

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Dress by Kate Kerrigan

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Sarah Borley

*A book that made me think about things differently. I loved every page and it left me wanting to read more, 'The Dress' is so much more than a story about the dress. Praises for Kate, 5*****!*

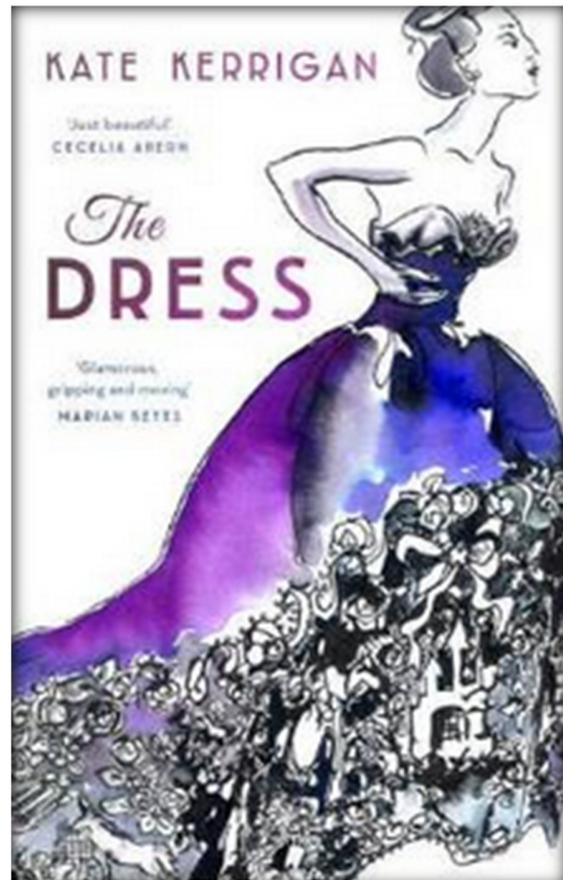
This book is about a dress but not just any dress. It's called The Dress and was made in the 1950s but that's not how the story starts. A girl called Lily is a fashion blogger and loves all things vintage so when she comes across an article about The Dress she decides to make a replica. This story is about love and friendship and also clothes! It follows the story of the original dress and how it came to be but also follows Lilly and how she makes the replica.

I was a bit dubious when I received this book but because I loved the cover I decided to give it a go. How right was I! It is an amazing book and follows two different stories. That of Frank and Joy, and then Lilly. The fact that Kate has written it in two different times is very good and it's like you are finding out about The Dress from two different people. Reading this has made me think about clothes differently and made me want to look back at the clothes ladies wore in the fifties. It is an amazing story about not only clothes but love and all the happy little things that go with love.

A book defiantly worth reading.

5 stars

www.foreverbound15.blogspot.com



Tasha

Amazing!! This book flowed from past to present so easily and the characters were so brilliant you couldn't help but want to continue to read more about their part to play in the story.

'The Dress' is a story set across two eras, the times are brought together following the death of Lily's grandad Joe. Lily stumbles upon an old Vogue magazine article about a 1950s New York beauty who shares her last name and is everything she wishes to be. This starts Lily's search for a family connection. This book shows how the mask/front you can put on can effect the people you love, how not getting help can destroy so much.

*I loved all the characters equally. I was left feeling soo sad at the end, not often I feel close to tears at the end. I wish Frank found happiness and Honor hadn't blamed herself so much and lived her life (not criticism of the book I loved the way it ended) **I loved it so much and it flowed so easily that I finished it 24hrs! And have been highly recomending it to everybody.***

Anne Mackle

A story set in present time that will transport you to the glamour and wealth of the American fifties. A story of love, obsession and flawed people. A story that will break your heart.

I'm still wiping the tears from my eyes after reading this book that had me hooked from the prologue and even before that with the stunning front cover.

The story is set in London in the present day and we meet Lily, a dress designer who has given up designing for wearing and selling vintage clothes.

While tracing her family history she comes across a photograph of a dress designed in the fifties for an American socialite and is determind to re- create it.

We fall seamlessly into the fifties and the story of Joy who wore the dress and Honor who made it. Attached to them is Lily's great uncle, Francis Fitzpatrick who Lily has just found out about.

