



# Prada and Prejudice

*Katie Oliver*

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## **Prada and Prejudice** Katie Oliver

He's a man in possession of a large fortune....but is he in want of a wife?!

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Natalie Dashwood loves to shop. After all, as the heiress to the renowned London department store Dashwood & Jones she's been wearing designer shoes since she could walk! But a socialite's life isn't as perfect as you might imagine... Natalie's spending is spiraling slightly out of control, her rock star boyfriend is engaged to someone else, and it seems the family business is in financial crisis.

New high-flying business exec Rhys Gordon has been brought in to save the company from ruin, but what are his motives? And infuriatingly even a shoe-shopping spree can't take her mind off his distracting and oh-so-charming smile...

Couture and confetti mix with scandal and intrigue in this wonderful tale of retail, romance and redemption.

## **Prada and Prejudice Details**

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Author : Katie Oliver

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# From Reader Review Prada and Prejudice for online ebook

## Bryony says

This book so should have been called HashtagFirstWorldProblems.

Pride and Prejudice. Where do I start? It is a book that I am infinitely better acquainted with than I would like - it being one of my GCSE texts and all. I will try not to degenerate into a full-blown rant. Honestly. Just it's quite hard not to when we are talking about an antiquated, dull, uninformative take on a tiny portion of the privileged classes of regency England, with no commendable characters, literary techniques or outlooks on the many flaws in the Regency England social system. I honestly don't see why a piece of 1700's fluff is still in publication. But hey, it is.

To be a modern counterpart all this one needed to be was simply a fluffy contemporary romance. And I would be happy with that n'awwwww smile you get after reading a lil' cute romance. But no. This one couldn't even deliver there. Let alone be read for the next 300 years.

It is the story of Natalie Dashwood, heiress to a dying British department store - Dashwood and James. The board of the shop bring in a specialist, Rhys Gordon, to salvage it. Lurve blooms between Natalie and Rhys. Blah blah annoying tabloids blah blah attempted weird black mail blah blah annoy pop star ex blah blah blah happily ever after.

An innocent enough backdrop.

So what did it do wrong? I'll start with our 'heroine': Natalie. Let's have a look at the characterisation of this widely loved human being...

She's snobby.

*"Whilst you," she added tartly, "are merely an employee."*

Stupid.

*'What exactly was I.T., anyway? Something to do with computers, she knew that much—'*

Judgmental and derisive.

*'He'd likely spent the night in bed with his latest slag du jour.'*

But at least she's modest!

*"You're amazing, Natalie Dashwood."*

*"I'm glad you've finally realised that. It took you long enough."*

Oh wait...

I despair, I really do.

But let's not dump all the blame on dear old Nat! The rest of her social group are basically the same.

They all stereotype.

*'mostly tourists and WAGs and Eurotrash'*

And that's one of their better traits:

*"Surely you don't advocate the use of sweatshops, Herr von Richter?"*

*"No, of course not. Bad for business, you know."*

Yes of course. Because THE VILE EXPLOITATION OF THIRD WORLD LABOURERS IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE REPUTATION OF YOUR FUCKING BRAND. Maybe that instance is excusable; after all, that character is designed to be an arsehole.

But when it is revealed that Phillip Pryce's brand, who are to be a key feature in the revamped Dashwood and James, manufacture using sweatshops there is angst. Shock.

Because of the damage to both Pryce's and D&J's reputations.

*"Poor Phillip!"*

OH YES. POOR FUCKING PHILLIP.

**Never mind the real poor. The fucking impoverished workers who slave for abominable numbers of hours for tiny slivers of pay to produce the overpriced designer clothing that you flounce around and embellish your wardrobe with, Natalie Dashwood. The starving Nepalis who have the real problems: working in atrocious conditions to feed emaciated families living in squalid homes. Actual problems. Not the problems of these wealthy, Daily Fascist (Oops, sorry, Daily Mail) reading twats. Just look at the world around you. Hubby spending all his time at work or daddy not liking your boyfriend or your fans finding out you're actually aristocratic or not being allowed to buy a handbag DO NOT WARRANT BEING CALLED PROBLEMS.**

I'm telling you now, the England that these people live in is not the England that I live in. I won't read too much into the instances where 'bills' or 'check' (American terms) were used rather than 'notes' or 'bill' (English terms). At least not right now.

