



# [ The dressmaker of Yarrandarra prison]

By Jaffe, Meredith

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## Genre and Subject

*Dressmakers -- Fiction*

*Fathers and daughters -- Fiction*

*Prisoners -- Fiction*

*Friendship -- Fiction*

*Australian fiction*

## Synopsis

This is a deft and unlikely story in an uncommon setting about an estranged daughter, her jailed father and a very bad idea about a dress. It all makes for a warm, funny union of foes and a lovely encounter with what matters.' Rosalie Ham

Derek's daughter, Debbie, is getting married. He's desperate to be there, but he's banged up in Yarrandarra Correctional Centre for embezzling funds from the golf club, and, thanks to his ex-wife, Lorraine, he hasn't spoken to Debbie in years. He wants to make a grand gesture - to show her how much he loves her. But what?

Inspiration strikes while he's embroidering a cushion at his weekly prison sewing circle - he'll make her a wedding dress. His fellow stitchers rally around and soon this motley gang of crims is immersed in a joyous whirl of silks, satins and covered buttons.

But as time runs out and tensions rise both inside and outside the prison, the wedding dress project takes on greater significance. With lives at stake, Derek feels his chance to reconcile with Debbie is slipping through his fingers ...

A funny, dark and moving novel about finding humanity, friendship and redemption in unexpected places.

## Author Biography

Meredith Jaffé is the author of four novels for adults— The Tricky Art of Forgiveness (2022), The Dressmakers of Yarrandarra Prison (2021), The Making of Christina (2017) and The Fence (2016.) Her bestselling novel, The Dressmakers of Yarrandarra Prison, was voted in the 2021 Booktopia Favourite Australian Book Award Top 50 and the 2022 Better Reading Top 100. She also writes for children.

She is the former Festival Director of StoryFest, held on the NSW South Coast, and regularly facilitates at other writers' festivals, literary lunches and author events. In a previous life, she wrote the weekly literary column for the online women's magazine The Hoopla. Her reviews, author interviews, feature articles and opinion pieces have appeared in The Hoopla, Australian Author, the Guardian Australia, The Huffington Post and Mamamia.

Her reviewing policy is to only post comments on books she truly enjoyed and wants to share with other readers.

## Discussion Starters

1. What was your favourite part of the book?
2. What was your least favourite?
3. Did you race to the end, or was it more of a slow burn?
4. What did you think of the writing? What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that states the book's thematic concerns?
5. How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"? How did you feel reading it—amused, sad, disturbed, confused, bored...?
6. Describe the main characters—personality traits, motivations, and inner qualities.
  - Why do characters do what they do?
  - Are their actions justified?
  - Describe the dynamics between characters (in a marriage, family, or friendship).
  - How has the past shaped their lives?
  - Do you admire or disapprove of them?
  - Do they remind you of people you know?
7. Are the main characters dynamic—changing or maturing by the end of the book? Do they learn about themselves, how the world works and their role in it?
8. What surprised you most about the book?
9. How did your opinion of the book change as you read it?
10. Has this novel changed you—broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new or been exposed to different ideas about people or a certain part of the world? Do you think you'll remember it in a few months or years?
11. If you could ask the author a question, what would you ask? Have you read other books by the same author? If so how does this book compare. If not, does this book inspire you to read others? How does the book's title work in relation to the book's contents? If you could give the book a new title, what would it be?
12. Is this book overrated or underrated?
13. Did this book remind you of any other books?
14. Would you ever consider re-reading it? Why or why not?
15. Are there lingering questions from the book you're still thinking about?
16. Did the book strike you as original?
17. Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?

## If you liked this book, you may also like...

- *The other side of beautiful* by Kim Lock
- *The tea ladies of St. Jude's hospital* by Joanna Nell