



It's All about the Dress: What I Learned in Forty Years about Men, Women, Sex, and Fashion

Vicky Tiel

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It's All about the Dress: What I Learned in Forty Years about Men, Women, Sex, and Fashion Vicky Tiel

Vicky Tiel started as an “it” girl of the 1960s and has had a four decade career designing clothes that make real women look fabulous. Her sexy, fresh hot pants and miniskirts were used by Woody Allen in his first movie, *What’s New, Pussycat?*, her classic design inspired the red dress that transformed Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, and her creations are worn today by stars such as Halle Berry and Kim Kardashian. Tiel’s own life has been dance-the-night-away fun, from her earliest days flunking out of Parsons to design on her own, to starting a chic boutique with best friend Mia Farrow in Paris, from marrying MGM’s top make-up man to becoming Elizabeth Taylor’s dear friend and part of her longtime entourage. Tiel forged her own path, and picked up some distinctive and hard-earned lessons from the rich, famous and celebrated along the way.

In IT’S ALL ABOUT THE DRESS, you’ll get a glimpse of what it’s like to be Hollywood royalty (think yachts, tiny dogs, giant pearls and peanut butter sandwiches washed down with Chateau Margaux), discover the seduction secrets of the greats (from Kim Novak to Goldie Hawn to Warren Beatty), take in a little husband-hunting advice, and even learn legendary model Dorian Leigh’s recipe for *gigot d’agneau sept heures*.

Vicky Tiel will teach you to dress like a sex symbol , cook like the owner of a French country inn, and seize what you want from the world like an American ingénue.

It's All about the Dress: What I Learned in Forty Years about Men, Women, Sex, and Fashion Details

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From Reader Review It's All about the Dress: What I Learned in Forty Years about Men, Women, Sex, and Fashion for online ebook

Rita Gibson says

Most of it

Rachel Swords says

I picked up this book based on the title from my local library, having never heard of Vicky Tiel (I don't follow fashion at all). Having now finished this read, lemme just say "It's All about the Dress" is one of the most fun books I've read in a while. The book is written in a style that makes you feel like you're sitting down and having one big juicy gossip session with Ms. Tiel. And it is definitely full of gossip. Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Jane Fonda, Woody Allen, Warren Beatty, and Goldie Hawn are just some of the celebrities featured throughout Ms. Tiel's colorful story, along with lots of recipes, tidbits of advice, and anecdotes on life. It's also fun to read about how some timeless clothing designs came to be, such as hot pants and the infamous red dress from the movie "Pretty Woman." I'll definitely have to buy a copy of this book for myself sometime in the future.

Ozma says

I was close to giving this book 3 stars, but I gave it an extra 4th star, mainly because you have to admire Vicky Tiel's pluck. I found some of her life lessons to resonate with my own experience. I love her confidence and her acceptance of life, her joie de vivre. She is a big name dropper and gossipier, but that's part of the fun of reading this book! If you are interested in Liz Taylor, you definitely have to read this book. Liz created the "entourage", with the makeup artist, the clothing designer, the chef, the friends, the dogs. Vicky takes a lot of credit for being the first to do this or the one to inspire Martha Stewart to start her entertaining career. I am not sure if it is all true, and it does seem a little much. But, I did find myself looking forward to reading on and wondering what next would happen in the world of Vicky Tiel!

Stephanie Smith says

This woman has done EVERYTHING and gone EVERYWHERE. She gives a lengthy insight into Elizabeth Taylor and I admire Elizabeth Taylor so much now. She gives great recipes, advice and funny stories. This book is GREAT.

GF says

I found this nonfiction book about a clothes designer very interesting as each chapter was dedicated to a part of her life, a piece of fashion that was relevant, something she had created, and life's experiences. Chapters

move quickly, and I found the anecdotes like taking a vacation to other places. The author's friendship with some famous actors did have a positive impact on her life, but you can see that the author's motivation and creativity carried her far.

