



Searching for Grace Kelly

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“It's a gem of a story.”—Laura Moriarty, author of *The Chaperone*

For a small-town girl with big-city dreams, there is no address more glamorous than New York's Barbizon Hotel. Laura, a patrician beauty from Smith, arrives to work at *Mademoiselle* for the summer. Her hopelessly romantic roommate, Dolly, comes from a working-class upstate town to attend secretarial school. Vivian, a brash British bombshell with a disregard for the hotel's rules, rounds out the trio of friends. Together, the girls embark on a journey of discovery that will take them from the penthouse apartments of Park Avenue to the Beat scene of Greenwich Village to Atlantic City's Steel Pier — and into the arms of very different men who will alter their lives forever.

Searching for Grace Kelly Details

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From Reader Review Searching for Grace Kelly for online ebook

Darliece says

My main thought was "why did an author who is not good at writing from a woman's perspective write from the perspective of three different women?".

It seems like such a cliché that men can't write women and I don't want to heap on that but, yeah, this guy couldn't write women. What actually happened seemed fairly reasonable and like stuff that could actually happen and I appreciated that but the voices were really unclear.

I liked it mostly (3 out of 5 stars) but I probably wouldn't recommend it. It seems like it's gotten a lot of hype and I'm not really sure why. I think it might be because people thought it was actually about Grace Kelly and then it wasn't but by then you were into it. It was an easy read but not necessarily a quick read, it wasn't a book where I couldn't wait to find out what happens next.

What was with all the Rebecca references? There were like 6 and the only other classical literature references were 1 to Jane Eyre and like maybe a Shakespeare reference or two. Is Rebecca that universal of a reference? I've read Rebecca but if I hadn't I would feel like I was missing something. I guess the whole point of references is they are short hand so you don't have to explain things and it would've been redundant to explain the references but why make so many references to Rebecca. The first time I was like "hey, I get that reference!" but by the end I was like "why is he talking about Rebecca so much?" Seriously, is this some sort of Rebecca analogy I'm not getting? Is Rebecca a much more popular book than I thought? I swear I'm the only person I know who's read it.

In conclusion, it was okay.

JoAnne Pulcino says

SEARCHING FOR GRACE KELLY

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NEW YORK CITY, THE BARBIZON HOTEL FOR WOMEN, PARK AVENUE, GREENWICH VILLAGE AND THE ATLANTIC CITY STEEL PIER in the 50's. What more could you ask for in a vintage look at New York and the avalanche of young women who flock to the city for love, life and adventure? Mr. Callahan did a wonderful job of capturing the excitement and glamour of a golden age and wrote with sensitivity and understanding in his treatment of the women and their voices.

Three vastly different young women arrive to stay in the Barbizon Hotel and despite their differences become fast friends. Laura an elegant beauty who left college has come to work at Mademoiselle for the summer, Dolly is attending secretarial school, and Vivian the brash British bombshell with no regard for rules all spend a summer of discovery. The men in their lives and their escapades make for a nostalgic read but there are consequences to be paid.

A lovely look at the past that includes the fashions, the manners, the innocence of the times and the enchantment of youth.

Nikki says

I adored this book! I'd recently read *The Bookstore* by Deborah Meyler and found myself thoroughly disappointed and irritated. *Searching for Grace Kelly* by Michael Callahan was everything I wanted *The Bookstore* to be but wasn't. It was simply divine.

Both books take place in New York City with a female lead and a musty, old bookshop as an ancillary character, but that's where the similarities end. Laura Dixon, the heroine in *Searching for Grace Kelly* is intelligent AND likeable. Even though she's a Connecticut debutante, there's not an ounce of pretentiousness to be found in her; she's stylish, poised, and caring. The love triangle between Laura, Box Barons (New York City's most eligible bachelor), and Pete (a bartender in Greenwich Village) is realistic and believable as is Laura's internal struggle. She may be naïve, but an idiot she is not.

Laura does not grace the pages of this book alone; her discovery of New York City is rounded out by the joining of her roommate, Dolly, and a vivacious redhead, Vivian, another inhabitant of the Barbizon Hotel for Women. *Searching for Grace Kelly* also takes place in 1955, and Michael Callahan did such an excellent job recreating this time period that reading it feels like watching a movie from the fifties. At times, it is a bit reminiscent of the movie *How to Marry a Millionaire* with three young women searching for love in New York City, but unlike *How to Marry a Millionaire*, not everyone in *Searching for Grace Kelly* winds up with a happy ending.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The storyline was engaging and believable, and I absolutely loved the glimpse into another, more glamorous era.

