult to put down. I truly felt transported to a very different time and place.*

### **Sarah Jones**

***A pleasant and escapist read about secrets, lies and most of all love.***

*Set in the 1950s this is an engaging story about Hal, a disillusioned journalist whose dreams of being a novelist died on the battlefield as he fought in WWII. He gatecrashes a party and ends up spending one night with the beautiful, but enigmatic Stella. When invited to write about a new Italian film and travel by yacht to Cannes, Hal is entranced by the stories of the other guests on board, but no one is quite as interesting as Stella. What is she hiding?*

*I enjoyed reading this and I found Hal to be an interesting and involving narrator. The scenery and descriptions were beautiful and the stories of everyone on the yacht and the past were just as captivating. Stella was well written as she was so closed off, but then when her narrative appeared with small tidbits in between Hal's that piqued my curiosity. Definitely one to recommend for anyone who enjoys a good love story that isn't clichéd or overly sentimental.*

### **Elisabeth Thomas**

***A fairly enjoyable read but did not grasp me like the authors first book.***

*Rome, the early 1950's. Ex-pat Hal is trying to scrape a living in the Eternal City by writing for a small paper. By chance Hal is offered the opportunity to attend a society gathering in place of a friend who cannot go. Here fate plays a part and Hal meets the gorgeous Stella, a society beauty from New York.*

*Two years on from the society gathering, the Contessa who hosted the gathering 2 years gets back in touch with Hal, asking him to cover the launch of her latest*

*film at Cannes. Hal grabs this opportunity to write for a well-known magazine and the chance to earn a fee considerably larger than what he earns at the newspaper.*

*Hal learns that the key people in the films making will be travelling to Cannes on board the Contessa's yacht. Unknown to him, Stella and her husband are also on the boat, a cunning plan by the Contessa to bring two lost souls, as she sees them both, together.*

*As the yacht travels, via various towns on the coastline, to Cannes, Hal plots to save Stella from her unhappiness and her husband. Also secrets about their past come to light, secrets that take Stella back to the Spanish Civil War and Hal back the North Sea during World War Two.*

*This book some time to get going, however it turned into a fairly enjoyable read but did not grasp me like the authors first book so slightly disappointed. If this had been her first book I don't feel that I would read anymore of her books.*

<https://www.facebook.com/Lis-the-Bookworm-1146448482049674/>

### **Jane Macleod**

*The story transports you to another era, where people lived their lives much more reservedly. Hal is a struggling writer/journalist wondering where life will take him, taking the place of a friend at a party the doors are opened to Hal of another more affluent society. This leads Hal to meet a whole host of people who normally he wouldn't mix with, and in the process an unexpected fling that Hal just can't forget. Sometime later their paths cross again and Hal has to fight the overwhelming impulse to be with Stella once again. However, a marriage to a controlling husband intensifies Hal's need to protect Stella. Fate seems to intervene and they spend time together whilst on a group yachting trip, and she opens up her past to him, stories and emotions locked away for many years there can be no turning back from the bond they now have.*

***A subtle story that develops throughout the book interweaving a mix of characters, histories and emotions so you feel part of the unfolding drama.***

### **Jacqui Passfield**

***A beautifully woven story providing fascinating details of Italian life of the 1950s as well as 1930s Civil War Spain.***

*It is Rome in the 1950's and impoverished journalist Hal has escaped to the Italian city in an attempt to shake off the demons of his war torn past in England. A meeting with a colleague lands him with an unexpected invitation to cover a party held by an elderly but intriguing Contessa, which ultimately culminates in a further invitation from the Contessa herself, for Hal to cover a promotional tour for a new Italian film, taking place on a luxury yacht trip to Cannes. Once on board it transpires that all is certainly not as it seems, and every guest on board the boat has something to hide, yet, interestingly, all confide these deepest secrets to Hal – not least the beautiful and enigmatic Stella with whom Hal falls desperately in love.*

*The book flits between 1950s Italy and 1930's Civil War Spain with sporadic glimpses of Hal's Second World War experiences. It is a fascinating read, thoroughly recommended.*

### **Joy Isabella**

*When Hal Jacobs is invited to a party in place of a friend, he finds himself set apart from the other guests, who are mingling effortlessly in their smart eveningwear. Another guest is also alone, Stella, and the two of them spend the rest of the evening exploring some of the lesser known sites of Rome. It was a one-off for the two of them, or so they imagined.*

*As fate would have it, Hal is invited onto a yacht bound for Cannes, tasked with reporting on the premier of a film. He recognises one of his companions and is startled to see it is Stella, who has boarded with her husband. Swept into a dangerous love affair, Hal and Stella slowly begin to uncover the aspects of each other that are hidden from sight – from the lasting impact of war to the marriage that isn't as perfect as it appears.*

***Lucy Foley drew me into the Italian Riviera with ease and created a perfect summer novel. It blends romance with mystery in a style I would liken to Daphne du Maurier's Rebecca. I was captivated from the very first page, kept in a state of intrigue and, ultimately, surprised by The Invitation's conclusion. Read on a dreary English day, Foley swept me away with her setting and her storytelling.***

[www.joyisabella.com](http://www.joyisabella.com)

### **Humaira Kauser**

***A fabulous book, perfect for the summer!***

*This book was just lush! I haven't read a book in a while where the setting was in the 1950's and everything being so lavish; it really does remind me of The Great Gatsby. I've been anticipating this book and it did not let me down. Lucy Foley is a talented writer and I need to get my hands on her other works! You really need to keep an eye out for her!*

Follow Humaira on Twitter: [https://www.instagram.com/cookie\\_bookie/](https://www.instagram.com/cookie_bookie/)

