



IF THE DRESS FITS



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Martha Aguas kind of has it all--she's an accountant who loves numbers, an accident-prone puppy that loves her, and the perfect wardrobe.

Yes, she wears a dress size 24, her bras don't fit and she's never had a boyfriend, but so what?

It becomes a big deal when her perfect cousin Regina announces her engagement to Enzo, the only boy she's ever loved (he doesn't know, so don't tell him!) Suddenly Aguases from all corners of the globe are coming for the event, and the last thing Martha wants is to be asked why she still prefers her lattes with a waffle on the side.

Thank god for Max. Goofy, funny, dependable Max, who finds himself playing the fake boyfriend at the family festivities. But why does it feel like only one of them is pretending?

If The Dress Fits Details

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From Reader Review If The Dress Fits for online ebook

Kate (GirlReading) says

3.75* This was so cute! I mean, who doesn't love a best friends to lovers romance featuring a fat girl who loves herself AND two utterly adorable dogs, (including one named Wookie!!!)

I did have a few issues with the way it was edited. There were a few sentences that didn't flow, with words in the wrong place etc. and I found the tense a little all over the place, with it switching back and forth from 1st to 3rd (sometimes even within a single sentence).

My feelings towards the fat representation in this flip flopped back and forth between loving it, to getting a little bogged down by the amount of fatphobia from the people in the main character's life.

However, all in all this was an incredibly fun and enjoyable read and I will never not be here for characters loving themselves and their body, even when those around them are telling them not to.

TW: Racial slur, fatphobia, body shaming, attempted forced purging.

Jennifer says

This book reminded me of Crazy Rich Asians because of the family dynamics. I can relate with having to deal with extended family members especially with issues such as weight and getting married at a certain age (which is really common in the Philippines).

Martha is a very likable MC; she tries her best not to get affected by the comments about her weight and relationship status. She has a guy best friend named Max who is a veterinarian, a music lover, and a bookworm. It's really hard not to pick him as my favorite character in this book!

This book also promotes self-love and body positivity (the MC didn't have to lose weight/have a makeover) and if you like the friends to lovers trope, then you should definitely read this book! This was such a fun, swoon worthy, and enjoyable read.

"You will never, ever understand how much it hurts that in the end, he still chose someone as beautiful and as perfect as Regina. Because of course the fat girl doesn't get the boy."

"It's weird, the moment you realize you're in love. You see it when you've lost it, and at the most random, inappropriate of times."

"Yeah I gained ten pounds living in London. So what? It didn't matter because the people who loved me, the people who mattered, thought I was perfect just the way I was. That was all I could ever need."

Soundtrack: Boxes by The Goo Goo Dolls

Sharon says

I felt like I was still waiting for my life to begin, but my weight had nothing to do with that.

Pros

- **Body positive and realistic:** I love the protagonist's conflicted feelings about her body. She realistically struggles with her feelings on it sometimes, but she, at the end of the day, accepts her body, and I love that. Even when family or strangers comment negatively about her body and pressure her to lose weight, she has learned to accept that she loves eating, and she's not going to change for anyone. As someone who has struggled with an eating disorder and has faced similar uncomfortable situations with family, I can appreciate her realistic and rather positive thoughts.
- **Family:** I love the strong family theme and the cultural aspect. I especially liked the complex relationship between Martha and Regina.

Cons

- **Romance:** I have always loved best-friends-turned-lovers trope, but because I'm not a fan of "OMW drama" and angst, I've never seen it executed in a way that I can fangirl about. This book also had OMW drama, and it just got too messy and sticky for my taste. Also, it took a while for the "fake relationship" part to start up, and when it did happen, it wasn't quite what I imagined. Max was cute and sweet as a best friend, and when the romance finally did happen (which was like 70%-ish of the book), I was so happy and relieved. I was shipping it. However, it went downhill from there with unnecessary drama and miscommunication issues and time skips and too much back-and-forth. I'm just not a fan of that kind of stuff in my romances.
- (More details on the spoilers section at the bottom of the review called "Love triangle? Cheating? Angst level?")
- **Slow plot:** I finished this book super quick (it's not that long of a read), but it just felt slow, especially with the romance pacing. I think perhaps it was a "slow-burn" type, but it didn't quite feel like that either.
- **The ending:** Cute, but underwhelming. Also, I felt like some things were unresolved.

Final Thoughts

I hate giving a book **2 stars** when it has so much potential, but the romance was simply not my cup of tea. I do appreciate this book for including a body positive message though.

Things that you might want to know (WARNING: Spoilers below)

Is there a happy/satisfying ending? (view spoiler)

Love triangle? Cheating? Angst level? (view spoiler)

Tears-worthy? (view spoiler)

Humor? (view spoiler)

What age level would be appropriate? (view spoiler)

Diversity in ethnicity AND body type?? Realistic, yet positive body representation message?? Fake relationship AND friends-to-lovers tropes?? <--- Sign me uppp!

