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The Bell Jar (FF Classics)



Synopsis

I was supposed to be having the time of my life. When Esther Greenwood wins an internship on a New York fashion magazine in 1953, she is elated, believing she will finally realise her dream to become a writer. But in between the cocktail parties and piles of manuscripts, Esther's life begins to slide out of control. She finds herself spiralling into depression and eventually a suicide attempt, as she grapples with difficult relationships and a society which refuses to take women's aspirations seriously. *The Bell Jar*, Sylvia Plath's only novel, was originally published in 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. The novel is partially based on Plath's own life and descent into mental illness, and has become a modern classic. *The Bell Jar* has been celebrated for its darkly funny and razor sharp portrait of 1950s society and has sold millions of copies worldwide.

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Customer Reviews

Like millions of other young women, I'm sure, I came across "The Bell Jar" in college, and I felt an immediate attachment to the book: it uplifted me, angered me, scared me, and made me feel deeply protective, all at the same time. "The Bell Jar" tells the story of Esther Greenwood, an intelligent

college student, as she slowly feels the "bell jar" of detachment and madness overtake her. As Esther goes from a prestigious internship in New York City to a summer at home with her mother in the Boston suburbs, her attachment to reality becomes more and more tenuous, until thoughts of suicide overtake her. It is no secret that the story has at least a partial basis in reality, and that Sylvia Plath is writing from her own experience is perhaps what makes Esther so deeply real. I recently wrote a review of "Bridget Jones' Diary," and although "The Bell Jar" is undoubtedly a better book, there is a certain similarity between the protagonists: like Bridget, Esther is a character who is almost universally relatable. It does not matter if the reader is psychologically healthy or not: Esther awakens what she is feeling in all of us. My emotional response to "The Bell Jar" was on par with my emotional response to certain real-life events. I was uplifted to find a shared experience; angered at Esther's responses--and at the fact that they seemed reasonable to me; scared at the uncertainty I felt about myself and my own psychological state by the end of the book; and deeply protective--of Esther, of Sylvia Plath, and of every other reader who shared my experience. I recognize that specifically speaking of the female experience when reading "The Bell Jar" could be considered rather narrow-minded of me.

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