



Once In A Lifetime

Cathy Kelly

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You never have to go very far...

Kenny's Department Store isn't just a place to shop; it's the heart of Ardagh, Ireland. Behind its stately Edwardian facade is an up-to-date store featuring unusual boutique products in an elegant setting. Here lives intersect...and secrets hide. TV reporter Ingrid Fitzgerald has watched her husband, David Kenny, pour his heart and soul into the family store -- the "other woman" in her marriage -- for years. Now, as their children fly the nest, Ingrid discovers something that will shake her world to its foundation.

...to see that you aren't alone.

Charlie Fallon is a dedicated Kenny's employee who adores her husband and son, but her selfish, dominating mother seems determined to ruin everything. Free spirit Star Bluestone, who sells her beautifully crafted tapestries at Kenny's, has her own secrets and wisdom to share. But when unexpected tragedy shocks everyone at Kenny's and threatens its future, the women of Ardagh find that secrets have a way of always coming out -- with repercussions that lead them to rely on one another more than ever before.

Once In A Lifetime Details

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Hazel says

I was expecting to hate this book. My mum gave me a handful of this type of book last time I was home and they've been sitting unloved and unread on my shelf ever since. However, I needed something light after reading 1984!

Cathy Kelly is a pretty well-known Irish author but this is the first of her novels that I've read. This book is an interconnected series of stories about women and the connections and relationships between them.

I found this book to be an enjoyable read. It was exactly the kind of light relief I was looking for. It would be easy to just dismiss this as chick lit but it does have some depth. I do have to admit to finding it difficult to get into. The first few chapters really were a struggle, especially trying to keep up with who all the different characters were. However, by the time the stories had started weaving together, I was invested in the characters. I even found myself getting a bit emotional at times! The majority of the main characters were well written and engaging.

Despite all that, there were some parts I didn't like. Many of the supporting characters were very 2 dimensional and interchangeable. The one thing that bugged me most though was Star and her "magic". It just felt so unnecessary to me and cheapened the story. For such a small group of women, there were a lot of dramatic themes too. I mean there's death, secret children, hidden affairs, child abuse and alcoholism. I think focusing on less of these would have been wiser and more realistic. It's also a touch long.

Based on this book, I'm not sure if I'd pick up another novel from Cathy Kelly. It might be ok for a beach read but I don't think I'd pay full price for one!

Annabel says

Somewhere along the way I stopped reading, which was previously one of my most favourite hobbies. Recently, my Grandma gave me a bunch of her second-hand light reads, this book was one of them. I enjoyed it, I finished it, I'm thankful for it because I'm slowly back in the world of reading. As I said, it's a light read, good as an easy holiday read.

Miriam says

an interesting but somewhat disappointing read. good premise; takes too long to get to the point.

Mariazita says

Mais um livro maravilhoso e doce da autora.

Mais quatro personagens com história sofridas e interligando-se entre si. Vidas com dramas e alegrias, descritos de uma maneira suave pela autora. Os livros de Cathy Kelly transmitem-me serenidade, e este em especial, pois vem carregado com a magia da personagem Star. Por mais difícil e triste que seja os momentos da vida das pessoas que habitam na pequena Ardagh, existe sempre uma lição de vida especial, que nos faz pensar. É um romance realista, do que pode acontecer a qualquer momento a qualquer pessoa, e como conseguir a paz necessária para conseguir ultrapassar obstáculos que na vida podem surgir. Muito bom.

Elke says

Niet mijn ding, komt erg traag op gang en pas op het einde komt er wat leven in de zaak waardoor je dingen gaat snappen. Het laatste deel was goed, de rest een beetje saai.

Jayne Grew says

Rubbish book
What a bore

Tea Jovanovi? says

I adore her, but this one is not among her best ones... :(

Bookish Enchantment (Katherine Quirke) says

There are times when you read a book and it truly speaks to you. This book was one of them. So many parallels on a relationship level that I could relate to on a personal level. Many times it stirred the pain I did not wish to have stirred. Don't get me wrong this is a marvelous story. Full of love and Irish humour. Well worth the read and no it is not depressing in any way.

Chloe says

The town of Ardagh in Ireland loves its local department store, Kenny's, run by David Kenny. But things to do with the people aren't all rosy. David's wife Ingrid, a politics TV Presenter is juggling her family life and work life, but she soon unearths a secret that will shatter her world. Kenny's employee Natalie is starting to question her father about her long-deceased mother, and finds out some shocking revelations that rock her. Charlie Fallon, a make-up guru at Kenny's is in despair at her rocky relationship with her mother, but loves her own husband and son. She's determined to make it right with her mother, but are they both too stubborn? And finally, Star Bluestone who provides tapestries for the store, holds the knowledge to help all these women in their hours of need. Star knows how important it is to these women to find closure... but will they

let her provide it?

Cathy Kelly is a very popular Irish author, and amazingly this is the 11th book she has released. She's been writing since 1997, but since I was only 11 years old then, I've only just really got into her work, my first Kelly novel being her previous release, *Lessons in Heartbreak* (reviewed of course). I wasn't overly impressed but hoped that this one would be more enjoyable for me. When I read the blurb, I wasn't too sure as it sounded like a lot of characters and would therefore require a bit more concentration than I liked to give a book but still I was willing to give it a real go and head into it with an open mind. It was a rather chunky book, so was one that would take me a while, and consequently give me a chance to really get into it.