As we move between the two stories I became drawn into their lives. Each of the characters in the fifties story had their good and bad points. One minute I loved them and the next I disliked them. I felt particularly let down by Francis or Frank. I thought he would turn out to be a really good man but I'm not so sure that he did.

Joy became a flawed character and then redeemed herself and as for Honour, she let herself be manipulated and went against her inner voice and it destroyed her.

The story of Lily was every bit as good and I loved the ending.

www.bookswithwineandchocolate.blogspot.co.uk / @cassam101

Joy Bosworth

It's easy to get swept into the glamorous, fashionable world of 1950s New York - and then begin to care about the people.

I found this book enthralling. *The modern part is okay but the 1950s is truly "vintage." It is like watching a lavish colour film from that era with larger than life characters and lush costumes and sets. Although I never like the trend for hopping from era to era, at least here they were clearly signposted and worth putting up with for the story.*

As someone with an interest in dressmaking and embroidery the haute couture world of Joy and Honor is extremely interesting - quite apart from the dramatic events happening in their lives.

Only the last segment seemed to be weak. A character now older acts in a most unlikely way whilst in the epilogue the central character seems alien from her previous self and like a schmaltzy afternoon drama.

Even with this break in great characterisation it is still a thoroughly enjoyable book.

Emily Wright

Woven with melancholy, redemption, friendship and love, Kate Kerrigan has written a novel that is a testament to the radiance of a person that can make any clothes truly beautiful.

'The Dress' follows three women in their quest to create a couture gown that is unrivalled in elegance and opulence.

In 1950s New York, Joy Fitzpatrick is a wealthy socialite. Beauty and wealth are her armour, but what she craves most of all is love. She commissions young Irish designer Honor Conlon to create a dress so spectacular that it will be a proclamation of Joy's devotion to Frank, her husband.

In the present day, Lily Fitzpatrick is a fashion blogger with a passion for

vintage apparel. She loves the style of the past, and is fascinated by the stories passed down through the generations by the clothes they have worn. Whilst researching her family heritage Lily discovers Joy and decides to recreate her dress.

The making of the iconic dress, in the 1950s and in present day London, pulls together the characters to create a story rich with evocative description; from rural, windswept County Mayo to glamorous New York.

There are many surprises in store for the three women in pursuit of fashion perfection. Threads of friendship, love and sanity can unravel more quickly than glittering gems can be stitched onto, and childhood dreams sewn into, a dress. Joy, Honor and Lily must all look beneath the carapace of beauty to discover the true joy hidden beneath.

Janet Gilliard

*I really enjoyed this book. It is a dual time story set in the late 1950s and 2014. In 1959 a rich American socialite has a dress made. In 2014 a young fashion blogger sees a picture of the dress and decides to recreate it. The story is well told and all the characters are well rounded. **Both the past and present stories are gripping and I really wanted to see how the story turned out. I highly recommend this book.***

Nicola Smith

A lovely story.

Lily Fitzpatrick is a blogger of vintage fashion. It's what she loves so when she finds a picture of a glamorous woman from the 1950s wearing the most fabulous dress she is fascinated to learn that the woman might be related to her through her beloved late grandfather. Alongside Lily's investigations into how 'The Dress' came to be made are the stories of Joy, the woman who commissioned it, and Honor, the talented designer and seamstress who made it.

***I really enjoyed reading this book and found that once I got into the book I didn't want to put it down.** However, I do have to say that I didn't actually feel much for any of the characters, neither sympathy or empathy, despite some pretty sad things happening to them. I liked the descriptions of how The Dress came to be made and the many hours that went into making it and thought that this aspect gave the book a fairly unique element. I like this author's writing and having only read one of her other books, I'd definitely like*

to read more. She has a nice, easy style, combining Irish and American cultures.

Sarah Harper

I adored this book and can't praise it highly enough. A thoroughly enjoyable read.

