



The Tailor's Daughter

Janice Graham

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Set in 1860's Victorian England, Janice Graham's suspenseful new novel tells the story of Veda Grenfell, a passionate young woman with an indomitable spirit. Raised on Savile Row, the enclave of fashionable London tailors, Veda is every inch her father's daughter. She has inherited his talent, his sense of style, and his love of tailoring. When a fever leaves her deaf at the age of sixteen, shattering her hopes of marriage, only Grenfell's familiar workshop offers any promise of an active life. Determined to prove her worth in a world off-limits to respectable women, Veda eventually persuades her father to promote her to the front of the shop where she . She makes a name for herself as tailor to London's smart young sporting set.

Veda matures into a woman of eye-catching beauty, inspiring the devotion of her dear and faithful tutor, Mr. Nicholls, as well as an ambitious Italian whose marriage proposal she rejects, with disastrous consequences for her father's firm. For years, Veda has been increasingly drawn to Harry Breadalbane, a young viscount with humane ambitions frustrated by the expectations of his class. Heedless of the unsettling rumors about Harry's family and his brutally powerful father, Veda has absolute faith in Harry's goodness. When passion turns to betrayal, she abandons her beloved Savile Row and sets off on a treacherous journey that will lead her into a world of deception, murder, and madness.

In the classic tradition of richly detailed historical fiction, Graham's elegant prose paints a deeply human portrait of a girl both willful and confused, vulnerable and yet fiercely courageous. Veda's chronicle of her struggle to sustain ties with the hearing world, and her determination to seize for herself those dreams others try to deny her, render her character unforgettable and illuminate a world rarely imagined in literature.

The Tailor's Daughter Details

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Author : Janice Graham

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From Reader Review The Tailor's Daughter for online ebook

April Dinucci says

This is the first book in a long line of books that has drawn me in to the character's mind, body and soul so completely. The author brings to life the struggles of a young girl forced to adapt to tragedy and the complexities of a disability. There is mystery, heartache, love and redemotion all neatly summed in a too short 400 pages. I highly recommend this book!

Jennifer Mcknight says

I picked up this historical romance because I craved a well written story set in Victorian England, and several reviews said the writing was outstanding even if the story itself was a little boring.

Unfortunately, the writing annoyed me from the start. Graham tells rather than shows 80% of the time, and if you don't know the difference between "show vs. tell" in writing, trust me, it's a big deal. It was so noticeable that the first 1/3 of the book felt like "info dump," and I suspect that's why some reviewers found this to be a boring novel. I rarely felt like I had the chance to see the plot unfold because Veda's narrative voice was always recapping things she had experienced instead of letting the reader experience them with her. The only time the narration seemed to stop and focus on anything was in the description of the clothing – and, let's be honest, there's only so many times a reader can read page-long passages about stitches and trim before wanting to pull her hair out – and the occasional bouts of longer dialogue which hint at all the promises this book might have been. Graham's use of -ly adverbs is excessive, if that bothers you as much as it does me, and three sentences ending in "she'd ever seen" all occurred within the span of two pages. At times, I felt like Graham was trying to break every basic writing rule in the book, and failed in pulling off her experiment.

Spoilers ahead. You have been warned.

Had I given up on this book during the first 1/3, I would have rated it 1 star. By the halfway point, I was ready to give it 2 stars. The reason I bumped it up to 3 stars is because the last bit of the story takes off. Finally we get to experience some action and even a bit of mystery. That last effort on Graham's part propelled the story forward and I was pleased (for the most part) with how it ended. My biggest complaint here goes back to the tailoring descriptions. There is so much description going on that important events are glossed over. We're given pages and pages of detail about Veda's suit and emerging role as fitter in her father's shop, but the end of her marriage is accounted for in a couple of sentences. I turned back the page to make sure I hadn't missed it, but Graham hadn't even thought it was important enough to dwell on. At the end of the novel, her reconciliation with Harry is much the same way. Did they remarry? Resume living as a married couple without another wedding? Who knows.

All in all, this is an odd bit of fiction.

Emily says

I found this story to be entirely too schizophrenic to enjoy completely. Although it's not formatted this way, I felt like there were three different plots, with fairly significant lulls in between that made it difficult to continue reading. The author couldn't seem to decide if she wanted this to be a coming-of-age story, historical fiction or a mystery. So, she did none of these facets well.

If I were editing this book, I would have reformatted it so that the last 75 pages were the crux of the plot, using (but cutting) the first 200 or so pages as background and illumination.

I wish there had been more historical context about Savile Row, as I was hoping to understand better that time and setting. Again, the author just didn't use that to her advantage in crafting the story.

