



## **It Was Only Ever You: A glamorous historical romance**

*Kate Kerrigan*

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## **It Was Only Ever You: A glamorous historical romance** Kate Kerrigan

This is the story of three women and one charismatic man. A glamorous historical romance, perfect for fans of Maeve Binchy.

It is 1950s New York, the time of dance halls, swing bands and the beginning of rock and roll. In The Emerald, Ava Brogan dances the night away, knowing that she will never be pretty like the other Irish girls there, wishing her mother wouldn't keep plotting to find her a husband.

Here, too, Sheila Klein, Holocaust orphan, dreams of finding a star and making her name in the music industry. Tough and cynical, she has never let her heart be broken by any man.

Enter Patrick Murphy, with a sublime voice, a hit song in his back pocket and charisma to burn. Ava and Sheila's worlds are about to be turned upside down. They do not know that Patrick's first great love from Ireland is on her way to New York – determined to find and get her man at all costs. Beautiful Rose is used to getting what she wants in life and that's not about to change anytime soon.

## **It Was Only Ever You: A glamorous historical romance Details**

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Author : Kate Kerrigan

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### **Debra says**

For my written review, please check out the link below:  
Debra's Book Cafe

Debs :-)

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### **Cathy says**

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In *It Was Only Ever You*, the author has created three distinctive female characters. I loved Ava who, in her 'lucky suit', made me think of the young Lauren Bacall in *To Have and Have Not*. To me she was the most fully realised female character and the one I found myself most engaged with and who I rooted for most. I also liked how, in Sheila, the author created a picture of a strong, independent woman, not afraid to challenge society's expectations and break through into an industry dominated by men. (I pictured her as Celeste Holm in *Gentleman's Agreement*). Beautiful, beloved Rose was the character I felt least drawn to, although I'm not sure quite why. Perhaps it was her cool, perfect beauty (which if we're indulging in film star comparisons can only be to a young Grace Kelly) or the fact she was the catalyst for so many of the dramatic events in the book.

Alongside these three strong female characters, Patrick Murphy has a tough job to gain the reader's attention and sympathies. He's handsome, charming and the author does a great job of communicating how his wonderful voice is so attractive to women. However, he's also rather naive and his poor choices will set in train unintended and tragic consequences.

Perhaps surprisingly, because he is not at first sight that attractive a figure, the male character I really engaged with was Iggy Morrow, the music impresario. I felt the author created a really believable character and his journey from loner to someone prepared to make a commitment to another person for the first time in his life was credible and rather moving.

Amongst many other compelling aspects of this book is the evocation of the New York of the period with its dance halls, jazz clubs, show bands and the advent of the sound that would revolutionize the music scene – rock'n'roll.

'But with this new, strange rockabilly sound [Sheila] found her hips were swaying from side to side at a speed that felt fast – too fast – and yet she was compelled to move in a way that felt utterly natural. It was as if the beat had injected her, and everyone else there, with a kind of electricity. Her body seemed to understand what to do in a way it had never done before now.'

If that doesn't make you want to listen to 'Rock Around the Clock' I don't know what will! Similarly, I loved the picture of the tight-knit Irish émigré community, where everyone knows one another – making subsequent events entirely believable.

The author gives us tantalising hints about some of the characters' earlier lives. I'm curious – and greedy – so I would have loved more about the back stories of Rose, Sheila and Rose's mother, Eleanor. For example – no spoilers, as these facts are revealed in the opening chapters of the book – information about Rose's biological parents, more detail about what happened to Sheila's family and what in Eleanor's past made her so fearful for her daughter.

The book ended satisfyingly for me with two of the three women being rewarded precisely in the way I'd hoped for and the third getting just what she deserved. I'll leave you to read the book and work out what I mean and which is which!

It Was Only Ever You takes the reader on a wonderful journey from rural Ireland to the excitement of New York. There is love and drama and sadness, there are partings and reunions, all set against the backdrop of the sheer joy of music.

I received a review copy courtesy of publishers Head of Zeus in return for an honest and unbiased review.

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### **Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says**

I think one of the reasons for me liking this book so much is because I really liked the women in this book, or rather two of them, Ava and Sheila. Rose was a bit harder to like, although, in the end, I did find myself warming up to her.