This is the story of socialite Joy's search for happiness in 1950's New York, through the creation of the ultimate dress. This also turns out to be the process through which she finds friendship in the unlikely form of Honor, the quiet, Irish designer and seamstress. But strong and powerful Joy also has a vulnerable, insecure side and is dependent on her husband for the love she craves. She is set to self destruct but we don't know how, when or where this will happen or what the trigger will be. It is also the story of vintage fashion blogger, Lily, in present day London, and her quest to recreate The Dress, locate her long lost relatives and find the courage to become the brilliant designer she can be. The story moves seamlessly between the past and the present without losing pace or a sense of place in the developing story threads.

I'm not really 'into' fashion in a big way but you don't have to be to appreciate this book for what it is, the story of a beautiful creation, The Dress, supported by a fantastic cast of characters. The details of the design and craftsmanship of The Dress are exquisite but the characters themselves are equally well crafted. I fell in love with Lily as soon as I 'met' her and then, a few pages later, I fell in love with Joy too and I knew that I was going to adore this book. Kate Kerrigan has a really delicate touch, I can't put my finger on it exactly, but it's perfect. She breathed life into beautifully crafted characters from the outset, especially the women, who just glowed with authenticity. I really didn't expect this book to deliver in the way it did but I can't praise it highly enough. A thoroughly enjoyable read.

Sarah Warbey

A wonderful read, recommended for anyone who enjoys historical fiction, attention to detail and definitely if you are interested in vintage fashion - I'm not, but I loved it anyway!

This is a wonderful story about a dress. Well, not just any dress, it is The Dress – a beautiful item of couture created by a talented designer, Honor, in 1950s New York, for Joy, a beautiful, but tortured, socialite. Meanwhile, jump

forward to 2014, where vintage fashion blogger Lily comes across a Vogue article featuring this magnificent dress. Discovering she is distantly related to Joy, Lily sets out on a mission to recreate the dress in all its resplendence.

Jumping between 1950s New York and present-day London, this is an enthralling read. The author has put in a lot of research regarding dress-making; even for someone like myself, who has no interest in this kind of thing, it makes for fascinating reading. It is an easy read, but by no means frivolous; covering subjects as diverse as dress-making, romance, relationships and alcoholism. I read the entire book over a weekend and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Carol Attridge

A great read to get lost in! It takes your mind off the humdrum!

It was the cover that drew me to this book.. My favorite colour and it just looked so glam!

The story was well woven together with a parallel story running through it. It took you to the hi life and then showed you just how low life can go.

The characters were believable and I took to them totally falling into the couture world as well as the vintage shop!

It's a great easy read, with a well written story, I only baulked a bit at the similar sounding names of the designers and a fashion store, you'll know what I mean. It put me off a bit but didn't spoil it. I thoroughly enjoyed it and wolfed down the second half to find out what had happened to everyone. So grab a copy and enjoy!

Evelyn Love- Gajardo

A pity this book isn't published till September as it's a perfect holiday read, with a story that holds your interest and characters that you care about. Set between 1958 and the present day, it tells the story of a dress, the woman who wore it and its designer then shifts to the present when a blogger interested in vintage fashion sees a picture of the dress and decides to recreate it, in the process finding out about the wearer and the designer.

The book gives lots of information about couture and the process involved in designing and making a dress. The story isn't all about perfect lives, and you feel a real sense of sympathy for Joy, the wealthy socialite who commissions the dress .

I really enjoyed the book and would recommend it to anyone looking for something easy to read, but with a story that keeps your attention.

Julie Bickerdyke

A brilliant plot and story but let down with weak, irritating characters and an adolescent writing style.

I have mixed feelings towards this book.

The plot and story were brilliant, a great idea by Kerrigan and even when you thought you knew what was going to happen she managed to add an unexpected twist.

However, I found the writing style difficult to appreciate.

I had little empathy with any of the characters, either modern day or past. I found myself annoyed by most of them as Kerrigan failed to truly capture or describe attributes that would make you want to get to know any of them.

I found the characters shallow, self-centred and down-right irritating. Maybe this was intentional but it is unusual for this to be a tactic for all characters in a novel.

I also found that some of the plot themes were written in an almost childlike manner and skirted over too quickly, creating an air of un-believability.

However, the book got better towards the end with the last quarter being a good read.

You can follow Julie on Twitter: @Julesbickerdyke

Cathy Small

A fascinating story that takes you into the world of fashion mixed with love, marriage and romance.