Tara Chevrestt says

I must give this author major points for a masterpiece of a prologue. In the first 3 or 4 pages we meet a girl, a girl who has been living in the famous Barbizon Hotel--an exclusively female hotel for the up-and-coming lady in NYC, at least until it began admitting men in the eighties. She feels her life is ruined and she has only one option left: suicide.

Then the story starts. We meet three girls who live at the Barbizon, all with vastly different personalities but all who want the same thing: to be loved. Yet...which girl was about to jump off the roof in the beginning? What a way to keep us reading! Though I admit I enjoyed the story enough to read regardless. I just had to mention that because I thought it was brilliant.

Back to the girls... Laura wants to be a writer, yet rarely picks up a pen. She's constantly being sidetracked by her social life, with two beaux. She also needs to learn to live her life her way, not her mother's. I felt like the moral of her story was, "Don't postpone your dreams and goals, for anything."

Dolores...we have all been a Dolores at some point, desperate for love and afraid of being alone. She'll do just about anything for approval. I guess the moral here is to not be so insecure with being alone that you end up making yourself more miserable. Don't force things, especially relationships. Her story had me on the

edge of my seat as I tried to figure out what was going on with the man in her life.

Vivian. Ok. This is where the story disappointed me. This line was way too predictable. I saw it all coming from a quarter in. I don't like figuring everything out that fast. I really don't. But there was a moral here too: don't alienate yourself.

Full review and final thoughts: <http://wwwbookbabe.blogspot.com/2014/...>

Elizabetha says

This book is one of my mistakes of buying books based on title only...

Nothing about Grace Kelly, mentioned I think 3 times only. But a solid story about 3 girls in 1955.

Katie Scarlett O Hara says

Bože ova knjiga je toliki plitkoumna i prepuna klišea, da mi do?e da vrišt看. Bukvalno san predvidela svaki rasplet. Naravno da je jedna nesputana i seksualno oslobo?ena morala biti kažnjena na kraju. Stil pisanja je kao nešto poteklo iz hemijske olovke srednjoškcolca, deluje mi kao da autor ne da ne poznaje žene, nego kao da nijednu nije nikada ni upoznao. Ili su mu sa namerom likovi tako površni i glupi.

Ok, kapiram da je naslov metafora, samo mi nije jasno u vezi ?ega. Ne znam, možda sam glupa, pa ne mogu da životnu pri?u Grejs Keli povežem sa ove tri devojke i njihovim životnim putem. Ali dobro stavi?emo Grejs Keli, jer ?e to sigurno prodati knjigu. Jedna je debela i nesre?na, jer nema momka, druga orbitira oko dva muškarca, od kojih su obojica debili, a ni ona nije daleko, ali eto voli knjige, pa joj opraštamo, a tre?a je promiskuitetna, pa ?e stoga u pakao. Ovo je poslednji put da uzimam knjigu na osnovu preporuke iz nekog ženskog ?asopisa. Stil pisanja je takav da ?ete po?eti da cenite Džeki Kolins. Bruklin je u pogledu oslikavanja atmosfere tog vremena umetnost za ovu knjigu.

Ne mogu više ni da pišem o njoj, mora?u da se saberem za recenziju, jer sam se pošteno iznervirala na kraju, naro?ito zbog jedne scene.

Holly says

A very good depiction of three completely different women who become unlikely friends, making their way through 1950's New York. Very enjoyable. Liked the women & their stories, hearing about the famous Barbizon Hotel, and how the 1950's were changing & molding women.

Ellie M says

In 1950s NYC three women meet in a hotel exclusively for ladies. These ladies are in NYC for various employment in publishing agencies/houses, secretarial schools etc.

The three are there for employment but to also escape their strict upbringings, for new experiences and to

find love. Each do meet someone they feel they love but they are to experience self-discovery, and their friendship would be pushed to the limits.

This was an enjoyable enough tale, and whilst there were love stories, there weren't any particularly happy endings.

