



## Girl in Dior

*Annie Goetzinger*

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**Winner of:**

YALSA 2016 Great Graphic Novels for Teens

In February of 1947, the *crème de la crème* of Paris haute couture have flocked to see Christian Dior's debut fashion show. In a flurry of corolla shaped skirts, the parade of models file down the runway and the mesmerized audience declares the show a triumph. When Clara—a freshly hired chronicler and guide to the busy corridors of the brand-new fashion house—is hand-picked by Dior to be a model, she knows her life will never be the same. A biography docudrama that marries fiction with the story of one of the greatest couturiers in history, this work is a breathless and stunning presentation of Christian Dior's greatest designs, beautifully rendered by bestselling artist Annie Goetzinger.

## Girl in Dior Details

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Author : Annie Goetzinger

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# From Reader Review *Girl in Dior* for online ebook

## Madhulika Liddle says

12th February, 1947: Fashion designer Christian Dior, from a family that manufactured fertilizers and detergent but crashed in the 30s, has now—with financing by a textile giant—set up his own fashion house, and today is the day Dior opens its doors to welcome a list of elite invitees to view its inaugural designs. Alongside the likes of Rita Hayworth and Carmel Snow (of *Harper's Bazaar*) is a quiet, timid journalist named Clara Nohant, come to report on the show for a fashion magazine.

Clara's article is good enough to draw her to the attention of Monsieur Dior, *eventually*—because of a mishap that occurs later. And Dior offers her a job: be one of the models, or, as he calls the women who showcase his dresses, 'young ladies'. This is the story of how Clara Nohant goes from being a 'dowdy' journalist to a Dior model.

Which might sound thoroughly intriguing and interesting, but falls sadly flat on the story front. As far as plot is concerned, this graphic novel has only a wisp of one, and that so bland, it just *doesn't* work. Clara, in her own 'biography' (though she's a fictional character, as Anne Goetzinger clarifies), is really not the focus of the book at all—Christian Dior is.

And even Christian Dior not so much as his dresses and his fashion house. In these pages are some interesting snippets of information about how fashion shows were organized; who were the people who ruled the fashion world (at least in the West) in the post-war period; how designs were turned into dresses, and so on. Just snippets, tantalizing glimpses of how fashion worked back then. There are bits and pieces about Dior himself—for example, about how he owned a series of dogs, all named Bobby, and how each year's showing always included a design named Bobby. Or how Dior's long skirts enraged American women, causing massive protests against the French designer in the US. Or how Yves Saint Laurent worked at Dior before setting up his own line.

I must admit I'm not very interested or knowledgeable about fashion; this graphic novel, though, gets three stars from me for two reasons:

- (a) It made me a *little* knowledgeable about Dior, and I always like books from which I learn something; and
- (b) The drawings. Oh, the *drawings*. Beautiful, elegant, very Dior. I'm keeping the book just because of them: they're a sight for sore eyes.

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## Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance says

How serendipitous it was to read this book at the same time I read Mrs. 'arris Goes to Paris. Both take on Dior and fashion and Paris as they were, and, read together, complement each other like a good wine with a delicious entree.

The story is simple: a young poor girl is plucked from the crowd to become a fabulous Dior model. It's the stuff of fairy tales, with the girl sent out into the world of the rich and famous where she finds a suitably rich husband and lives a grand life.

But the strength of the book is in the illustrations that make this unusual graphic novel, illustrations of amazing dresses and hats and skirts and hairdos. It's a lovely little peek into a world that doesn't exist any more. And I'm glad I got to visit it.

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### **laura (bookies & cookies) says**

Good supplementary reading before I see the Dior exhibit at the Denver Museum of Art.

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### **Joshua says**

This one was frankly just a bit odd for me. On the positive side I loved the art in the book. On the negative, it felt like it was missing substance. Heck even the forward isn't even worth reading (they basically jabber awkwardly and then just tell you they haven't even read the book). Its interesting to see the beginnings of the Dior fashion house from the inside, but it just left me wanting something more from the characters and the story as a whole.

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### **Kate Copeseeley says**

This is an odd sort of graphic novel, if that is what you want to call it, I'm not sure. It's basically a shallow history of Christian Dior through the eyes of Clara. Through a strange set of circumstances she becomes a Dior model and this story vaguely follows some of her life as she works in Paris.