This books follows the lives of Joy Fitzpatrick, Honor Colon and Lily Fitzpatrick who live in a separate time but are linked through the desire of making and designing the dress. Lily lives vintage fashion and her research brings her in touch with an unknown relative who made the dress for a friend. Through her search to make the perfect replica she finds a forgotten family history that has been hidden away for many years. Can the two stories entwine in the current day and not only bring the dress into the front of fashion design but bring to an

end the heartbreak of the past. If you enjoy fashion or history or family stories then you will enjoy this book.

Jane Pepler

A highly recommended book that will immerse you in the world of 1950's New York couture.

The cover of this book is stunning and what lies behind it is a fabulous story. As I was reading it I realised that it would definitely appeal to my 16 year old daughter. Anyone with an interest in women and fashion will enjoy this book.

The book covers three time periods - 1930's Ireland, 1950's New York and the London, Miami, New York and Ireland of today. It focuses on two women - socialite Joy Fitzpatrick in the 1950's and fashion blogger Lily Fitzpatrick in contemporary London.

*Vintage clothes lover Lily stumbles upon a picture of Joy in *The Dress* and makes it her mission to recreate the beautiful creation that unknown Irish seamstress Honor designs and makes for Joy's 30th birthday party, and to find out exactly who Joy Fitzpatrick was.*

The book is beautifully written, its pace and flow is just right to capture the interest of the reader.

*I had previously read *Ellis Island* by the same author, which I enjoyed very much, so I had high hopes for 'The Dress'. It certainly did not disappoint!*

Anne Cater

Kate Kerrigan is a talented author who has created characters who are vivid and authentic.

It's such a dream of a story, so beautifully written that the reader is transported off to the world of high fashion and wealth and glamour. *'The Dress' is a dual-time narrative, with the modern-day story being told from the point of view of Lily*

Combined within the story of high fashion and wealth and beauty are more serious issues and Kate Kerrigan skilfully weaves these into the storyline, adding a depth and substance to both the story and the characters that takes this novel up a level.

Kate Kerrigan is a talented author who has created characters who are vivid

and authentic. She has combined a touch of romance and glamour with heartbreak and treachery, often taking her characters to their lowest ebb, but always engaging the reader with her magical gift for storytelling.

With a cover that will shout from the shelf of every bookshop and a plot that will delight fans both old and new; 'The Dress' is engaging, charming and elegant. A highly recommended read.

<http://randomthingsthroughmyletterbox.blogspot.co.uk/>

Edel Waugh

The story begins in the 1950s in Ireland with a boy called Francis. Francis has a bad home life, and after one too many incidents he is helped by his teacher, but instead of staying he decides to leave and run far away.

Fast forward to present day and we meet Lily, a fashion blogger who takes an interest in a specific dress from the past not realising it is going to lead her on an adventure into the glamour of New York and those who were part of it.

The story goes back and forth in time with these characters and from Ireland to New York. Francis changed his name to Frank and made a very comfortable life for himself with Joy, a very glamorous woman from a wealthy family. They have the perfect marriage until Joy's drinking and spending gets out of control and cracks begin to appear. While trying to fix their marriage Joy decides to have a dress made that will wow Frank and remind him how much he really loves her, not realising that the very thing she is going to do could be the downfall of their marriage in the form of Honor, a dressmaker with a connection to Frank's home town .

It is a beautiful story full of glamour and real heartache that is perfect for those of you who like a book that will make you want to read it all in one sitting!

<http://www.edelwaugh.blogspot.com>

Katie Hoare

The Dress is a charming book split between 1950s New York and in London's today, which spans three generations of one family. Lilly Fitzpatrick, a young fashion blogger, loses her grandfather, Joe, in London, which starts her investigating her family history. She finds out that there was a great Uncle Frank. This leads to the part of the story based in 1950s New York, where he

meets his first wife Joy, who is extremely attractive.

The marriage is not happy, and she commissions a young designer, Heather Conlon, to design a dress for her birthday party. Joy and Heather become friends, however, she does not realise that Heather had a fateful meeting with Frank. The dress is worn to the party to great acclaim and being photographed for Vogue.

