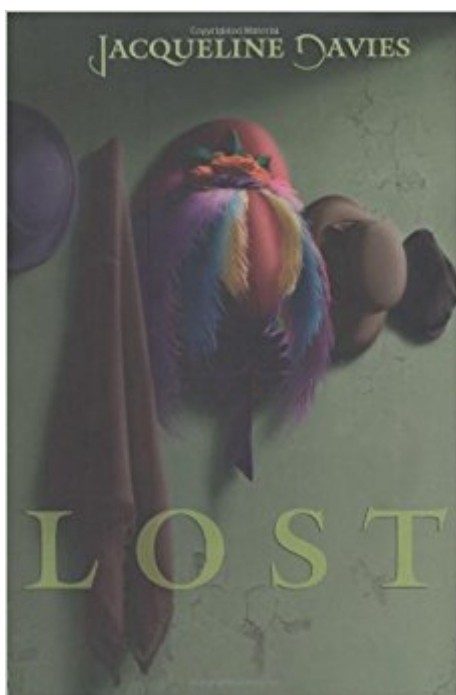


The book was found

Lost



Synopsis

Essie can tell from the moment she lays eyes on Harriet Abbott: this is a woman who has taken a wrong turn in life. Why else would an educated, well-dressed, clearly upper-crust girl end up in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory setting sleeves for six dollars a day? But Harriet isn't the only one who is lost. Essie wanders between the opposing emotions of her love for the young would-be lawyer who lives next door and her hatred for her mother who seems determined to take away every bit of happiness that Essie hopes to find. As the unlikely friendship between Essie and Harriet grows, so does the weight of the question hanging between them: Who is lost? And who will be found? This is a powerful novel about friendship, loss, and the resiliency of the human spirit, set against the backdrop of the teeming crowds and scrappy landscape of the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the early 1900s.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Essie lives a hardscrabble life with her widowed mother and younger siblings on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the early 1900s. The grim specter of poverty always hovers, yet Essie's spirit, her talent for creating beautiful hats, and her bountiful love for her little sister Zelda help to imbue their lives with joy and positive energy. As chapters alternate between earlier and later settings, we follow Essie to work at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. The plot builds and so does a gradual awareness of cracks in Essie's grasp of reality.

She is in denial about an accident that has taken Zelda's life, and she pursues a friendship with the mysterious Harriet Abbott, who shows up to work at the Triangle but does not seem at all like a typical working girl. Davies weaves two historic events—the disappearance of a wealthy heiress escaping family scandal and the catastrophic Triangle Shirtwaist fire of 1911, graphically depicted—into a lively tale of striving, unspeakable loss, and an eventual life-affirming resolution. Grades 7-10. --Anne O'Malley

Jacqueline Davies is the talented author of both novels and picture books. Jacqueline lives in Needham, Massachusetts, with her three children.

From other reviews and the description, I expected this book to be written for an audience of "Tweens" or younger teenagers. I decided to give it a try, though, and was rewarded by a well-written, complex story of relationships, family, love, and trust. The characters are well written and endearing, and Esther's mother is particularly complex. The author's method of slowly revealing Essie's past simultaneous with the present worked well and built up a lot of suspense. The period and setting were well-developed, and the ending has just the right mix of sadness and hope. There is definitely material for older readers here. In fact, the content was such that I wouldn't necessarily recommend it for younger readers. The Triangle Shirtwaist fire is rather graphic and could be frightening, and there is a hint of content of another nature between the main character and a young gentleman living next door (a passionate kiss and Esther's thoughts while in bed).

Historical Fiction is a favorite of mine. I judge books by how well the actual facts, descriptions, plot lines, and characters pull me into them. I was totally immersed in this one. My grandparents immigrated to the U.S. at the turn of the century. I grew up in a mill town, with the stories of mill workers living in cold water flats in those wood framed tenement buildings. I heard of the poverty, extraordinary hardships, fierce sense of community, and gratitude for the opportunity to raise their families in this country of great opportunity. Living and working conditions were appalling yet the people had this consistent sense of pride and stolid work ethic. They endured. In this novel, I could smell the laundry boiling on stoves, the borax used for scrubbing floors, the coal stoves, and horse manure in the streets. I could hear the sounds of children playing in the streets, train whistles, horse carts passing over cobble stone streets, and the noisy operations of looms, spindles and those early industrial sewing machines. I felt the sweltering heat, the airless nights and the extreme emotions of living, loving, grieving, hopelessness, and friendship. It remained true to times of small shops, street

peddlers, unsafe working conditions, sub standard living, and the horrific tragedy at the Triangle shirtwaist factory in 1911. I loved this book....Retired Grammie

I found the reading of this book to be a little disorganized. I did like the story though. It is based a something that happened about 100 years ago. It was written well enough that I could picture in my mind what was being described. It gives a good insight into what life was like around the turn of the century.

Like the movie Titanic, this novel blends a fictional story of a poor young girl living in New York's abject poverty of the early 20th century with the true events of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the disappearance of an heiress. As soon as she turns 16, Essie takes a job at the factory, and befriends a mysterious slightly older girl at the sewing machine next to hers. Essie, who entertains dreams of opening her own hat shop, hates leaving her little sister Zelda at home while she works, but the father passed away years ago and the family--the cold, pragmatic mother, an older brother who's headed for trouble, Essie and charming little Zelda--needs the income. The book moves back and forth from the birth of Zelda and her growth to the current day timeline. By the end of the book, the two timelines converge in an interesting way. The presentation plays with your head--what is real, what is imagination, how much heartbreak and abuse can Essie take? Yet things eventually become clear and the book does have a satisfyingly happy ending. This book held my interest and I'd recommend it.

I thought the book was very interesting, especially because of its connection with The Triangle Fire which resulted in the deaths of many young women. They were trapped on the 7th floor where they worked in a sweatshop where doors were blocked and many jumped in hopes of surviving, but they didn't. The book is fiction, but could have been true and this fire tragedy did happen early in 20th Century. I enjoyed getting to know the heroine's family and their struggle living in a NYC tenement. I also liked the writer's quick-paced style, which kept my interest.

Wow! If you love history of NYC, for one, you will love this book. If you love stories of ethnicity, and how people lived at the turn of the 20th century, what they thought, and how they suffered to assimilate, to make it in this country, then this book is for you. You will laugh, and cry. This book will keep you on your toes until the very end, and then...I can't tell you any more. This book will make it to one of my very favorite list for sure. Take a trip to old time New York. Take a look into the lives of

the struggling immigrant. It is worth the trip, and I promise it will stay with you for a very long time.

This book draws the reader into life on the lower east side of New York. It captures the economic deprivation and concomitant living conditions of families struggling to subsist. The characterizations are vivid. The reader readily identifies with the protagonist. Her grief is poignant. This author combines historical facts with well delineated characters to create a orbiting novel. I highly recommend this book.

I was wanting a book with deep inside information the Triangle Shirt fire. It was a little short on that but it was filled with a wonderful story of life for young girls in this time frame. Rough life, hard work, close friendships.

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