I read this book much more slowly than I normally would a book of this length, because there were times that I honestly didn't feel like picking it up. Maybe my expectations were just too high; it seems like with some editing, it would be so simple to make this an outstanding page-turner instead of a so-so read.

Meagan says

Nothing overly spectacular about this book but I really enjoyed it. Takes place in England during mid-late 1800's. Three main elements to the story are:

1. Loss of hearing for the main character at the age of sixteen. Finding her place in a society not comfortable with her situation.
2. Her love of tailoring and the social issues of women and work which accompany the time period.
3. Her love life.

This was a nice love story with a little bit of drama, especially towards the end. It was very clean on the language and content front. I would feel safe recommending to anyone based on that criteria alone although I am not sure everyone would love the story line. I didn't feel this way, but some reviewers seemed to lose interest with some of the details and thought the ending wrapped up too quickly. I will say there were a few loose ends I would have preferred to have been cleared up.

Barb says

I really enjoyed Janice Graham's story about the life of Veda Grenfell, a bright and headstrong young woman making her way in a man's world.

Veda lives with her mother, her father and her brother Reggie in Victorian London. Her father is a tailor and Veda too loves making beautiful clothing for people.

Veda suffers many losses in her youth including the loss of her hearing at the age of sixteen. Veda gives up any hope of living a typical life in London's society. And instead pursues her love of tailoring and works in her father's business.

Despite her deafness she has two suitors who would have her hand in marriage. And she has her own ideas and feelings about Harry Breadalbane, a popular viscount who is far above Veda's place in society.

I thought Graham did an excellent job illustrating the difficult situations Veda had to deal with because of her deafness. In particular Veda describes her need for candle light and fire light so she is able to see a person's lips in order to lip read what they are saying. She says that candles are expensive but that her father would never deny her the candles.

I thought this was a moving love story with plenty of grief and despair. I thought the writing was very good and the story well told. I really liked the characters Veda Grenfell and Harry Breadalbane. I thought Janice Graham created very life like characters and realistic relationships. I thought this was a lovely story about a clever and headstrong young woman who is willing to set aside traditional rules in order to pursue her happiness in life.

Donna Jo Atwood says

1860s/70s Veda Grenfell is the daughter of a tailor who, at age 16, becomes deaf. The only surviving child, she begins working in her father's business, wearing--gasp--men's clothing. She eventually marries Harry, Lord Ormelie, but they are cruelly torn apart by his father. This started out as an interesting historical novel, but turned into a "had-I-but known",

Task 25.4

Janet says

This is a very good book. I have to say if you have ever had a family member who is hearing impaired this book will help you to understand what they go through. I only wish I had read this book twenty five years ago. I truly see my own daughters determination in this story and her never give up spirit and her take no crap attitude. The story is so real that you feel all the pain and emotions the character feels. The author did a wonderful job in making you see what the fashions were like for the time period. I hope more people read this not just for the good story but the lesson that can be learned from it, as well as for the amazing show of spirit this character has and show others what a bit of determination can do and the will to not take no for an answer.

Tara Chevrestt says

Terrific!! This book is very elegant and very realistic. It really tells the life of deaf woman and the troubles she faces from other people's ridicules, being excluded from conversations, the tiring practice of lip reading, and the feelings of hopelessness that accompany the affliction. I am a hearing impaired woman myself and I was shocked that someone out there understands. The heroine is a terrific woman that overcomes everything life throws at her, and life throws A LOT her way. The first quarter of the book is about her childhood and gives the reader tremendous insight into what makes Veda the woman she is. As a deaf woman in the victorian era, she did not have a major selection of potential suitors, but romance finds her. I loved the

scandalousness and spunk she showed by donning male attire. She also proved to be a outspoken, brave person. I did not really care for the ending or the choices this incredibly forgiving woman made, but the book and the story and the writing were all very lovely. Truly a story that will give women hope, deaf or blind or not handicapped at all. My only complaint is that I would have liked to learn more about the times and customs of this era. The book was not very detailed regarding everyday mundane life in the times.

Erin says

Veda Grenfell comes from a prosperous tailoring family, but her brother longs to be a scholar rather than take over the family business one day. Veda, on the other hand, loves tailoring and has a knack for design, but is stymied by her gender and the societal restrictions of 1860s London. A series of tragedies plague her small family, including the illness that leaves Veda deaf. She struggles against the overwhelming isolation that causes, determined to find a way to communicate and make a life for herself. Love and marriage seem unlikely in the extreme when society equates physical disability with mental incompetence, but hope is hard to extinguish, despite cruel disappointments and heartbreaking betrayals.