In the present day Lilly decides to recreate the dress for a competition, with the help of friends, and also finds that she has family in New York, who help her find out more about the whereabouts of Frank, Heather and Joy. This helps to answer the questions that were raised for her.

This book is about friendship, family and the importance of knowing where you are from. Both strains of the story are intertwined with each other and come together at the end of the book.

Lynette McCann

This is one of the most enjoyable books I have read. I couldn't wait to see what happened to the original dress and Lily's dress. The characters were so realistic, having everyday things happen to them. The book actually gave me a liking for vintage clothes. Frank was a typical Irishman in the story and led a very colourful life, as his great niece Lily explores his story and the way it relates to the family. Lily is a very modern individual girl with her blogs and her incessant curiosity about vintage clothes and spends a long time (getting more curious about the dress' owner) making sure she had made a replica gown, which was woven well into the story.

Julie Wragg

A gorgeous cover, a wonderful story.

A dual timeframe story which veers between the fifties and present day bringing together a distant family link with high fashion.

Lily Fitzpatrick is a vintage fashion blogger, grieving over the sudden death of her beloved grandfather. Finding a photograph of a dazzling 1950's evening dress and an equally stunning model, who just happens to share her surname, means she has to investigate.

New York society beauty Joy lives a glamorous life surrounded by beautiful couture, but it is seamstress Honor who can offer her something really special

for her thirtieth birthday party.

Honor, an Irish migrant, works hard for a well known designer, but is eager to develop her own designs based on nature. She finally finds her muse in Joy and together they plan to make the world's most expensive and impressive dress.

Lily decides to go back to her roots as a designer and to recreate "The Dress", even though she doubts she has the skill and she certainly doesn't have the budget. New friends and the unexpected involvement of two major fashion chains sweep her up into a huge competition with global interest. As Lily becomes engrossed in her mission, the book gradually reveals the vulnerabilities of Joy and how the "dress" changes her life in a most unexpected way.

A book that waives between fantastic glamorous settings and clothes and the despair of loneliness and alcoholism. A wonderfully escapist, but still cautionary tale of how you need family and security much more than beauty and money to give you peace and happiness.

Vanessa Wild

An easy, delightful and engaging read revolving around a bedazzling dress, a dress which fairy tales and dreams are made of!

A dual timeframe story set mainly in London during the present day and in New York during the late 1950s, revolving around the designing, making and wearing of a magnificent dress, a dress which fairy tales and dreams are made of! After her grandfather dies, vintage fashion blogger Lily Fitzpatrick comes across an old photograph in 'Vogue' of a beautiful woman sharing the same surname as herself and sporting a glorious and bedazzling dress. Is she related to Lily and just what is the history behind 'the dress'?

This is an intriguing tale with some interesting characters, not all of them likeable. It is nicely written with a good storyline. It kept my attention throughout and I thought the flitting between the eras was accomplished seamlessly. The fashion industry is well researched and I found this fascinating in itself. It is lighthearted and entertaining, as well as covering some quite serious topics such as alcoholism and a marriage breakdown.

The Dress is an easy, delightful and engaging read which should appeal to those who have an interest in the creative arts, particularly vintage fashion design, and like relationship stories with a hint of glamour! I very much enjoyed it.

You can follow Vanessa on Twitter: @Butterflybiblio

Linda Hill

A glittering exploration of the world of fashion, both past and present.

I really enjoyed reading Kate Kerrigan's 'The Dress', not least because it gave me an insight into a world I couldn't possibly inhabit - that of haut couture. Occasionally I found it difficult to believe the prices involved for some of the clothing, but that was my ignorance rather than a fault in the writing.

I found Frank slightly disappointing as a character, but really empathised with Joy, finding her brittle, sad and deserving of happiness.

The plot is extremely clever, weaving past and present together highly effectively and bringing to life the rich times of American 1950s very evocatively. There is also a very clear sense of Irish landscape and pride.

I thought 'The Dress' would make a perfect holiday read and would appeal to those who also enjoy books by Emma Hannigan and Sheila O'Flannagan.

<https://lindasbookbag.wordpress.com/>

Joan Sidwell

I have read most of Kate Kerrigan's previous books and whilst there is still the Irish/American background and New York setting in The Dress, it takes place mostly in two time periods, 1950s New York and present day London.