When I was promised modern day Pride and Prejudice, I was set for fluffy contemporary romance. Instead, I got sheltered 21st century English upper classes with 18th century morals.

So: To whoever chooses the iBook of the week - I'm very, very disappointed.

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## **Becky Johnson says**

This book has such a potential to be so much better if only it were proof read or "researched".

For one thing Aussies say crikey, not posh rich girls.

Another, there were far too many storylines going in this book, too many pov that were unnessecary.

If you don't know about medical stuff, please please don't pretend you do or research the correct diagnosis.

I enjoyed the main characters to an extent and am willing to read this authors other books to see how her writing progresses and where the stories lead.

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### **Susan Buchanan says**

Bridget Jones meets Shopaholic and then some!

I have to say I was drawn in by the cover and not by the name. Initially I thought it might be an updated version of Pride and Prejudice and was glad to find it wasn't, as I am not a massive Austen fan. The book is light, frothy, sexy, funny as hell, and was just the escapist read I needed with a young baby interrupting me. I read it over the course of a few days at every possible opportunity. By comparison it took me 3 weeks to read the new Bridget Jones, whom I love. I was drawn to the love interest, Rhys Gordon immediately and wouldn't have minded dating him myself! Natalie was ditzy and irresponsible, born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Her grandfather finally made her work for a living on the sales floor and she progresses through the department store, under the tutelage of Mr Gordon who has been brought in to save the failing dept store. Meanwhile, her rocker, ex-boyfriend, Dominic is trying to win her back, whilst simultaneously sleeping with anything that moves. Dominic really annoyed me at the beginning and I wanted to slap him, but later there are some unexpected developments which made me warm to him more, although he didn't entirely win me over. The love/hate relationship between Rhys and Natalie makes for entertaining reading and the sinister nature of her situation with a friend's husband is utterly compelling. I had to keep reading to find out if the git would get his comeuppance.

I particularly loved that there was so much action in the novel and that all the sub-plots were seamlessly intertwined. Even the peripheral characters had lengthy sections dedicated to them and I felt the novel was all the richer for it.

Refreshing debut novel. I've already read the next in the Dating Mr Darcy Series and loved it too. I can't wait for the release of the third in the series at the beginning of March.

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### **Amy says**

I'm all for happy endings. Really. I love them. I am a hopeless romantic who believes that fairy tales come true.

Make of that what you will.

But when a happy ending seems so utterly and transparently manufactured, when it comes so easily that it wrecks the story, I lose that love.

Such is the case with this book.

Well, one of the cases. The other one is that Prada & Prejudice can't quite decide what book it is. Cheesy romance novel? Homage to Jane Austen? Rip off of Bridget Jones? Money grab?

The plot, such as it is, is simple: Natalie Dashwood (see: Sense & Sensibility), a rich, spoiled heiress (see:

Emma) to a department store scion, is faced with the unfortunate fact that her family's store is leaking money like a BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Her grandfather brings in the cold, supercilious, enigmatic Rhys Gordon (see: *Pride & Prejudice*) to fix things. One of the things that must be fixed is Natalie herself; her spending habits are ridiculously silly and need rehabilitating.

Quicker than you can say "Netherfield Ball," the two develop an interest in each other that extends beyond spreadsheets. We can see why she's attracted to him, but Natalie is drawn as so flighty and self-involved that we cannot figure out why he's attracted to her. He sort of explains it in one scene - she's some kind of light blah blah blah - but it truly makes no sense.

In addition to their stories, there are a couple of subplots, one involving Rhys' father. That one signs out with a thud. It's sort of mysterious past - mysterious past - mysterious past - BOOM, over. We don't even know why what happened happened. Katie Oliver completely misjudges this one, and it is to the detriment of the novel. (I blame her editor: surely someone saw how problematic this story line is.)

Another subplot involves the family of one of the senior managers of the store. Again, why? Why are these people cluttering up the tale? Is it to have the Wickham-esque story in there somewhere? At least George Wickham was entertaining. There is no entertainment in this story line at all. Much like Rhys' father, we're left scratching our heads, wondering why this is in there.

The third subplot, centered around the husband of one of Natalie's friends, is equally as ridiculous. For one thing, it requires such a leap of faith to play along with what's at play here, and we take it, just because we need to trust the writer. But it is so tidily resolved that we feel cheated.