Jennifer Daly says

No one is more in love with herself than Vicky Tiel. I studied fashion in college and have been an avid fashion follower my whole life, yet I had never heard of this woman until I discovered her book at the library. According to her, though, she invented the mini skirt (liar, liar, pants on fire Mary Quant?) And she tells a little story about meeting Coco Chanel which makes it sound as if Coco bestowed her blessing on Vicky as her heir apparent; Karl Lagerfeld be damned apparently.

I have a feeling that if you interviewed any of the name-dropped celebrities in the book (and there are seemingly hundreds) each one would have an exact opposite interpretation of their encounters with Vicky Tiel. They all loved her, envied her, worshipped her, wanted to be her, or wanted to sleep with her -- according to Vicky.

It's Vicky Tiel's world and we're just living in it. Highly do not recommend this book. I only finished it hoping that somehow the celebrity/fashion world dirt would be worth the awkward writing and narcissistic fantasies, but it is most decidedly not worth it.

Amy says

As much as I disliked "Devil Wears Prada," I cannot explain what made me pick up this book next. Fact is, I never heard of Vicky Tiel, but she invented the mini dress among other things. A delight from start to finish, Tiel takes us on a journey from Greenwich Village in the sixties when she nearly flunked out of Pratt School of Design to owning her own boutique in Paris by age 19. By 23, she is dressing Elizabeth Taylor, Ursula Andress, Sophia Loren, and Raquel Welch; and was giving then unheard-of door-to-door tie salesman Ralph Lauren advice on how to make it in couture. Even though it's chockful of Hollywood Insider stuff, which I normally loathe, Vicky tells the stories as someone who is truly fascinated by life and the people in it--and she pays attention. A perfect book for a woman who is too busy to care about fashion, but dreams of living on the Left Bank in Paris! An expat dream!

Suzanne says

I had no idea who Vicky Tiel was when I picked this up. I like dresses. I missed the sub-title that explains that the book was also about sex. This is not hyperbole to sell books. Ms. Tiel came of age during the 70s and was unencumbered by any sort of sexual restraint.

Turns out that Vicky Tiel designed the Pretty Woman dress. Her work was also popular on shoes like Dynasty and Dallas. Tons of draping and pleats but with equal amounts of structure. Not a look that remains very popular but it has its place and for sure the gowns were flattering to the celebrated body type of the day. She claims to be responsible for the miniskirt and the jumpsuit and to have had the wrap dress in her portfolio before Diane Von Furstenberg (though she does not claim to have invented it). Dunno. You can

decide that for yourself.

It isn't a great book but it is readable and not horribly written. She name drops a lot and I was interested in that. If you can get past the debauchery and stupidity there are some gems here. Like her description of raiding the most epic wine cellar when an angry soon-to-be ex-wife opened her husband's vault and let everyone take what they could drink on the premises. She knows her wine.

I can't seem to read anything decent these days so I'm plowing through some things that have caught my eye that I'd normally ignore. This was perfect for that.

Lisa Marie says

The first half up to the photos section of this book was really very good and kept my interest big time. Once I got into the second half after the photos section, it just lost my interest and it was a slog to get to the end - I kept hoping, from enjoying the first half of the book so much, that it would get better but something seemed lacking. Much of the second half was "chapters" that were a paragraph or a page and half of "whatever" and just like someone telling you a story in pieces of "oh yeah and, blah blah blah." The ending was a big disappointment and felt so abrupt; I paged back thinking I had missed something and hadn't.

Phyllis says

Good God. I think most fashion designers need a pretty healthy ego to survive the hard knocks of the industry, but the portrait of Vicky Tiel that emerges in this autobiographical/advice for ladies hybrid makes her come off as such a cheerfully demented megalomaniac she makes Karl Lagerfeld himself seem self-effacing and meek in comparison. Tiel is best known for designing 80s women of power evening gowns (the red gown Julia Roberts wore in *Pretty Woman* was a Tiel design) and being Elizabeth Taylor's personal designer. The latter sounds really impressive until you remember that Elizabeth Taylor spent most of her adult life on Mr. Blackwell's shit list. There's some pretty outrageous fashion history revisions in this book, including claims that Tiel invented the wrap dress and the mini-skirt. She also claims Yves Saint Laurent copied the pose from a nude photo of herself and her collaborator Mia Farrow for his famous Jean-Loup Sieff portrait. Having seen both photos, the only similarities I see is that they're both nudes and they're both in black and white. The mood of the photos is completely different.