Scarlett says

Ovo je jedna od najboljih prevara u naslovu na koje sam do sada naišla. Nisu ?ak ni prevodioci krivi, original se zove "Searching For Grace Kelly", brzo ?itanje zadnje korice tako?e vam ne kaže istinu i onda prevari ljubitelje fiktivnih biografija koje ne mrzi da provedu nekoliko sati u magacinu na radnom mestu i da završe ovu knjižicu. Naime, ovo nema nikakve veze sa Grejs Keli, ni izdaleka. U fokusu su tri devojke koje poha?aju školu za dame koja je nekada, na kratko vreme, ugostila mladu Grejs i koja je od tada svima njima idejni uzor.

Sve tri imaju svoju pri?u, svaka nezanimljivija od druge: lepotica u koju se zaljubljuje bogati vlasnik robne ku?e, skromna i ružna koja trpi sve što treba da bi se udala i tre?a koja je bahata Engleskinja koju mama nije volela, a utehu traži na žurkama, ma šta to zna?ilo pedesetih godina 20. veka.

One ?e se sprijateljiti, postoji ?ak i tragi?na smrt koja je sve samo ne tragi?na, odahnula sam kad smo se ratosiljali jednog od bezbroj iritantnih ženskih likova.

Stvarno me ništa nije dirnulo, iako mi se ?ini da pisac sve vreme igra na tu kartu - radost novog prijateljstva, nesnalženje dobrih devojaka u velikom svetu i porazi nakon loših izbora.

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot....>

Many know I'm a self-proclaimed cover slut, so I want to be perfectly clear when I say that Greta Sibley's design had nothing to do with my decision to read and review Michael Callahan's *Searching for Grace Kelly*. The truth is I've many delightful character flaws and one is a tendency to let my imagination run wild which likely explains my bypassing the description under the assumption the title's focus was the famed Princess of Monaco. If memory serves, I was somewhere in chapter three when I broke to read the premise and erupted into giggles over own incompetence. Looking back, I'm almost sorry no one was 'round to witness that realization because if it was even half as amusing as I imagine we'd all have a tale to tell.

I suppose you're wondering where I'm going with this and I promise, I've a point. You see, that moment gave me reason to pause and reflect on exactly what I'd gotten myself into. Callahan's themes lean toward women's fiction, a genre I've a historically rocky relationship with and I'm not particularly keen on the 1950s. Had I bothered to do my homework, I'd have skipped the title without a second thought, but as it stood I'd managed a good thirty pages and am too damned stubborn to give up without a fight. So, skeptical of my prospects and suspicious of the material, I continued dubiously down the rabbit hole. And what did I discover at the bottom? A captivating novel that defied both odds and expectation.

Atmospherically, *Searching for Grace Kelly* presents a fascinating portrait of New York. The glitz and glamour of Park Avenue plays beautifully against the bohemian counterculture of Greenwich Village and the seedier elements of the city's back alleys, but none of this holds a candle to the sisterhood Callahan created

behind the walls of the Barbizon Hotel. Laura, Dolly and Vivian forge a unique bond despite their differences and I found the ambiance of their shared living situation and the experiences it fostered quite entertaining.

The girls themselves are very well-drawn and universally engaging, but it was the supporting cast that captured my attention. Metzger, Nicky, Jack, Pete, Box, Betsy and Connie enjoy minor roles, but they are essential to the telling and I loved how Callahan gave each a significant moment with one or another of his protagonists. I also appreciate that not all of these characters are admirable and applaud Callahan's decision to include such a colorful group of individuals within his narrative.

Wicked, witty and overflowing with intrigue, *Searching for Grace Kelly* was an absolute pleasure. A surprising fiction that caught me off guard in the best possible way.

Celeste_pewter says

Searching for Grace Kelly had one of those covers and synopsis that I just couldn't resist. Young women bucking 1950s convention by traveling to New York to pursue their dreams? SIGN ME UP.

However, after reading the book, I quickly realized that *Searching for Grace Kelly* is far more than just a coming-of-age story about three very different women. It's also a thoughtful study on societal norms, and the challenges of bucking (or accepting) tradition, when dictated by the rest of society-at-large.