The only worthy story, then, is the central one, between Natalie and Rhys. Where this goes wrong is in its attempt to mirror *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth Bennet's character flaw is that she thinks she is always right - that her insight into other characters has no defects. As she discovers, time and again, how wrong she is, she has engendered enough sympathy in us that we want to pull her to us and comfort her. Natalie Dashwood, on the other hand, is so flighty and dingy that I kept hoping Rhys would tell her to stuff it.

As for Rhys, he is the most interesting character in the novel, which says a lot because he is woefully underwritten. The thing with his father? Please explain. And his brother? And his attraction to Natalie?

By about the 2/3 mark of this book, I started skimming. I had lost all interest in it, save for how Katie Oliver would wrap up her story. It wasn't worth it.

There could be a good book here. That's the bothersome part. With a stronger editor, this could be something better than it is.

Thanks to NetGalley for the preview.  
Published on cupcake's book cupboard  
@VivaAmaRisata

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**Lisette Brodey says**

I just loved this book from start to finish. As the story begins, department store heiress/socialite and shopaholic Natalie Dashwood waits on a very demanding (and good-looking) customer — who is much more than he appears to be. I won't re-hash the synopsis, but rather, will say a few words about why I enjoyed *Prada and Prejudice* so much.

The book has wonderful humor and multiple story arcs that feature the various characters who run the very old, dignified, staid (and failing) Dashwood and James department store, in desperate need of a makeover on every level. Mirroring real life, all of the stories in this delightful novel merge today into one bigger story with lots of twists and turns..

The characters are so much fun (and a bit evil), and the issues they deal with ring true to me, which only served to pull me into the book and made me care about them.

The term "page-turner" may be a bit of a cliché, but honestly, I couldn't stop reading. I read the book in two days, reading way more in one sitting than I ever intended.

A super read and I really look forward to reading more in this series.

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## **Karen Mace says**

This was book #15 in my #20booksofsummer paperback challenge pile!

I was really looking forward to this one as the blurb is quite promising - Natalie Dashwood seemingly has it all, especially a shopping spree habit which is handy when your family run a top London Department store that allows her shopping excesses to carry on. But when that store hits financial trouble then so does Natalie as she's never seemingly heard the word 'NO' before!

And this is where my problems began, as Natalie was just too unlikable to care about! She always got her own way despite the bratty way she acted and you just wanted her to see the error of her ways but, even when the financial expert Rhys Gordon is brought in to get the store back on an even keel, she seems unable to grasp the severity of the financial problems and so she carries on being a brat and everyone seems to love her for it!

There are also a number of other little sub plots which really distracted from the main storyline, and felt unnecessary so added nothing at all to the story which was disappointing.

There were a few enjoyable moments which were a glimpse into what the book could have been if it had just scaled things down a bit - and found a way to make Natalie a little nicer!!

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## **Shruti says**

Read it on an overnight flight. Badly written and trite.

I am struck anew by why I don't like the shopaholic books. "Girl likes shopping. Doesn't have a job. Meets dreamy SERIOUS man who falls in love with her flightiness. Shenanigans ensue. Everything gets tied up into a little bow."

Et voila.

Just stop it already with this kind of chick-lit that assumes women only like shopping and men who don't like them to shop.

Natalie Dashwood (no relation to Marianne and Eleanor) is a one dimensional paper caricature of a woman. Rhys Gordon was bought in the archetype store under the category "brooding hero type" (ref: Darcy, Heathcliff, All the Sofia Kinsella heroes). Dominic made me laugh but he was overdrawn. The side characters were side characters and way too many of them.

Katie also was running too many subplots in the book (the main story of a relaunch coupled with the romance, Dominic-keeley-Gemma, the James' story, the blackmail plot, divorces) and kept changing focus 3-4 times a chapter with no warning whatsoever.

And the writing... The amount of time "Natalie fled" or Katie lost track of timelines (the wedding that was next Friday but moved to two Friday's hence)

There are some glimpses of what this book might have been. If only a ruthless editor had carved through it with a light sabre. But for now... Terrible, trite, putrid prose.

A pass.

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## **Katherine says**

This book was easy breezy. A light chick flick slightly funny at times.