It Was Only Ever You is such an interesting story about three very different women who end up playing very important roles in Patrick Murphy's life. We have Rose, his sweetheart in Ireland, Ava, the warmhearted woman with low self-esteem who falls for him despite being engaged to another man and the self-assured Sheila who is hellbent on turning Patrick into a star.

For me it was Patrick not the star of the book, he was the thing that connected the women, but what I found interesting was the period, the life of the women and their struggle. I found myself totally fascinated with each of the women's journeys (yes even Rose's now and then), although there were some parts that made me roll my eyes mentally, mostly when Rose took the center in the story. But, even Rose would in the end, as I mentioned, grow on me. And, even though it was not the ending I wanted, I still liked how Kate Kerrigan decided to end the book.

***It Was Only Ever You is an intriguing book, with many strong women in focus. I quite liked the book and I'm looking forward to reading more from Kate Kerrigan!***

I want to thank the publisher for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!

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### **Amanda - Mrs B's Book Reviews says**

Late 1950's Ireland and New York plays the backdrop to a book I would label my favourite romance of the year, which is Kate Kerrigan's latest novel, It Was Only Ever You.

Patrick Murphy is at the front and centre of It Was Only Ever You. Patrick is a young man with an incredible

talent, who vows to make it big one day as a professional singer. Patrick is in love with a doctor's daughter and aspiring artist named Rose however, their love is doomed from the start, as they come from completely different backgrounds. It is a love that will eventually take Patrick away from his homeland in Ireland, to the bright lights of New York city, where opportunity and a new love awaits.

After reading Kate Kerrigan's last novel, *The Dress*, I immediately declared myself a firm fan of Kerrigan's work. Now that I have finished reading her latest novel, *It Was Only Ever You*, I will say that I absolutely adored this book – even more than *The Dress*. It is such a wonderfully crafted book, that for me it earns the title of the best romance book of the year. Kerrigan works hard at the opening of the novel to set her scene in 1950's Ireland. I felt a strong and immediate sense of place, which also extended to Kerrigan's depiction of the societal attitudes of the time. Kerrigan uses this as an opportunity to show the reader the extent of the class divide in Ireland, as well as the lure of greater opportunities abroad. This is where New York comes into the picture, which is also described in picture perfect detail. I loved that this book had a strong music based theme grounding it. The opportunity to become immersed in 1950's rock and roll, as well as popular Irish ballads was fantastic. Kerrigan's research into the music of the times is clearly evident, as it runs throughout the storyline.

Characters are also a joy to connect with in *It Was Only Ever You*. Patrick, the lead protagonist, is cast perfectly as the charismatic Irish boy from a lower class background, who also gets embroiled in the lives of three very different women. The three women, Rose, Ava and Shelia, all play a part in Patrick's life as the narrative progresses. Rose, Ava and Shelia are all equally interesting characters, with their own back stories to match. I found each of them likeable and very much appreciated that they had their own flaws. At many points of the novel it was hard to decide with which character you sympathies should lie.

*It Was Only Ever You* is a book that I definitely could not put down and when I was eventually forced to, I couldn't wait to get back into the story. I firmly believe this is a sign of Kerrigan's evocative storytelling ability, it is very easy to get lost in her writing. The finale of *It Was Only Ever You* has got to be one of the most beautiful and poignant endings to a novel I have read for some time. I am sure it will stay with me long after finishing the book.

*It Was Only Ever You* is a memorable tale, packed with love, loss, dreams and most importantly, the passion of music. It features a cast of endearing characters, who will be sure to occupy a space in your heart. Highly romantic, I recommend this book highly – five stars.

\*I wish to thank Beauty and Lace for providing a copy of this book for review purposes.

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## **Anuja Chandramouli says**

Kate Kerrigan comes highly recommended as a veteran of vintage romance and her latest novel, *It Was Only Ever You* is the winner of the RNA 2017 Historical Novel of the Year award. Set in the 1950's, this tale of amorous entanglements is about three women – Rose Hopkins, Ava Brogan and Sheila Klein, of varying degrees of likeability who play a big role in the life of Patrick Murphy, a dreamboat and songster on the brink of superstardom.