Silvana [The Book Voyagers] says

"I'm actually happy with my weight, even though it's hard to believe. I like that I can work it, because it's mine. Everyone makes me feel so guilty for it, like there's something wrong with me. But come on. I look amazing. And honestly? I don't say it enough. I LOOK AMAZING."

If The Dress Fits is the perfect, funny, adorable romance contemporary you seek. And have found. It's about Martha and the wedding of her cousin, Regina. And because of this wedding, the whole family is coming to Manila and Martha knows they all going to be talking and asking her about her weight. She doesn't want that so she comes up with a fake boyfriend to distract her aunts. It just so happens her fake boyfriend is her best friend, Max. Cute, veterinarian Max.

This book is so adorable I vomit rainbows every time I read a little bit more. 1) The editing of this book is so!!! The chapter drawings are my fave thing in the world and it makes the whole book feel fresh and adorable. 2) I love the length of the book; not too long but also not short! I get too used to it when #romanceclass books are short but If The Dress Fits is actually more novel than novella.

It's modern, there are so many lauh-out-loud moments you will enjoy, the characters are so relatable + the family is epic and hilarious, I love them. Fake datings + best friends to lovers tropes + cute dogs + delicious food + amazing heroine and hero ~ this is what you can expect from this book!

Full review to come on the blog soon-ish!

Jess says

The only reason this book isn't five stars is the occasional distracting typo or discrepancy in continuity. And the fact that she said Shakespeare 400 was in celebration of his birthday, not his death. But otherwise, magical, wonderful, adorable book. I mean, look at the cover, and then download a sample and read the dedication. If that doesn't get you, read the rest of the sample and see if you don't immediately buy the rest of it.

But seriously: capable, fat heroine with life goals that don't involve losing weight. Bookish veterinarian hero who can distinguish Pride and Prejudice 2005 from the original text. Manila and endless delicious sounding Filipino food. Who wouldn't want to read this book?

Veronika says

Finished this last night in less than two hours, and wow, this was so adorable!! I'd say this is the most rom-com like book I've EVER read, and while rom-coms are not my favorites, I did love this tons, even if the drama towards the end was a bit too much.

Small list of reasons why you should read it:

- body-positivity + #ownvoices fat rep
- #ownvoices Fillipinx rep
- shippy as heck romance (A+ use of the best friends to lovers trope)
- strong willed, amazing heroine
- the hero was lovely! he was a vet who was literally always reading
- awesome family dynamics
- CUTE DOG(s)

All in all, IF THE DRESS FITS is 1000% recommended to anyone looking for a fast, fun and adorable romance.

Marieke says

Wat een heerlijk boek! Vol met cultuur en liefde, de perfecte combinatie!

Maf (Bookworm Wanders) says

THIS WAS SO BEAUTIFUL IM CRYING BUT IT WAS ALSO TOO FAST AND SUPER SHORT?!?!

EXCUSE ME I NEED SO MUCH MORE OF THESE CHARACTERS

Claire says

Ooof, I just... had a hard time with parts of this. I was excited that it was framed as a fat-pos romance set in the Philippines with an #ownvoices author... and while parts of it worked super well for me, others were not so great.

I liked:

- The setting and sense of place
- The role that her strong extended family played, with each family member fleshed out rather than being an afterthought
- how SUPER into her the dudes were, especially Max (and I read the bonus story from his POV, which made me really happy)
- her adorable fashion & shameless enjoyment of great clothes making her feel good

-Max

I had a hard time with the juxtaposition of "I love my body! I wouldn't want to change it!" and CONSTANT -- like, nearly every page -- loaded descriptors and negative body self-talk. In terms of show-don't-tell, the heroine spent an enormous amount of time verbally attacking her body, even more than the folks around her. I can't think of a single moment when she looked at her body and described it as soft, welcoming, warm, solid, pretty, any of the positive descriptors that the hero (who's obviously attracted to her) would have used, or that she would have used if she were describing her attraction to herself or another fat person. She *tells* us a lot that she likes her body, but I can't think of a single point where she *shows* it.

I think maybe all of this would have been easier to swallow if the narrative was told from the hero's POV... maybe through that filter or at that remove, it wouldn't feel like such a barrage of little attacks.