Natalie, the main character is a young girl in London who grew up very privileged but is not a snob which is surprising given that shes London Posh. Her family business is going bankrupt and her grandfather has hired a new young, attractive young shark to fix things with whom Natalie must work with.

Surprisingly NOT they have a fling that turns into a thing and everyone gets a happy ending.

Not the best review written ever but then again not the best book ever written.



It was cute and can make a great travel buddy if you just want to read something simple and sweet.

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### **Elaine says**

This is a light hearted chick lit which is definitely fun to read. Natalie Dashwood, "it" girl and heiress of the Dashwood and James department store chain, loves to Shop with a capital S. Her life is going to change however when it becomes apparent that the family business is in trouble and has to bring in Rhys Gordon to try and change its fortunes. For the first time in her life she has to work and, even more devastating, has to curb her spending. What follows is a really good read, one that you know what the ending will be, but it really is fun getting to that ending. It is a story of glamour, paparazzi, designer clothes, with plenty of drama and romance as well as bitching, backstabbing and danger. The story is very well paced and never boring. I didn't feel the need to skim through anything, just devoured the words on every single page.

Even though Natalie is pampered and spoilt, especially at the start of the story, there is something irresistible about her. I just couldn't help liking her and really hope that the author plans to bring her back in the future. A highly recommended read. Many thanks to the publisher for sending me an ARC in return for an honest review.

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### **Robyn Koshel says**

Prada and Prejudice is loosely based on Sense and sensibility. There are familiar themes and even some familiar character and names, but the rest is all Katie Oliver's wonderful imagination.

The book starts off with Natalie, who is heir to a failing department store and London socialite. Spending more money than she can ever hope to make, her grandfather puts her to work on the sales counter.

After being dumped by her train wreck of a rock star boyfriend, she meets Rhys Gordon. I'd say more like ran into Rhys. Rhys was called in to save the store and as soon as he met Natalie, it was handbags at dawn.

It is love/hate relationship between Rhys and Natalie, with a sexual tensions you can not miss. Rhys has this stoic Scottish thing, that is totally irresistible. He manages to tell Natalie off a few times but in such a charming way, you could almost see a glint in his eye.

It is a glitzy world of "WAGs and Eurotrash" that is so recognizable as real life but so detached from our own life, that it makes the book pure escapism.

Katie Oliver adds so much humour that I found myself laughing out loud . The book really is a light-hearted romp. It is filled with designer labels, stropky fashion designers and iconic London locations - It made me feel as if I was actually there.

Natalie's grandfather reminded me of Mr. Grace from "Are you being served?" and whenever I pictured the declining Department store, I always thought of Grace Brothers.

With financial whiz kid Rhys Gordon on the case, and with Natalie's help they get things off the ground. Things escalate between them and it gets very steamy.

Prada and Prejudice isn't just a book, it is an adventure. There is intrigue, blackmail, buried secrets, and back stabbing. There are quite a few bombshells along the way and you will be kept in the action right to the very end. You don't have to be a fan of Austen's to appreciate this fresh, funny and exhilarating romance

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### **Hannah says**

A lot of people called Plum Sykes 'Bergdorf Blondes' shallow, but this made that look like the Marina Trench compared that BB (which was a lot more enjoyable too). You go into the book thinking the plot was simple enough - which is what I wanted - but instead there was about six or seven different POV all clashing against each other, taking away from the central storyline - Natalie and Rhys' romance.

The only thing that kept me going was the sexual tension between those two, but even in the end I just wanted it to be over.

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### **Rebecca Raisin says**

This is one of those books that has you totally riveted from the get-go. The main character Natalie is hilarious and even though she came from 'old money' originally I still found myself relating to her antics, and her social life. (Well when I had a social life pre-kids!) There are a number of different story lines, and Katie Oliver weaves them seamlessly. I found myself eager to keep reading to find out how they all connected, and because they were really well rounded characters, believable and utterly life-like. Dom, the rock star, was so funny, and added a real sense of that 'A' list life to the book. And let's not forget Rhys Gordon, that guy is HOT plain and simple. There were so many twists and turns in this book that kept me up way later than I should have been! I'm really looking forward to the second book in this series. And think anyone who loves rom com or chick lit will love it too.

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### **Dawn says**

Prada and Prejudice. What a fab title and what a beautiful cover! I had an ARC of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review, which I'm more than happy to give.