The story begins with a Holocaust orphan's attempt to deal with pain and loss, before plunging the reader abruptly into County Mayo, Ireland where an incredibly handsome and charismatic Patrick falls in love with

an exquisite beauty (Rose) who is also sensitive, passionate, and blessed with more of the ravishing attributes that are a prerequisite for characters in these highly dramatized and overblown romantic tales. Of course, the young lovers cannot cut to a happily ever after since neither is big on brains making them all too susceptible to the manipulative machinations of those around them.

Shortly after, Patrick finds himself in New York and must do his best to make it as a singer. However, love is not quite done with him and he finds himself in the maelstrom of yet another messy matter of the heart. This time, it is the fabulously wealthy Ava, who is warm, clever and nice but dealing with low self – esteem because she is no raving beauty and thanks to Patrick, her beautifully ordered world is turned inside out. Tough as nails Sheila is determined to mould Patrick into achieving his great potential and ensures that his fate is tied irrevocably to her own. Rose too, decides that she must do whatever it takes to reunite with her love even if it means destroying whoever stands in the way no matter how innocent.

*It Was Only Ever You* does manage to engage the reader in parts and evoke the wonderfully vibrant era of dance halls and jitterbugging which preceded the explosion of rock and roll. However, after a point it gets incredibly trying not the least because one is asked to buy that two of the protagonists are blithe, free spirited and somewhat pure even when they come across as borderline sociopathic jerks who will do anything to get what they want. It makes it hard to root for them or even give a crap about what becomes of them given their callous treatment of those who become casualties to their needs and failure to make amends in a decent way. There is a lot of heavy duty, wishy-washy emotional fare to wade through. There is even a lengthy description of how finding the right, over – priced, designer dress or suit can be the sort of thing that changes your life forever because the world has no place for awkward, ugly – ducklings even if they are kind, smart and too sweet for their own good. That it is important to find the right style for you, because it is only ever about being the most attractive version of you as opposed to the best possible person you are capable of being. It is the sort of regressive, reprehensible nonsense that romance writers have long been guilty of propagating, which makes you roll your eyes and wish they would quit it already.

*It Was Only Ever You* limps to a laboured climax where everybody ends up in somebody's arms – “She reached in and grabbed his hand and Patrick knew he was saved.” because in this world being single is the only unforgiveable crime. I wish I had been saved too. From this tired old love story.

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## Gaele says

Staring off, the story felt a bit disjointed as it begins with a Holocaust survivor and their struggles and then we find ourselves in County Mayo where we meet a charismatic, handsome and talented Patrick, determined to make his mark on the world as a singer. He's exciting and different from most, and that is one of the reasons that Rose, a renowned beauty, is in love with him. These two are destined to fail as a couple from the start, since neither is prone to thought or examination of motives, and this makes them far too easily manipulated. With the end of this relationship, Patrick is off to New York seeking fortune and fame.

In New York, Patrick's desires for love bring him to Ava: wealthy and clever, but not a beauty. His eyes and future are guided by yet another woman, Sheila, who is determined to make every move necessary to have him, and make his dreams of fame and fortune come true. Of course, even with her own issues and the ocean between them, Rose isn't willing to let the hope for her love with Patrick go.

Confused yet? I was. And it wasn't helped by the lack of actual build to the characters that was more than stereotype. From the women who were obsessed with 'winning' the man, one upping one another and appearing to be willing to do anything to get a win, they were tiring, and I found myself uninterested in the relationship that they each purported to have with Patrick. For his part, Patrick seemed to find himself

without the ability to control his heart: an immaturity issue that seemed to be the overriding personality trait of an otherwise flat character. Descriptions of sights, sounds, clothing and setting were wonderful, but even that couldn't bring me to make the comparisons held in the synopsis of this title. Sadly, this was a miss for me because of the characters that were all too familiar and flat in their construct.

I received an eArc copy of the title from the publisher via NetGalley for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

Review first appeared at I am, Indeed

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### **booksofallkinds says**

IT WAS ONLY EVER YOU by Kate Kerrigan is a powerful and beautiful tale of love, life, and finding what you need in this world.

