

The Dressmaker: A Novel

Elizabeth Birkelund Oberbeck

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In this romantic debut novel, a reserved provincial French tailor falls head over heels in love with a woman who's hired him to create her wedding dress

Claude Reynaud is a bit of a throwback, an old-fashioned dressmaker working in a cluttered studio outside modern-day Paris, quietly designing his famous gowns by hand. Every spring he ushers pretty young society brides into his studio, measures them, and designs their dresses without ever contemplating for himself the sort of romance that will lead these ladies and their grooms to the altar.

But one afternoon a woman arrives who shatters his composure: Valentine de Verlay is charming, beautiful, a lady of society, and, of course, engaged. She comes with no instructions for her wedding dress, just a beautiful figure, a long graceful neck, and total faith in her dressmaker. Claude, forty-six years old, devoted to his work, and long since deserted by his wife, finds himself smitten.

As Valentine's wedding approaches, his commitment to her dress makes it impossible for Claude to keep a safe distance, and everything he's come to rely on in his small, focused life looks ready to collapse. Worse still, as he is welcomed into her circle of friends and family, it appears that the betrothed Valentine may share his feelings.

The Dressmaker is a perfect gem of a novel, an enchanting portrait of another world, and, above all, a sly and irresistible love story.



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