I'm not sure that this is necessarily a criticism of the book's quality or the author's skill, and I definitely hope she keeps writing and publishing because I look forward to reading more! It feels a lot like older queer books that are filled with homophobia, both internalized and external... maybe it's better than no rep at all, or maybe it isn't. Maybe a kid or an adult is in the right place to engage with that, especially recognizing and engaging with internalized homophobia, or maybe they're too vulnerable to engage with that right then. Maybe they don't even recognize it. But it's worth being cautious when recommending it, because a reader who's grappling with a lot of body-hatred may have a very different, painful experience reading the book than a reader who's at a different place.

Rebekah Weatherspoon says

This book does need a wee bit of a trigger warning for Fatphobia on the part of a few of the characters and Eating Disorder mention and behaviors.

That said HOLY FUCK THIS BOOK WAS FUN! The plot was straight up rom com with family drama goodness. I gasped several times and had to set my kindle down to process the plot twist I'd just read.

As a fat woman I could totally relate to Martha's experience. Sometimes you love your body. Sometimes you hate it, but that doesn't mean you hate yourself. I loved that de Guzman addressed that complex relationship with self and image.

The love story was sweet and real and the hero, Max was A+. I'm definitely going to read more from this author.

K.J. Charles says

This was a compelling read mostly for the heroine's voice. Martha is seriously fat, and conflicted: she's basically happy, her weight problem is that people are jerks about her weight, but she does feel insecure, hurt, and constantly very conscious of her body. I am not a great fan of insecurity as a romance plot driver but it's easy to see why someone who's constantly being told how unattractive she is should struggle. She is,

when not being insecure, highly competent, likeable, funny, and stands up for herself. A bit slow to see the gorgeous Max right under her nose but hey, otherwise the book would end on ch.1.

Also to note, I really liked how the hot sexy ex wasn't a jerk. Most people were actually not jerks, they were just flawed people trying to make life work. Highly readable with a driving throughline and we really care about the outcome.

Jaclyn says

8/12/2017 A fun, body positive romance and a delight to read! I love the realism of Martha's complex relationship with her boys, and sweet, bookish, animal-loving Max is just perfect. All empathy as well for Martha's crush on theatre guy Enzo, coz who doesn't love a theatre guy? Seriously, part of why I loved reading this book so much is that Martha has exactly the same taste in guys I do. I can also relate to her body insecurities -- how much do I love the sex scenes where Max worships her body kinda like Joe Manganiello does in that scene from Magic Mike XXL! (Okay, maybe not exactly like that and my fantasies may have blurred together somewhat...)

My main gripe is with the ending. After such a deliciously slow burn building up the relationship, the last 10% or so rattles off plot point after plot point to propel us to the HEA. One second they're barely speaking, the next they're going hot and heavy in the kitchen. And I get the whole insta-passion thing, and even enjoy it as a plot device, but here there are a lot of emotional issues that were nowhere close to being resolved. Worse, there never actually is that big emotional release. A convenient 'smoking gun' plot device leads to a quick resolution, and honestly, Max and Martha deserved more. I wish the ending of their story had been allowed to unfold more organically.

There are other minor plot points as well that are brought up, but barely developed before being resolved somehow (e.g. the tensions in Regina and Enzo's relationship, the emotional fallout of Tita Flora's news for the whole Aguas clan).

Still, I really enjoyed this book, and love the main characters and their romance.

+

8/7/2017 Just reading the Kindle sample so far and already loving it. I like that the heroine is fat, and not just 'pleasantly plump' or 'curvy', how she is happy about her weight but that doesn't mean she doesn't sometimes lie in bed and wish she was big like a plus-size model, whose curves always end up in the right places.

I'm already loving this heroine and eager to read about her romance and happily ever after. Will update this review after I purchase and read the whole book.

OMG and the hero is a veterinarian??? *swoon*

Kate Olson says

Cute story, and a unique-to-me setting. Too much self-deprecation for my taste and definitely could use a

professional editor! I'm going to try another from this author, though ~ she has promise!

Sue (Hollywood News Source) says

I was so excited to read *If the Dress Fits* and it certainly live up to my expectations. It was funny, heartwarming, and empowering. A disclaimer: this review is coming from a skinny Filipinx reviewer, I can't vet on the fat representation but remember that this is an #ownvoices book. I know this would mean a lot to fellow Filipino readers that need their own mirror. It's difficult to find a fat character in the medium that we consume that didn't resort to stereotypes, especially losing weight. In which, *If the Dress Fits* subverted.

It's about Martha who loves her own body. The novel didn't just touch self-acceptance, the heroine is already *there* at that point. It's also about our vibrant culture, tight-knit family, self-discovery, and falling in love. I don't want to hear non-Filipinx readers trying to discredit Martha as anything less empowering because they can't relate to her fatness, not when there are cultural differences involved. We should stop treating "western media" as the only universal method of weaving a story. Every culture has different construct.

Overall: I like this book a lot. The romance is superb, the food descriptions are my most fave. Full review to come.