I say vaguely, and now I'm going to give two reviews for this book.

My first review is for the graphic part of the graphic novel. The illustrations are beautiful. I could look at them over and over again. The author obviously did a lot of research on the styles and techniques Dior used. The illustrations themselves tell so much about his fashion house and what they did. Honestly, this book could have stood alone WITHOUT words, that's how great the illustrations are. 5 Stars for the drawings.

Unfortunately, the text was awful. I'm not sure if the writer wasn't used to writing in English, or if this book was translated or if the writer was just awful. And I'm sorry, I really don't want to be insulting! The dialogue was so stilted and the narration seemed so completely vague that half the time I couldn't really tell what was going on.

It was almost as if the author got halfway through and either lost her will to illustrate or didn't really know what to do with the story. It's a great idea, and I give her credit for it, but the execution of the writing was subpar and the ending was terrible. I think this is a case where there should have been an author/illustrator pairing, for certain.

And finally, I think the publishers of this book should be ASHAMED of themselves for letting a book go out with a forward like that. It was horrifying. A foreward is supposed to explain something to you of the author and what they've written. This woman didn't really say ANYTHING about the author, just rambled on and on faux apologizing for not really writing a forward. OH YEAH, AND SHE DIDN'T EVEN READ THE THING. (not that I blame her there, but GEEZ LOUISE).

In summary, I would look at anything this author drew, and I hope she does far more illustrating in the

future, but please, madame, get a writer for yourself.

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## **Damon says**

Not recommended. An insult to comic writers everywhere. Stick to weekend articles in the local paper.

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## **HFK says**

*Girl in Dior* should be everything a woman who is into fashion and admires Dior's work could wish for, but unfortunately it is nearly everything that a woman who spend her and her husband's last dime to buy their newborn baby girl a Dior's bathrobe many, many years ago\* would find to be an utterly disappointing reading experience, a waste of good and luxurious history.

Yes, she surely would and she surely was.

*Girl in Dior* has an interesting premise as it does mix real fashion history and tells the shallow story of Christian Dior while throwing a lot of fictional aspects into the girly treat. It does have an interesting premise of promising marvelous drawings made out of Dior's fabulous dresses and clothing lines. Almost like an eye-candy dream come true.

It really did succeed with the latter as the drawings, the art is such a fucking beautiful hit in your face that leaves your mouth a bit open, and makes your smoky voice do oh's and ah's. Stunning, artful, detailed and makes every bit of honor to Dior's work. Oh yes, yummy yummy.

But when comes to writing, we hit a painful dead end. It is disjointed, unreadable, senseless, awkward, difficult to understand, shallow, emotionless, a mess inside a bigger mess without any glamour in it.

I am unsure at to who this work is done to? Women or girls, fashion or history lovers, to solid readers or coffee table book collectors? To be honest, I only see this as a good decorating object, but nothing else, and that is a fucking shame.

\*My husband had to use his broken shoes instead of buying new ones because I spent our last money to useless Dior bathrobe that my daughter did not use even once. It was a time when I was out of work and my husband finishing his doctorate in technology. We were poor as fuck.

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## **Martyn says**

I get what other reviewers are saying about this book, that the story is slight and that it seems a little chaotic, but I enjoyed it for its elegance and for the bitter-sweet ending. The art is sensational, I would buy this for the picture of the outfit called "Amour" alone (page 19 in my edition) - amazing color and movement! I also loved the way that the colors in the book became muted toward the end, reflecting well the narrative. I've always had a fascination with the fashion world and its processes, probably because it's so completely alien

to me, and so I may be more open to this than other readers. But I do also think that there's more going on in here than seems to be the case on first read. I also loved the non-introduction introduction by one of my favorite authors, Anna Gavalda. Despite being modern in tone it set the scene for creativity quite well.

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## **Lola says**

A day in the life of Christian Dior...

Well not exactly, but that's exactly how it feels. Although this is a biographical graphic novel, Christian Dior is technically not the one whose life is told. The "heroine" is Clara.

But as she said herself, Dior gave her everything. He gave her the opportunity to become a model for him. And later, she found love thanks to the opportunities provided by Dior.

So I guess I shouldn't be this shocked by the ending. Still, I think Clara should have been a little less obsessed with this man, although he was quite charming and kind to her.