Set in the 1950s the story moves from Ireland to New York where Patrick Murphy is hoping to make his dream of singing become a reality. A man that oozes charm, kindness, and charisma, Patrick draws women to him like moths to a flame, and when he doesn't hear any word from his young first love, Rose, who is back in Ireland, he believes that things have changed.

?

In New York, we meet Ava and Sheila, two very different characters who have a lot in common - strength and determination to live their lives on their terms in a society that wants a woman to know her place. And as their paths collide with Patrick's it will change them irrevocably in ways that they could never dream of. And then there is the fact that Rose is coming to New York determined to find her man...

With music at the forefront throughout this alluring novel, it is no surprise that there is a lyrical quality in Kate Kerrigan's writing, and I found myself swept away with the beat on every page. The characters are appealing and really make you care, and I loved learning more about the music and Irish immigrant scene that was bursting with life in Manhattan at that time.

IT WAS ONLY EVER YOU is a dramatic and all-consuming story about relationships in all of its forms, and as always with books written by the wonderful Kate Kerrigan, it played with my heart strings all the way through. A stunning story that would be perfect on the silver screen, and one you should not miss out on.

\*I voluntarily reviewed this book from the Publisher

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### **Margaret Madden says**

1950s Ireland. Rose and Patrick have to hide their love for each other as they are from two different classes. Patrick, a talented singer, heads for the bright lights of New York and Rose is devastated. In New York, Ava dreams of finding love in the dance halls of the Big Apple where she dances her way to happiness. Sheila, dreams of managing the biggest rock and roll acts in the USA and encounters the sexist world of the music industry. The Emerald Ballroom is where New Yorkers go to dance their worries away. Will it be enough for these young music lovers or will rocking around the clock lead to heartbreak?

From the author of *The Dress*, comes a tale of music, love and new beginnings. Kate Kerrigan's eighth novel is alive with the sound of jazz, ballads and rock and roll. 1950s New York is awash with new talent and high fashion. Women still dream of finding the perfect husband and men still get away with murder. When Patrick leaves his family behind in Co. Mayo, he also leaves a part of his heart. Rose is devastated and will do anything to find him. Ava seems destined to marry a nice, sensible New Yorker and to bid farewell to the dance halls she loves. Sheila grieves for the family she lost at Hitler's hands and struggles to find her place in the world. The only thing that they all have in common is their love of music. Told with melodic simplicity, their stories become intertwined in their quest for happiness. But somewhere along the line, hearts will be broken.

This is the ideal read for lovers of Historical Fiction and is perfectly timed for the Christmas market. More suitable for an older audience, I would think, with its gentle narrative and endearing characters. The dance halls hop off the page, with their smoky dance floors, jiving customers and sassy staff. You can almost hear the music and envision the ladies popping off to powder their noses. These women are living in a man's world yet are determined to make the most of it. A classic love story with a musical twist. Time to dust off your dancing shoes and grab the rouge...

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## **Scatterbooker says**

*It Was Only Ever You* is my first introduction to Kate Kerrigan, but before I even picked up the book I knew that I had been missing out! With comparisons to the great Maeve Binchy and high praise from romance stalwarts, Marian Keyes, Cecelia Ahern, and my good friend, Tess Woods, I knew this would be a great book. And I certainly wasn't disappointed.

The novel is set in County Mayo and New York in the 1950s and told from multiple points of view. Patrick leaves his sweetheart, Rose, the beautiful doctor's daughter, behind in Ireland to emigrate to New York and make it big as a rock star. In New York, he meets Ava, a wealthy but shy girl, except for when she is on the dance floor. Holocaust survivor, Sheila, manages to talk her way into becoming Patrick's manager, despite being on the run from the mob.

I loved the way this story was told. I can definitely see some similarities to Maeve Binchy's heartfelt romance style. Kerrigan captured the mood of old-school Ireland and the 1950s rock and roll scene of New York perfectly. I particularly enjoyed the scene where Sheila watches Bill Haley and his Comets perform one of their earliest performances, especially as *Rock Around the Clock* was my grandmother's favourite song!