There's a lot of advice about men & relationships in this book that I found impossible to take seriously after she retells the story of going home with a folksinger in the early 60s and finding that he keeps a flowchart of every woman he sleeps with judging their erotic skills and beauty on a series of foil stars tacked above his bed. Instead of laughing in this guy's face over this high school level bullshit and leaving, Tiel asks him to teach her the sexual repertoire that will give her ten stars across the board. If nothing else, this book made me grateful I didn't live through the sexual revolution. Do I want to contemplate an era in which women hold sex contests in which they have a 50% chance of fucking Woody Allen? HELL NO, I DON'T.

Overall I had a weird reaction to this book because parts of it are entertaining (particularly the stories about her time traveling around with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton), but the constant grandstanding and extreme egotism got really, really wearying. I'm glad I read it, but I was so glad when it was all over and I could move on with my life.

BONUS: for whatever reason there's a recipe for a pink tuna salad sandwich in this thing.

Erin Tuzuner says

The hyperbolic prose, the ridiculous name dropping and the attention span of teenager did not make for an engaging story. This feels like a Sex and the City parable relayed by a terrifyingly seasoned relative.

Claire Hatch says

It's All About the Dress is just a kick in the pants. Tiel has a very engaging, upbeat personality. She's always up for an adventure and happened to graduate from fashion school just as the 60's mod revolution was heating up.

She's a great storyteller and even if you don't especially enjoy celebrity gossip, you'll probably be intrigued by her tales.

If you have even a passing interest in fashion, travel, the movies or the social history of the '60's, this book makes a great escape read.

Jennifer says

Terrifically fun read about the life and times of fashion designer Vicky Tiel. Her autobiography is an absolute hoot which you won't want to put down. She recounts her life with such zest that you feel like you are with her while she travels the world.

If you like gossipy stories about old movie stars like I do (Liz and Dick!), check out this book. She also offers words of advice on love, life, and food. It's like hanging out with your fabulous, rich aunt who always entertains.

Jo Anne says

The title of this book should really be: It's All About Taking Off the Dress in Order to Have Sex with Movie Stars.

Not sure why I picked up this book--I'm not into fashion--but I'm glad I did. Vicky Tiel is a fashion designer who started in the 1960s. She claims to have invented the mini skirt and hot pants; English designer Mary Quant says SHE did and Wikipedia says something else. Tiel DID create the red dress Julia Roberts wore in

Pretty Woman.

The book is really a tell-all about all the famous people Tiel's slept with while creating costumes for their movies. She slept with Warren Beatty. She was supposed to have sex with Woody Allen but she met her future husband and had sex with him instead. Was friends with Roman Polanski at the time Sharon Tate was murdered by the Manson family and claims Manson was promised a record deal by Terry Melcher (Doris Day's son), who welched on the deal. Manson sent his family to kill Melcher but sadly, Sharon Tate was renting the house at the time. (At least this is what Tiel's boyfriend Ron told her.)

She met Elvis. She had a very long friendship with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Even though she never slept with Burton, she does tell all about all the sexual relationships HE had, before, during and after divorcing La Liz.

See what I mean? Where's the dress? Anyway, if you love Old Hollywood gossip, read this book. While wearing something sexy, of course.

Jstrootle says

The content was interesting, sometimes. The writing style I just could not get used to. For the most part the book follows a time line, but then there are random jumps that spin you around a bit. The little inserts were a cute idea and seem to fit the personality of Ms. Tile that comes out in the writing. Would not recommend to everyone, but if someone follows movies or fashion this is probably an interesting book to add to your bookshelves.