Boring ending. The "story" itself is one full of fashion, models, glamour and dresses (and short snippets of Dior's life and creative processes). It's truly magnificent to behold, the sort of graphic novel I would gladly plunge into when wanting to feel like I'm part of something special.

But truly, this isn't really an inspiring story. We know only of Christian Dior's successful times and Clara herself shows us mainly the beautiful and fortunate. She seemed like a kind soul, but still now, I know close to nothing about her.

Very lush, colourful, realistic and impressive illustrations. What gorgeous dresses. I would suggest you buy this only if graphics matter more than story to you. But does anyone really care more about appearance than content? What a question, Lola. (YES.)

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## **Cassandra says**

First of all, the illustrations in this book are stunning. 5 stars for the art. Zero stars for the story. It was a weird focus of some random facts about Dior and a fictional character named Clara being magically intertwined with the Dior fashion house. Clara's story wasn't believable at all, and Dior's story wasn't coherent. The actual text on each page was confusing and vague. The characters' dialogue was composed of everyone saying one line that had little to do with the lines that came before or after it. If you're interested in beautiful art, flip through the pictures but skip the reading.

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## **NicAlba says**

Clunky. Underdeveloped. Beautiful pictures of dresses. Not a very good biography of Dior or creating the

Dior dress. This could have been fantastic, but it didn't even reach the fail point. It never lifted off the ground. Not good. The one star is given not out of hatred (which is usually the reason for me) but because I came into this book with little expectations and I left feeling "Wow. What was the point of that?" There is no story, no character development, hardly any bones of biography or history going on, the art style was hugely lacking for something dealing about Dior and the silhouette that made his mark on fashion, and the book was just plain boring.

Editors/Publishers--come on! You can do better than this!

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### **David Schaafsma says**

Girl in Dior is sort of out of my wheelhouse, focused as it is on fashion, and the Paris artist/author did a lot of glamour fashion comics work (she died last year at 66, RIP). I read this because I had just read her book about Collette, which I thought was just all right, and saw that a couple of my Goodreads friends liked this. It's a kind of historical fictional story of Christian Dior's fashion house focused on the later years before Dior died at 52.

Clara is a young journalist who meets Dior and becomes a model for Dior, then isn't a model, and then again is, and Dior dies. She's apparently the only non-fictional character in the book, so she kind of represents us: Wow, what if out of nowhere Dior picked me to walk his runway in these to-die-for dresses!? (Note, this is not ME asking this, as that would be comedy, at best, to see me in one of those dresses, though my mom did dress me twice as a girl for Halloween when I was a kid).

We don't really get to know Clara, though, and there isn't so much a story here as it is an occasion for Goetzinger to draw some of those great period dresses. The art is fabulous; the graphic novel, not so much. But if you are interested in fashion or design you might like it.

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### **Elizabeth A says**

Winner of: YALSA 2016 Great Graphic Novels for Teens.

You only have to look at the cover to know that the art is beautiful. It is so lovely that I flipped through this graphic novel several times. Given the lovely art the lackluster story is doubly disappointing. It reads like a boring memoir or biography of a woman whose life intersects with Christian Dior (yes, that Dior), but then at the end you read that this woman, the main character in this story, is a figment of the author's imagination, and was inserted into Dior's life to illustrate what? I'm not sure. The text is uninspired and without passion, and given that we are immersed in the fashion world, among models, and a creative genius, it just does not make any sense that it is so. Still, I would recommend that fashionistas and artists pick up a copy from the library so you can feast your eyes on the wonderful art in this one.

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### **Laura (???) says**

Mechanically well constructed. Beautiful binding, beautiful paper, beautiful colours that suit the 1940s

glamour... but, other than mechanics... it was boring. There was no passion or feelings. It just fell flat. I would summarize the story as: "first my life was ok, then it was ok, and then it was ok again." Disappointing.

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### **Heidi The Hippie Reader says**

A girl falls into the world of high fashion and then out of it and then back in again. A so-so storyline that should have been elevated by, come on, Dior! Sadly, that was not the case.

I would have enjoyed this more if it had just been panels of the dresses rather than pretending to be a story.

Literally, a girl in Dior on each page would have been epic.

Only recommended for serious fashionistas or those who study graphic novel art. Every one else, strut your stuff on down the library aisle and pick another book.

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