Michael Callahn introduces us to Laura, Dolly and Vivian, three very different girls who are drawn to the Barbizon Hotel to pursue their dreams. Laura's an East Coast blueblood determined to prove herself as a writer; Dolly is from a hardscrabble neighborhood trying to work and carry out the all-important goal of securing a husband, and British Vivian just wants to be a singer.

While the girls come to New York with big ideas and even bigger dreams, they quickly learn that not everything will go as easily as they would hope. They're limited up by societal convention and outside competition, and the realization that not everyone has their best interests at heart.

However, even as Callahan shows the girls sometimes become the unwitting pawns of individuals with complicated intentions, he's also careful to show the girls beginning to develop the savvy and intuition to deal with some of these manipulations in their lives. It's not an easy lesson to learn; it often times involves the girls becoming disenchanted with aspects of their lives that they once held dear. But they also come out stronger, as a result.

As the girls try to figure out their paths, the secondary characters also play a significant role in their development. Metzger, Nicky, Jack, Pete, Box, Betsy and Connie all have collective lessons and wisdom to share with the characters. Both their past triumphs and failures all contribute in helping the girls learn from their mistakes, while also reassuring the three girls that they have, and will never be, alone in their journeys.

Ultimately, while none of the girls have their life plans come to fruition in exactly the way that they want - with one story ending particularly tragically - it's their individual and collective journeys that stay with each other, and with the reader.

Final verdict:

It's been about a week since I've finished reading *Searching for Grace Kelly*, and I still find myself thinking about the book.

Michael Callahan has created a memorable cast of characters, whose journeys to figure out who they are and who they want to be, are absolutely relatable and understandable to any reader of today. While Laura, Dolly and Vivian may not end up getting all that they desire, it's their pursuit of the seemingly impossible in the face of significant odds, which makes this a memorable, unforgettable read.

I highly recommend this book for fans of historical fiction, especially for readers who are looking for protagonists whose struggles, challenges and lives are as relatable to the challenges that many of us continue to face today. There's a universality to Callahan's work, which will help ensure that it will stand the test of time.

Susan says

This debut novel is set around New York's Barbizon Hotel for women in 1955. The story features three young women, who meet up and become friends. First, there is debutante Laura Dixon, spending a month in the city as a "guest editor" for "Mademoiselle" magazine and longing to be a writer. Laura's room-mate is Dolores Hickey, known as Dolly, who is studying at Katie Gibbs Secretarial School and working a summer job as a typist in a small publishing house. Last, there is British redhead, Vivian Windsor, who works as a cigarette girl and wants to be a singer.

The summer starts as a time of great excitement, adventure and dreams. Vivian seems unimaginably exotic and exciting to the other girls, with her grown up ways and work in nightclubs. Flirting with danger, Vivian becomes attracted to mobster, Nicky Accardi. Meanwhile, the beautiful Laura attracts the attention of the implausibly named department store heir, Box Barnes, and Dolly just longs to have a boyfriend of her own. What begin as great romances, to be discussed, and giggled over, become more serious as time goes on.

This is an interesting novel, with good characters, set in a fascinating era, where young women were just beginning to taste freedom, but society was still very hypocritical – with girls very much labelled, 'good' and 'bad.' As the three young women taste the freedom on New York, they soon discover the grime beneath the glitz. This novel takes us from the Greenwich Village literary scene to New York night life, through romance and reality. A very good debut, from a promising author. Lastly, I was given this book to review from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

Christina (Confessions of a Book Addict) says

Laura Dixon, a debutante and college student from Connecticut, comes to New York City for an summer internship with Mademoiselle magazine for their college issue. The year is 1955 and if you are a female in

the city, you want to stay at the famous Barbizon Hotel for Women which is pretty much like a large sorority house. Plus, the beautiful Grace Kelly stayed there! Laura can't believe her luck when her parents agree to allow her to go to the city and stay at the Barbizon. She meets her roommate, Dolly, who is very different than herself, but charming enough and a friendship ensues. Dolly worries she will end up being one of the "Women" at the Barbizon, the spinsters who are still staying at the hotel and never married. On Laura's first day at Barbizon, she meets Vivian Windsor; she works at the famous Stork Club as a cigarette girl. Vivian is always pressing everyone's boundaries and breaking the rules at the Barbizon, including having male visitors, which is strictly forbidden. While at the Stork Club one night, Laura happens upon New York City's most eligible bachelor, Box Barnes, and after a few coincidental meetings, she finds that he is pursuing her with much determination. All three women experience love and loss in the city; one thing is for sure, New York City always promises an adventure. Michael Callahan's debut, *Searching for Grace Kelly*, is a delightful romp through 1950s America. It was like an episode of *Mad Men* and I loved being lost in the girls' world.