The story revolves around Natalie Dashwood, heiress to Dashwood and James a beautiful but failing department store, in my eye it was very much like Macy's in New York! I do like to visualise a setting. My first impression of Natalie was - spoilt brat!! She has never had to work and has managed to successfully wrap her grand-father around her finger. Despite a generous allowance from him she still manages to sweet talk him into letting her have the latest clothes and bags from the store on his account - all of which very much taken for granted, she's not a bit grateful and he's not learnt how to say no.

I just cringed at the way she treated Rhys Gordon. Whilst she was working in the store in the run up to Christmas he came in to shop. He was brought in to try and turn the company around and the staff hadn't met him at that point. I guessed he was some sort of mystery shopper - no real customer would have put up with the abuse!

The book rattles along at a fair old pace with Rhys and Natalie coming head to head on many occasions. Both are strong willed and it was interesting to watch the fireworks. Natalie had the ability to light the blue touch paper and then leave. Often jumping in with both feet only to have to come back and apologise. It was a joy to watch her find herself, being forced to work gave her purpose and her character evolved and strengthened before my eyes.

This was an enjoyable, easy read, ideal for curling up with a coffee and a bar of chocolate on a rainy weekend - which I did! It had a good mix of characters, some to love, some to pity and some to hate! I went through more emotions than usual when reading this book. I laughed out loud, cursed and prayed for a particular outcome. I wasn't expecting to feel sadness and fear though - but I did. The story isn't all predictable like some chick lit and yes you get a happy ending or two - but not for everyone involved in the many plots!

Katie Oliver is clearly an author to look out for, I'd highly recommend this book to all chick lit lovers out there and I'll be chomping at the bit until I get to read her next novel 'Love and Liability'.

A big thank you Katie for the shoes - but you had my heart in my mouth and shouting out loud "How could you let her do that with Louboutins?!"

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## **Suze Lavender says**

Nathalie Dashwood doesn't really work. She's the future heiress of a large department store and she has a company credit card, so she can buy what she likes. She loves to shop and has a fabulous sense of style. Dashwood & James aren't doing as well as she thinks they are doing and her spending has to stop. When her boyfriend dumps her by getting engaged to someone else at a party in front of everyone they know Nathalie has to start thinking about the future. Rhys Gordon has been hired to save the company and Nathalie is forced to work with him. He's arrogant and isn't afraid to hinder her with his measurements, but he's also kind and very good looking. Will they be able to make things work on both the personal and the business front?

Nathalie has a flaw, she loves to shop. She also knows fashion and she can help to give the company a new impulse. There are three men who want her attention and that can be pretty exhausting. She loves her family and wants to protect them, but how far is she able to go to do that? Rhys is dependable and headstrong and he's determined to make something of his new project. The question is if he's taken the job because of ulterior motives. I liked that this book had a bit of intrigue in it as well. The plot is unexpected and has a great twist. I loved every page of this book. It was wonderful to read about style, parties, business moves and fabulous romance. I can't wait to read the second book in the series. Katie Oliver has made the department store come to life very well and I loved the description of the clothes. It badly made me want to shop at Dashwood & James. *Prada and Prejudice* is a perfect holiday read and I liked it very much.

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## **Namratha says**

I really need to stop getting terribly excited every time I see a *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation at the bookstore. Because being terribly excited means I feel the terrible need to bring the book home and that eventually leads to getting terribly disappointed when the modern-day Lizzie and Darcy duo do not live up to my expectations.

**Prada and Prejudice** falls under this category. Except for the fact that the hero is a tough-talking, bossy

good looking this book bears no resemblance to the classic.

In fact, it is a rather formulaic chicklit offering (girl finds her life going downhill, man in bespoke suits comes riding in with flourish, misunderstandings ensue, the “oh-she-is-so-spoilt: - “oh-he-so-bossy” – “ yes, we are attracted to each other” drama follows, parallel characters deal with their messy lives, more misunderstandings crop up, a few kisses and a few boinks pepper the pages, mild chaos reigns and finally girl’s life turns upside down with sparklers and memorable morning sex).

Pfft.

I am not dissing this book. It’s light, frothy and frivolous. I just wish I hadn’t fallen for that misleading title and expected the halls of faux Pemberley to come alive with wit, vim and true Lizzie Bennet sass. That did not happen. And so, I am a tad miffed.

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