My aunt and uncle recommended this book to me, and I am so grateful! It's a very character-driven story, where I felt immersed in Veda's life and the strangeness of her silent world. I agonized alongside her when she lost loved ones, and I cheered her on as she fought to make those who remained understand and communicate with her. My heart broke for her many times, and I KNEW she was not told the truth when she was in France.

For readers' advisors: character doorway is primary; setting secondary. The relaxed pace might frustrate those who read for story, although the end gets much more exciting. There is no onscreen sex or bad language.

Stephanie says

This novel took me FOREVER to read, and I often didn't look forward to picking it up; however, when I had large chunks of time to read I found myself really enjoying the story. This is not a book for reading when you have ten minutes to spare. The author's style reminds me of Jane Austen, and you need time to absorb the beauty of her words.

This novel has everything: love, death, deception, etc. The protagonist, Veda, must overcome all obstacles while dealing with becoming deaf in her teen years at a time period when it wasn't considered acceptable in general society.

So, when all is said and done, I give this book four stars for the beauty of the writing and the carefully woven plot.

Christa says

I found this book to be both captivating and poignant. It is the story of Veda Grenfell, daughter of a London tailor. Veda has been brought up with excellent manners and given a fine education, which sets her apart

from her peers in the merchant class. Veda suffers several tragedies as a teenager, one of which is the loss of her hearing. This further cuts Veda off from the world in which she lives. Her passion is that of the business of a tailor, and she persuades her father to let her be his assistant in his elegant shop. Before her hearing loss, Veda began a friendship with a young viscount which later turns into a romance. The lovers are cruelly thwarted by the viscount's malicious father. Veda tries to go on with her life, but faces heartbreak and betrayal by those that she loves and trusts the most. She has to find the strength to fight for what she wants, and to forgive those close to her who have caused her tremendous hurt.

This historical fiction novel not only detailed what it was like to be a tailor in London during the 1800's, but also showed what those who were deaf faced during this time period. It emphasized the plight and helplessness of females up against men who treated them badly instead of giving them the protection that should have been obligated. I enjoyed the character of Veda very much, and admired her resilience in the face of so much heartbreak. I had mixed feelings about the character of Harry, Lord Ormelie. He did not seem to me to show much constancy towards Veda during most parts of their relationship. I know that his father was a man with the power to destroy him, and I understand his duty and obligations, but he still came across to me as weak during parts of the book. Veda suffered so many tragedies that at times the book seemed depressing to read. Even so, I enjoyed reading her story and was particularly pleased with all of the rich historical detail in the novel.

Korey says

For the first 100 pages or so I thought this was going to be a 5 star book. I was loving it. Graham's writing is on the formal and flowery side but I found it beautiful. I was so curious to see where it was going to go. However, my interest ebbed as the book went on because this is way too long and it relies too heavily on description in place of action. This is prettily written but so slow. Eventually some interesting, intense stuff does happen but my patience was tested waiting. The big stuff also feels like it happens abruptly. I'd say it's just good enough to read but I feel like it spends a lot of time in the second half just spinning its wheels.

Dariann says

Though I truly enjoyed Veda's story in *The Tailor's Daughter*, it wouldn't have been nearly as enjoyable without the author's great artistry. Janice Graham wove this book together with all the care a master tailor would put into a nobleman's coat. (The comparison had to be made). The characters were frustrating in their stubbornness, weakness, and bad judgements, but the majority of them were so loveable; if not loveable, then definitely relateable. I was expecting a different ending than I was given. While this slightly disappointed me, Graham's craft made the unexpected fate of the characters very bearable for me. I look forward to reading more of her works in the future.

Maren says

I can't stand these historical romances!! Just when I thought I had found one I liked, it went and threw me. The problem with trying to write with one eye in the past and one in the present is the two eyes have a tendency to cross. I would have been happy if the book had concluded in the same way most Victorian novels did: either tragic or happy-ending Disney-style. This one could never decide which it would be: happy

ending or tragedy. And for all the loose ends?? Pure frustration!! I also hated how the main character, Veda, seemed to vacillate between an independent American woman of the present and a meek, oppressed woman of the Victorian era. Suffice it to say, I was unhappy with the turn of events the last bit of the book and would've preferred a cleaner climax. I can't believe I even read this book--I usually don't do the romance thing, even period romances. This book has convinced me to go back to my previous romance-less policy...

Amber Gardiner says

This was one of my bookclub choices that I think was rejected mostly because Firebird was not our favorite books. After the first chapter, I was completely hooked. The story of a girl who is deaf in a Victorian England, struggling to be her fathers only heir. It's a great story with a great love story weaved in but I can say it's definitely not a romance novel. I read in the reviews that it's a retelling of Pride and Prejudice but I'd disagree and say that in comparison it's more like Jane Eyre. Great Book that I'd suggest to all my friends and family.