Read the rest of my review here:

<http://www.confessionsofabookaddict.c...>

Laura says

Urgh. Okay. Let's see if I can compile my thoughts here....

So, first off, the plot is pretty solid; Vivian and Dolly's storylines were good, but sparse and I think it would have been a lot better if they had been given more attention. Laura's storyline was *the* most predictable thing EVER and to top it off, it wasn't done well. I'm not saying that the other two storylines were unique, but they were done well (at least in Vivian's case; Dolly's I felt was really rushed and not given the amount of closure it should have been given?). All of the characters associated with Laura were TERRIBLE (Pete is a soul-seeking poet who is secretly an author (yeah; saw that one coming a mile away) and Benjamin "Box" Barnes is a rich jerk who is only interested in her because he can marry her and get his trust fund while carrying on with a model (called that one from the first page) both are predictable, terrible, and GUESS WHAT Laura's the only one who winds up with a happy ending!). Laura is also so obviously supposed to be our "different" girl and the "special snowflake" because she's so smart, and pretty, and she's rebelling against her New England parents. I was over her story about 20 pages into her narrative and I'm SO PISSED that it was her narrative that was given the most attention because Vivian and Dolly are soooooo much more interesting than Laura.

And basically, Laura ruins the ENTIRE book for me. She even ruins Vivian and Dolly's characters for me. Because she makes them seem weak and inferior in comparison with her wonderful "I'm a unique and hurt person and I am Suffering because I am a Writer" persona.

So, Vivian is snarky and sassy and great, but she gets involved with an abusive prick. Again, not necessarily original, but well done. Up until the end when she commits suicide by leaping off the building. Now on the one hand, it makes sense that she'd do this, BUT you know what fucking Laura does while she's up there? SHE GETS MAD AT HER FOR KEEPING THE FACT THAT RICH PLAYBOY JACKASS IS HAVING AN AFFAIR. BITCH, THE WOMAN IS TRYING TO KILL HERSELF AND ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS THAT SHE DOESN'T GIVE YOU INFORMATION TO YOUR LOVE LIFE?! WHAT. THE. ACTUAL. FUCK. And then fucking Dolly is all "oh but you're fine because men mellow with age" (that is not even a paraphrase. that is a direct fucking quote: "men mellow over time" page 259. AN ACTUAL

QUOTE. "IT'S OKAY GUYS--HE'S ABUSIVE NOW BUT HE'LL MELLOW!!!" like, I know that this book is set in 1955 BUT JESUS FUCKING CHRIST).

Dolly is super sweet and romantic (UP UNTIL THE END WHEN SHE'S IDEK BECAUSE APPARENTLY ALIENS TOOK OVER HER BRAIN?!) but she has a bad love life and the one guy who is great turns out to be a priest so he can't be with her. And that's it????? THAT IS LITERALLY THE END OF HER STORYLINE?! Except at the very end when she's become super skinny and "beautiful" because she stopped eating because Vivian killed herself?! WHAT?! I DON'T KNOW!

I just. I so, so badly wanted to like this book a lot more than I did? The writing was good, and it started out so promising and then it picked up kind of towards the last third and then the ending killed it for me. Just, absolutely slaughtered it. Because it was basically saying a) you have to either kill yourself or be stuck with an asshole, b) you have to be skinny to be beautiful, and c) you have to be a special snowflake to be happy.

If Laura was "searching for Grace Kelly" she was looking in entirely the wrong direction.

Dawn says

From the blurb, I really thought I'd like this book. Three girls go to NYC to seek fame, fortune, and love --- sounds kind of like Valley of the Dolls, doesn't it? The description of the setting is pretty good, but IMO the pace was too slow and the characters didn't come to life until nearly the end of the novel. There were several anachronisms that threw me out of the story. "Meet cute" was not a saying in 1955.

A reviewer on Amazon said the author would have done better to write a nonfiction history of the Barbizon. I agree, because the research seemed to be solid.