*I finished *If The Dress Fits* a couple of days ago and I was too emotionally exhausted to review it. Writing and reading has been tough this past few weeks, please bear with my botched attempts.*

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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? I read this for the Unapologetic Romance Readers' **New Years 2018 Reading Challenge**, for the category of: *Animal Lovers' Romance*. For more info on this challenge, [click here](#). ?

When I found out that this was a romance between a plus-sized woman of color and her best friend, I screamed. Even better, it's #OwnVoices Filipino rep and the hero is a veterinarian. This book was also on sale. Honestly, this was like the perfect storm of all possible outcomes to get me to want to read this book.

Martha is an accountant who has carried a torch for the first guy she's ever had sex with. It's the usual story - he's the good-looking boy who made her feel good about herself, and she's fallen under a spell of hero-worship. Even cuter, they first connected while they were both playing the leads in *Hairspray* (they like theater).

So naturally, her heart shatters when she finds out that this boy, who is named "Enzo," is going to be marrying the awful cousin who terrorized her about her weight and appearance when she was younger. Martha already feels so self-conscious and the thought of going stag to the wedding is a nightmare in and of itself, so she ends up roping her childhood friend, Max, in to accompany her to the wedding as a fake boyfriend. She doesn't tell him her scheme, thinking that she'll just avoid any questions and he'll be cool enough to play it off, but to her surprise, he plays the role a little too well.

There was a lot I really liked about this book. First, de Guzman really nails the insecurity of what it's like being plus-sized/overweight. Microaggressions/outright aggressions in the form of "helpful" advice or backhanded compliments? Check. Having difficulty finding clothes that fit well? Check. Feeling incredibly self-conscious about your body in certain situations? Check. Sometimes Martha feels very good about herself, but that attitude can shift throughout the day depending on who she's with, what she's doing, what she's wearing, and who she's comparing herself to. *That* also felt very accurate, and even though her self-loathing could sometimes feel uncomfortable, who *hasn't* had a bad day where they've been their own worst enemy? Society teaches us to be cruel to ourselves.

I also loved Martha's family. Even though they got on her case about her appearance, it wasn't done out of meanness (which can, ironically, make it hurt more, I think). They cared about her a lot in their own, weird way. And apart from those comments, de Guzman created a warm and loving atmosphere that also captures how kooky and annoying relatives can be. Even the horrible cousin, Regina, is actually not that bad. One of the revelations Martha has is how much Regina has grown up, and how some of her dislike for her comes from self-projection about her own self-loathing moments.

The hero was also adorable. Max, the real love interest, is a veterinarian and one of the first things he does in this book is go to a zoo for a calving giraffe, which he helps birth. How freaking cool is that? Both the hero and the heroine have dogs and are animal lovers (hers is named Bibi, his is named Wookie), and at the end of the book, he saves her dog after it ingests something poisonous. He's also thoughtful, charming, and zany - all of my favorite attributes in a beta hero. In case that wasn't enough, he *loves to read*. He's a mood-reader, picking books based on his mood, and Goodreads even gets a name-drop in this book (although not a very good one - Max things it has too many spoilers).

Also, the *food descriptions*. Oh my God, they were all so delicious-sounding. Even though it's the middle of the night right now, they gave me a pressing urge to get in my car and find a Filipino restaurant that serves *tapsilog* or a Taiwanese boba cafe for some delicious milk tea.

Things I didn't like? At one point, one of the characters' eyes is referred to as "chinky." I thought that was weird, since it didn't seem like it was meant to be offensive, even though some people would assuredly find it so. I also thought that Martha was very hard on herself, and even though it was well done, some readers might find it disturbing how often she fixates on the jiggling of her body or, when she's in a moment of

emotional distress, how she immediately rushes into the bathroom to purge (note: she is not a bulimic character, but she does emotionally binge-eat). There's also this weird moment where one of her aunts announces that she will only receive her trust fund if she marries by age 27, which ends up serving as a callback to an ending that I was not that fond of.

I was also kind of bothered by Enzo and Regina's relationship. Enzo confesses something pretty problematic to Martha, and then he and Regina end up married anyway. And we're just supposed to take it at face-value that there's a happily-ever-after without any sort of problems to follow? I know this is supposed to be a short, sweet romance, but with some serious issues broached, the length of this story actually creates a downside to the plot because too many things are resolved *too* neatly.

Overall, though, this was a pretty good book. As far as plus-size rep goes, this is one of the better books I've read, and the hero isn't a creepy jerk who sexualizes overweight people (unlike the heroes in some BBW erotic I have read). I loved that it was #OwnVoices and I really look forward to reading the other book I own by this author, a royalty romance called QUEEN'S GAME. YAS. <3

3 to 3.5 stars