Lucy Fitzpatrick is passionate about vintage clothes and researching on line she finds a photo of a vintage couture dress owned by someone with the same surname as her, Joy Fitzpatrick, a society lady in New York in the 1950s. Delving into her own family history after the sudden death of her beloved grandfather, Jack, Lucy finds a connection between the two families and discovers that Jack's elder brother, Frank, went to New York from Ireland as a young man.

The story moves between the 1950s and present day, detailing Joy's marriage to Frank and how The Dress evolved, made in New York by an unknown Irish seamstress, Honor, whom Joy befriended, but what happened to Joy? Lucy decides to replicate The Dress leading to wonderful parallel descriptions of The Dress being made in 1950s New York and 2014 London and eventually unveiling the mystery.

A warm and compelling story, I particularly liked the characters of Joy and

*Lucy. Kate Kerrigan makes post war New York come alive, with The Dress being the ultimate star of the story, showing how the original design came about, sourcing fabric and embellishments, fitting and ultimately wearing it. **This is a beautiful and fascinating book with an intriguing opening, a story to keep the pages turning and a satisfying conclusion, I loved it.***

Denise Dodd

I loved this book and it kept me intrigued from the first page to the last. Its a real page turner full of strong characters and emotions intertwining two eras sixty years apart.

This book is based around the love of design, the love of vintage, the need to find out about ones past and bring it together in a dress, one replicating the other. The latter one filled with the families past and love.

I loved this book. From a couple of pages in it had me hooked and intrigued because of my interest in the past.

The book has many strong and well written characters, I did not have a favourite one, although I disliked Joy from the start. The more her character developed, she became more softer, more vulnerable and more human. The book moves on at a steady pace intertwining all the characters. I particularly enjoyed the part where Lily went to Ireland, to get some lace, and met the past or what little there was of it.

The book brought out feelings of frustration, hope and sadness for most of the characters.

Even towards the end of the book there is a little twist which you don't expect. I can't recommend this book highly enough. Well worth a read and certainly urges me to seek out her other two novels.

Mary Gibson

The Dress is a beautiful tale of love, lost dreams, the power of redemption and how the clothes we wear tell our stories.

The Dress by Kate Kerrigan intertwines the stories of three extraordinary women and connects two eras. Present day and we meet Lily a vintage fashion blogger, who, by the death of her beloved grandfather, seeks to find out more about his hidden past. In 1950's New York, Honor an Irish seamstress and

talented, aspiring dress designer by chance meets glittering but troubled socialite Joy. Honor makes an exquisite ball gown for Joy and the two women become great friends but perfect beauty comes at a price and the dress becomes a catalyst for the friendship ending. Lily whilst researching her grandfather's past discovers a link between her long lost great uncle and the 1950's dress and decides to recreate the dress even if by doing so it bankrupts her and destroys her friendships.

Celeste McCreesh

This story had it all from love, fashion to more sensitive and a hard-hitting issue- I found I had a little tear in my eye at the end along with shedding a few along the way, so grab this book, curl up on the couch and prepare to have a few lump in your throat moments too.

Meet Lily Fitzpatrick, a hugely successful vintage blogger, has over a quarter of a million blog and Twitter followers and also uploads what outfit she's wearing onto her Instagram on a daily basis, she has really made a name for herself in the world of fashion and vintage. She has a collection of fashion pieces that are much sought-after. But this passion for the beautiful clothes of the past is about to have unforeseen consequences, when Lily stumbles upon a Vogue story of a 1950's New York beauty, with a photograph of 'The Dress' which is probably the most beautiful dress ever created, and worn by a stunningly magnificent woman who also shares Lily's surname. Lily is determined to find out as much as she can about both the dress and the amazing woman that is wearing it in the photo.

The Dress is a dual-time narrative, with the modern-day story being told from Lily's point. It is mainly set in London in the present day and 1950's New York. I had it read in a few days, I couldn't put it down, I loved the fashion from the 1940's onwards in America so I felt transported there whilst reading & could visualise the lovely outfits that were worn back then. It was such a heart-warming, uplifting story.