Originally posted at <https://scatterbooker.wordpress.com/2...>

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## **Beth says**

1950's Ireland .. I love books set in olden days time era. That always pulls me in right off, love the cover, Love this story, I am new to Kate Kerrigan's writing, I am hooked & I can not wait to read more from Kate very very soon. I love the dialogue, the characters .. such a fun quick read for me. Loved it!! ( :

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## Ana says

Originally posted on This Chick Reads

*It Was Only Ever You* is the first book by Kate Kerrigan and I've been so excited about checking it out, especially as it has won the RNA 2017 Historical Novel of the Year Award. Now that I've read it, I can say it definitely won't be my last one by this author. *It Was Only Ever You* is a charming tale of love, soul mates and music and I devoured it in a day.

The story is set in a small village, Foxford in Ireland and New York during the 1950s, the time when rock and roll was just starting to enter the clubs. There are four main characters, something I would usually find overwhelming, however Kate's beautiful writing style and portraying of her characters made the reading experience so much easier and enjoyable. Of course, there are many more characters in the book, for some there might even be too much to follow, however I had no problems with this. They were all so diverse and each of them added to the story. The main characters are Patrick, Rose, Ava and Sheila and in the book we get to see a bit of each perspective. The book opens in 1941 and we see Sheila living with her aunt and uncle in the States because of the war. She just found out her parents and brother have been killed by the Nazis and at 14 years old, she really does her best to digest this horrible information. Fast forward 17 years, Sheila is a strong independent woman in her 30s, who's trying to make it into a 'men's world' by becoming a music manager. As we follow her attempts at finding a new talent to work with and get into some of the clubs and dance rooms, we get to really feel her determination and strong will. Patrick and Rose live in a small Irish village, Foxford. Patrick has a beautiful voice and charming looks. He's in his mid 20s and can have any girl he wants. However, he's not arrogant, on the contrary, he's very down to earth when it comes to both his singing talent and looks. Rosa is just finishing school and is the daughter of a well known doctor. She's also Patrick's sister best friend and seems to have blossomed into a gorgeous young lady over night. Rosa and Patrick fall in love with each other however Rosa knows her family (pragmatical Dad and snobbish mum) would not approve of plain, artistic Patrick. After a series of events (which I won't reveal much about as I don't want to spoil the book for you), Patrick arrives in America, the land where all dreams come true. Some dreams do come true for him, alright, yet some are shattered to pieces.

Ava is the daughter of an influential Irish immigrant. She's well mannered however very self-conscious. She loves dancing and is a regular at one of the dance rooms. Her life is forever changed when she meets the young, dashing Irish singer, Patrick. Through love, pain and tears all of these four main characters learn about life and their biggest passion - music. It's their love and passion for music which intertwines their stories and which plays a huge role in the book.

What I loved the most is how through Kate's beautiful writing and descriptions I was transported in a completely different era, in the 1950s, seeing and feeling the glamour, the fashion, the music genre which was just emerging. I haven't read a book (at least not recently) where music plays such an important role and I absolutely love how Kate managed to transport me in this time of our history, a time when I wasn't even born. I could close my eyes and see the big dance rooms (or ball rooms), the musicians on stage, the glamorous couples dancing. As someone who loves the 1950s and 1960s this was truly a great enjoyment. It's obvious the author did her research well on the life in the States during this period of history and the music industry at the time.

However, this book is not just about music. It's a romance book and there are some very complex relationships to follow. Even the blurb implies there's a love triangle, so do have this in mind when you pick up this book (as I know many readers don't like this). There's also insta love, and I have to say I was slightly bothered by this, but then again...it was 1950s...a completely different type of dating (courting) and some very different social/cultural conditions. While there were some scenes that melted my heart, there were some that left me a bit confused and puzzled. The characters felt a bit over the top in the second part of the book, it seemed like they were all overreacting or reacting rather different to what we now consider 'normal/usual'. There was loads of drama (sometimes unnecessary) and there were so many stuff happening I was really trying hard to keep track. While I absolutely adored the first half of the book, the second one felt a bit confusing which is the only reason why I'm not giving this book a higher rating.