When I started the book, it really wasn't the modern tale of a department store that I had expected straight away. Instead, we were introduced to white-witch Star, and I really struggled to get into the book at all. If I am honest, I did think about putting it down because usually I don't persevere with it because I have so many others to read, but I decided to give it a chance for some reason. When the book got going a bit more, I found the read sort of flowed better and I very much liked the characters that were being introduced, especially Ingrid and Natalie who were interesting, modern and had great stories to read about. Although she appeared in the book's prologue, we don't see all that much of Star in the book (good for me because I didn't like her) but you can see her importance as the book progresses, which is all due to Kelly's writing talent.

After doing a bit of research on her other novels, it seems Kelly's novels are all about women and their relationships, be it with their husbands, mothers or other family. She's stuck to what she knows here, but perhaps too much because when discussing this book with my mum, she told me it felt too much like something Kelly has written before – fine if it's one of your first Cathy Kelly books like me, but for my mum and nan who are long-time readers, they feel a bit cheated and weren't all that convinced it was a good, fresh story. The story was well written, don't get me wrong on that part, but as with all chick-lit to a degree, it was quite predictable as to how it was going to progress. One strand of storyline kept me guessing because not enough was revealed to guess the answer, but it wasn't enough to really keep my interest in the book at its peak, and at times I felt I was just reading it to get to the end as quickly as possible.

The characterisation in the book was very good – Kelly really gets into the hearts of characters and puts on paper perfectly what you expect them to be feeling. There aren't all that many relationships in the book to build on, mainly as they involve characters that aren't around in the book, but the few that are there are realistic and enjoyable to read. Kelly writes in the third person, making it easy to switch between the amount of characters in the book. As mentioned, my favourites were Ingrid, the strong, business-savvy TV presenter and Natalie who is without a mother. Charlie annoyed me in ways but I did feel sorry for her, and as I said I really didn't like Star, although I can't put my finger on why. You would expect an author of Kelly's history to write well, and yes she does, but the book just didn't grip me like so many young and more vibrant writers do these days.

If I'm honest, I don't think I'll be looking to pick up another Cathy Kelly book in a hurry. My mum has told me to read some of her earlier books because they are far better, and I will when I have the time, but I won't hurry to get her new ones in the future. It is a well written book with good, realistic characters but for me it seemed to drag on and on, without an end in sight. There didn't seem to be an aim to reach and without that, the story sort of tended to amble on and on, often dipping into the past of certain characters to reveal some new storylines but even they weren't enough to renew my interest. For fans of Cathy Kelly, you'll probably still want to read this and may enjoy it, but if you're not a fan, don't rush to read this, there's much better out there.

Joanne Freitas says

Leitura agradável. Gostei mais do que estava à espera. Gosto de livros que me surpreendem pela positiva.

Sarah Sammis says

Successful woman happily married to successful man must re-examine her life after husband's untimely death. With lots and lots of mundane padding.

<http://www.pussreboots.pair.com/blog/...>

Aathira Jim says

Far from being labeled as a chick lit, this is one that will make you think. It also tackles some serious subjects like alcoholism, child abuse, mother-daughter relationships. I loved the snippets of wisdom at the beginning of each chapter and planning to write it down in my journal to remind myself of what really should matter in life. So much love <3

Raquel Bernardes says

São três histórias diferentes mas que acabam por ter algo em comum. Foi a primeira vez que li algo desta autora e que gostei imenso. É um romance leve, aliás bastante leve e que se lê bastante bem, para que não aprecia romances, pode começar com este que vai adorar de certeza absoluta.

<http://aviciadadoslivros.blogspot.pt/...>

Louise King says

By golly this book was hard work. I very nearly gave up on it on more than one occasion, however, by the time I was three quarters of the way through I figured I might as well continue. The book conceptually shows promise however it doesn't quite deliver. The book very unsatisfactorily jumps around a multitude of characters and concurrent story lines in such a way that it is difficult (almost impossible) to develop any kind of attachment, interest or empathy for all of the different characters. This theme continues throughout the book and just when you think there is going to be an interesting twist where all of the stories converge and start to make sense the book ends. As I read the last page I was left thinking 'Oh is that it?'. I have a little baby so my reading time is precious, I therefore almost feel cheated that I spent my time reading such an unsatisfying book. That said, I am glad that I finished it and recognize that there was something about this novel that kept me turning the pages...

Janet says

This has to be one of the most unfortunate titles and cover art I've seen, the picture of a carefree young woman on a swing is misleading, a lesson in "don't judge a book by its cover". It appears to be a romance, or chick-lit, but it's actually a very well written, thoughtful, satisfying work of fiction for women. Yes, there are a few young women in the story, but the majority of the book focuses on middle-aged women, women who are in (or entering) the autumn of their lives and find that it's not the end after all. Each chapter heading has a line or two of advice which I really should write down for my own benefit, and at the ending of the book, it all comes together.