### **Glynis Elliott**

*I loved the nostalgic feel of this novel and imagined in my head Truss as the evil husband from Indian Summers! If anything I would have enjoyed more from Estrella (Star) in the time of the Civil War.*

### **Ruth Paterson**

***Once again I find myself reading a spellbinding story of love and loss from Lucy Foley. Mystery, romance, danger and lots of “sun” kept me reading on and wishing for more.***

*Once again I find myself reading a spellbinding story of love and loss from Lucy Foley. All the main characters, despite their flaws are lovable and interesting. The glamorous setting helps the reader escape and truly feel they are joining budding journalist Hal, as he follows the cast and crew of a new film. The book begins in Rome in 1951, when Hal is given an invitation to an exclusive party by an acquaintance. Hal is someone who people open up to, despite his profession, secrets are told and kept. He hold secrets of his own too. Mystery, romance, danger and lots of “sun” kept me reading on and wishing for more. I really enjoyed snuggling down to read “The Invitation”, and can thoroughly recommend it.*

Follow Ruth on Twitter: @ruth\_pat

### **Julie Bertschin**

***From the glamorous setting of a high society party in Rome to the beauty of the Mediterranean coast this story slowly unravels the hidden histories of Hal and Stella. A glorious summer read.***

*Hal is drawn to Stella from the moment he meets her. They are from different worlds yet their attraction to one another cannot be denied. After one night together their paths do not meet again until some years later when they meet in*

*Cannes. They both have hidden secrets which define the people that they have become. Despite their attempts to avoid being in one another's company, their host sees fit to encourage their obvious interest in one another. Stella has married a man to escape her past and Hal has carried the guilt of his friend's death at sea on his shoulders for many years. When they finally share their most hidden stories with one another, there is no hiding their love, yet they cannot be together, but they must try to find a way. I loved this novel.*

### **Emma Barton**

***This is a brilliant book, set in 1950's Italy during a luxurious yacht trip, heading to the Cannes Film festival, where everyone on board has a story to tell.***

*The invitation is to a party, hosted by the Contessa, to celebrate a film she has commissioned, based on a legend from her family's history. Hal, an English journalist living in Rome attends, and meets the beautiful, but troubled Stella.*

*The Contessa then issues a more selective invitation to attend a yacht trip, heading to the Cannes Film Festival, where Hal and Stella meet up once more. Everyone on board has a troubled past, and as the secrets are revealed, a tragedy occurs.*

*I really enjoyed this book and thought the characters were beautifully constructed. Their individual histories were fascinating and portrayed how the legacy of war can live on and shape futures. A great summer read.*

### **Phylippa Smithson**

***Ooh I so wanted to be a character in this most compelling and intriguing story based in 1930s Spain and 1950s Italy.***

*Set mainly in 1950s Italy but switching back to 1930s Spain during the Revolution, the story brings together a group of exquisite characters enjoying the high life as a result of their individual wealth and presence in society.*

*Hal, ex-pat who has been living in Rome for 5 years largely to escape his parents and pursue his dream of becoming a journalist, would appear to be the odd one out. Hal is existing to prioritise on his ambition – he can only hope to one day enjoy 3 meals a day for example.*

*When he crashes the party of the rich and wealthy, the host, 'the Contessa,' looks favourably on him and subsequently provides him with an invitation – to join*

*herself on a journey to promote the film that she has financed, along with the cast, production team and various others. As he arrives at the point of departure, he is reunited with Stella, a one-night stand from the party and who had simply disappeared.*

*The Stella he meets on the promotional tour is withdrawn, timid and a shadow of the person he thought he had met. What is Stella hiding from and why?*

*But it's not just Stella who has secrets, what we learn is that everyone on the trip is hiding some details of themselves.*

*It was a real joy to read such a unique story. Really miss not having it to return to!*

### **Angie Rhodes**

*Hal is a journalist and a second rate one at that, his passion died, along with a lot of his friends, but this is Rome! and Hal is hoping there will be something, anything to bring that spark back.*

*Enter an elderly Contessa who opens doors that would usually be closed to the likes of Hal and sets on a different path, a path which leads him to Stella, a beautiful, mysterious young woman who sets his heart aflame. Though Stella has a dark side, Hal cannot stop himself from falling hard. Will she be his undoing?*

***Set in Rome and Cannes, this beautiful novel made me think of 'The Great Gatsby'.***

### **Joy Bosworth**

***I shall look for this author again.***

*Hal has survived the war but struggles with this fact. He lives economically in Rome and jumps at the chance to further his writing when an invitation for a journalist is passed on to him. The sense of the 1950s being quite close to the war is well expressed. As is the luxury of the aimless life of a film star. He meets an ethereal girl who shares his condition and eventually they plan to improve both their lives but hopes are dashed.*

*Parts are fascinating, and the matter of fact consequences of living through the hostilities that affected the lives of all concerned are really powerful. Even the obvious villain has another side.*

*I found the legend upon which the film has been based in the story, a little distracting as was the flitting between times, but the story itself was really **good, atmospheric and very believable.***

### **Janet Monks**

***Writer Hal is invited to a party in Rome where he meets Stella an intriguing socialite. A glamorous story set in Italy, which through other tales takes the reader from New York to Spain and beyond.***

*A colourful novel, an ideal summer read. The glamour of the Italian Riviera is brought to life aboard an Italian Contessa's yacht, which is travelling towards the Cannes film festival. It is 1951 and journalist Hal joins the cast/team from a film which is to be released at the festival. Each person has a different story, many have felt the impact of the Second World War. And Hal meets once again Stella from the Roman party. A lovely easy read.*