Overall, this was an enjoyable romantic read and I'll definitely be reading more by this author. I'm fascinated with Irish fiction and authors and I'm glad I've discovered another great Irish author. From Mayo County, Ireland to New York, in the 1950s, Kate takes us into the dance rooms full of glamour and charm. A time when rock and roll was just emerging, when culture was going through a rapid change, through the stories of Patrick, Rose, Ava and Sheila we get to really feel a bit of that 1950s glamour. If you're looking for a charming romantic read you'll devour in a day, this is definitely the book for you.

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### **Sonya says**

A lovely romantic read, the story moves along quite quickly & doesn't drag, a lovely read for a winter's night.

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### **Alison says**

Now I will be honest and say I have never read anything by Kate Kerrigan before, not even sure if her name has hit my radar but as soon as I spotted that cover I just had to read *It Was Only Ever You*. Just take another look at how beautiful the dress is, my favourite colour and style. I'm lucky enough to have received a paperback copy from the publisher and it is truly gorgeous.

Anyway, did the story live up to my expectations based on the front!? Yes it did. It actually involves a couple of my other favourite things, the 1950's and New York so I knew I was on to a winner.

Kate writes with a flourish that immediately pulls you into the scene. The naivety of Ireland and the glamour of NYC make for an interesting combination for a setting.

This follows the lives of three women all very different personalities and one man ... that lays down the foundation for a complex romance inter-weaved with class and nationality issues reminiscent of the era.

I loved the music and fashion aspect along with the historical facts .. I went through phases of liking a different character pretty much each time I picked the book up. There is passion, drama and plenty of atmosphere in the dance halls, if you are a rock and roll fan then whisk yourself away with this book and enjoy the dancing.

I enjoyed the authors style and would definitely read more by her.

My thanks to the publisher and author for my copy which I read and reviewed voluntarily.

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### **Linda Hill says**

Patrick Murphy dreams of being a famous singer, but three different women, Rose, Ava and Sheila, will impact on his life in ways he couldn't imagine.

I am so pleased that *It Was Only Ever You* has fulfilled all my expectations and alleviated my disappointment at not having had time to read Kate Kerrigan's other novels yet. Everything positive I have ever heard about the way she writes is true.

*It Was Only Ever You* is a delight of a read. It is a pitch perfect romantic novel where all the characters are as real to me as I am myself. Usually there is a main character I don't warm to but Kate Kerrigan manages to make me empathise with all of them in *It Was Only Ever You* so that I found my loyalties and emotions pulled every which way as the story progressed. I felt the women in particular were so well defined and realistic, although it was actually Dermot who moved me to tears at one point. Kate Kerrigan certainly knows how to create emotion.

I loved the plot and being taken back to New York so evocatively at a time when the second world war had ended and youth was beginning to find its way musically. I found Kate Kerrigan's style such an effortless read and felt this was a book that would be a fabulous comfort read on a cold winter's afternoon or on a beach in the sunshine. I also thoroughly enjoyed the 'Irishness' of so much of the story, with its religion, its love of ballads and the matriarchal hierarchy portrayed so beautifully.

Although the plot made me feel anxious at times because I wasn't certain that it would work out as I wanted and Kate Kerrigan kept me guessing, I thought *It Was Only Ever You* is a smashing book that is eloquent, moving and nostalgic and I highly recommend it.

<https://lindasbookbag.com/2017/07/30/...>

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### **Zoe says**

Heartwarming, impassioned, and alluring!

This is a compelling story about first loves, friendship, community, goals, dreams, family and music that is set during the late 1950s when New York was a melting pot of immigrants and Manhattan was the hub of the American music industry.

There are four main memorable characters in this novel; Rose, a young Irish lass who leaves comfort and security behind in hopes of finding her first love; Ava, a woman with insecurities but a lot of heart; Sheila a Jewish orphan who has lots of spunk, tenacity and grit; and Danny, the dark-haired, blue-eyed small-town lad who turns all their heads with his angelic voice.

The writing is vivid and sincere. The supporting characters are multi-layered, unique, and true to

character. And the plot is a wonderful mix of passion, drama, character development and emotion.

Overall this is an extremely engaging, memorable, enjoyable read that does a remarkable job of interweaving historical facts, fiction, and romance.

Thank you to Head of Zeus for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review.

All my reviews can be found on my blog at <http://whatsbetterthanbooks.com>

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