

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Brenda is the author of six novels, including *THE GRACE KELLY DRESS*, which was published by Harper Collins/ Graydon House in March 2020. Her work has also appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Sunday Times (UK)*, *Salon*, *Redbook*, *USA Today*, *Bustle*, *The Forward*, *the New York Post*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Hello Giggles*, *Writer's Digest Magazine*, *WritersDigest.com*, and *xojane*. She is the former Books Correspondent for *PopSugar*.

Brenda attended Cornell University and Hofstra Law School, where she was a member of the Law Review. Upon graduation from Hofstra, worked for the law firm Kaye Scholer, LLP, and did a federal clerkship with the Honorable Marilyn Dolan Go, United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

- Author's website

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *The Grace Kelly Dress* is about an heirloom wedding gown that's been passed down through the three generations of a family. Do you have any heirlooms in your family? How important are these items? How did they become heirlooms?
2. What does the dress mean to each woman in the novel? What impact does it have on their lives, and how does it shape their expectations for love, marriage, and family?
3. How does the dress reflect the times in which each woman is living? Discuss the role fashion can play in forming (or performing) identity and in pushing societal boundaries.
4. Which woman's version of the dress was your favorite? Why? How did you feel about the alterations each generation made? Do you think the women should have made changes or kept the original version?
5. Family roles define many of the women in this book: Rose is an orphan, Joanie is an only child following her sister's death, and Rocky struggles with her relationships with her sister and mother. How can familial expectations define a person? Can you ever step outside of these roles?

6. Discuss how each woman in the story is touched by loss. How does the death of a loved one affect our daily lives? How do you keep those you've lost in your life and honor their memory?
7. In chapter twenty-four, Diana tells Rose that her friends are like family to her. Discuss what this phrase means and how it applies to your own life.
8. Do you think Birdie was right in keeping the truth about Michele's death from Joanie? Have you ever had a family secret you withheld from loved ones? How important is it to shield our children from life's more difficult moments?
9. Why do you think Grace Kelly – and her wedding dress – have inspired so many? How does her influence live on today, half a century after her wedding and decades after her untimely death?
10. Discuss the importance of tradition. How can family tradition both bond people together and cause tensions and misunderstandings?

- Bookclubbish.com

BOOK REVIEW

Booklist

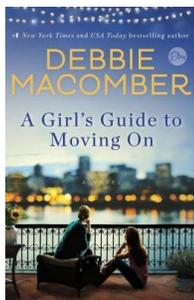
Three generations of women wear a wedding dress and make it their own, mirroring their own romantic struggles and triumphs, in this sweet family drama. Seamstress Rose is a struggling orphan in 1958 Paris. She lands a job in Madame Michel's atelier and her sewing skills soon earn her Madame's admiration. Unexpected circumstances force Rose to take a greater role in the atelier and alter her life's course. Joanie, still hurting after the sudden death of her older sister, is beyond excited to wear the dress for her upcoming wedding to college beau Matthew—as long as she doesn't think too hard about why she is more excited to wear the dress than she is to marry Matthew. Joanie's daughter, Rachel, is as tough as her nickname Rocky implies. Rocky is a tattooed tech CEO and is not excited to continue the tradition of the dress. Alternating between the timelines of the three women, Janowitz gives each of them a unique voice and weaves a delightful tale of mothers and daughters and the delicate balance of keeping tradition while still forging your own path. -- Lynnanne Pearson (Reviewed 1/1/2020) (Booklist, vol 116, number 9, p47).

Kirkus Reviews

A wedding dress designed in 1958 Paris is passed along the generations in this three-part story about the women who wore it to walk down the aisle. This is the tale of one wedding dress. One-third of the story follows its design and construction by Rose, a hardworking seamstress and orphan who creates the dress for Diana Laurent when Madame Michel—the head of the atelier where Rose works—suddenly dies without naming a protégé to take over the business. The daughter and granddaughter of the original woman who wore the dress adapt it in two subsequent generations to make it their own. College-student Joan inherits the dress from her mother, and one-third of the book details her ill-advised engagement in 1982 to a man she doesn't particularly care for even though she longs for a grand wedding and the inclusion of so-called "Princess Diana sleeves" on the dress. The remaining third of the book details successful video game app developer Rocky's wedding planning in 2020 as she prepares to marry her love, Drew, a venture capitalist, and her inheritance of the dress, which she does not want to wear.

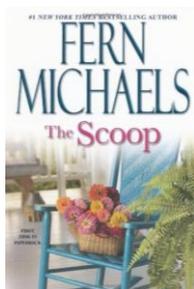
Author Janowitz (*The Dinner Party*, 2016) has created a frothy story where unlimited money and love flow freely. The tale touches ever so lightly on weighty issues—drug use and overdoses, death, infidelity, a quest to find a birth mother, and gay rights. Joan's story has the most depth, but it hangs together uneasily with Rose's and Rocky's as a result, as it is a much earthier exploration of self, autonomy, and maturity than is offered by the other two stories. A story for fans of happily-ever-after, where love and acceptance resolve every problem and money is no object. (Kirkus Reviews, January 15, 2020).

READALIKES



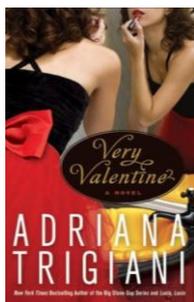
***A Girl's Guide to Moving On* by Debbie Macomber**

A mother and her daughter-in-law bravely leave their troubled marriages and face the challenge of starting over. Leaning on each other, Nichole and Leanne discover that their inner strength and capacity for love are greater than they ever imagined.



***The Scoop* by Fern Michaels**

In this first book of a new series, Michaels introduces *The Godmothers*, four unforgettable women who are about to get a whole new lease on life.



***Very Valentine* by Adriana Trigiani**

Valentine Roncalli struggles to save her decades-old family business, finding love and the life she wants along the way.