

The background features a complex network of white nodes connected by thin white lines, set against a gradient background that transitions from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The nodes are scattered across the frame, with some forming distinct geometric shapes like triangles and quadrilaterals. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

# City of Girls

Written by Elizabeth Gilbert

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# City of Girls

By Elizabeth Gilbert

## City Of Girls Review

From the # 1 New York Times bestselling author of *Eat, Pray, Love* and *The Signature of All Things*, a delicious novel of glamour, sex, and adventure, about a young woman discovering that you don't have to be a good girl to be a good person.

City of Girls

## City Of Girls Book Review

Life is both fleeting and dangerous, and there is no point in denying yourself pleasure, or being anything other than what you are.

## City Of Girls Gilbert

Beloved author Elizabeth Gilbert returns to fiction with a unique love story set in the New York City theater world during the 1940s. Told from the perspective of an older woman as she looks back on her youth with both pleasure and regret (but mostly pleasure), *City of Girls* explores themes of female sexuality and promiscuity, as well as the idiosyncrasies of true love.

## City Of Girls Amazon

In 1940, nineteen-year-old Vivian Morris has just been kicked out of Vassar College, owing to her lackluster freshman-year performance. Her affluent parents send her to Manhattan to live with her Aunt Peg, who owns a flamboyant, crumbling midtown theater called the Lily Playhouse. There Vivian is introduced to an entire cosmos of unconventional and charismatic characters, from the fun-chasing showgirls to a sexy male actor, a grand-dame actress, a lady-killer writer, and no-nonsense stage manager. But when Vivian makes a personal mistake that results in professional scandal, it turns her new world upside down in ways that it will take her years to fully understand. Ultimately, though, it leads her to a new understanding of the kind of life she craves-and the kind of freedom it takes to pursue it. It will also lead to the love of her life, a love that stands out from all the rest.

## City Of Girls A Novel

Now ninety-five years old and telling her story at last, Vivian recalls how the events of those years altered the course of her life - and the gusto and autonomy with which she approached it. At some point in a woman's life, she just gets tired of being ashamed all the time, she muses. After that, she is free to become whoever she truly is. Written with a powerful wisdom about human desire and connection, City of Girls is a love story like no other.

Gilbert's narrator is an old woman named Vivian, looking back at herself as a naive 19-year-old who had just failed out of Vassar College. (She ranked 361 in a class of 362, surpassing only a girl who contracted polio.) Baffled by a daughter with no matrimonial or professional prospects, Vivian's parents send her off to an eccentric aunt who owns a crumbling theater in New York. Light-years from Broadway, Aunt Peg's Lily Playhouse offers cookie-cutter musical comedies written on the fly for work. Gilbert's narrator is an old woman named Vivian, looking back at herself as a naive 19-year-old who had just failed out of Vassar College. (She ranked 361 in a class of 362, surpassing only a girl who contracted polio.) Baffled by a daughter with no matrimonial or professional prospects, Vivian's parents send her off to an eccentric aunt who owns a crumbling theater in New York. Light-years from Broadway, Aunt Peg's Lily Playhouse offers cookie-cutter musical comedies written on the fly for working-class folk. Vivian has no interest in acting, but she adores fine clothes and she's a whiz with a sewing machine. Always on the lookout for talent, her aunt makes her the theater's costumer. And so what should have been a mere summer interlude became a whole life.

Unfortunately, what should have been a mere 300-page novel became a 470-page tome. The best and worst thing that can be said about "City of Girls" is that it's perfectly pleasant, the kind of book one wouldn't mind finding in a vacation condo during a rainy week. In exchange for a series of diverting adventures, it demands only stamina from its readers.

Not that it's without charm. Gilbert definitely knows her way around the vintage dress shop. So many outfits are sharply described in these pages that rather than put this novel on a shelf, you should hang it in a closet. And she's got a good ear for the arch repartee of 1940s comedy. In the best passages, her witty dialogue sparkles like diamonds in champagne.

But this is a story that takes a half-hour to travel a New York minute. And that leisurely pace pushes. . . .

To read the rest of this review, go to The Washington Post:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/entert...>

...more

## City Of Girls Goodreads

Thank you to Riverhead Books / Penguin Publishing Group for providing an advance reader copy via Edelweiss.

It's 1940 and nineteen year old Vivian Morris is a Vassar College dropout. In the summer of that year, Vivian's parents sent her packing to New York City to stay with her Aunt Peg. Peg owned a dilapidated theater company called the Lily Playhouse which churned out revues sporting former burlesque dancers transformed into showgirls, with mostly forgettable storylines. The ticket prices were cheap to adapt to the low income residents in the immediate neighborhood. The living quarters were located above the theater, its apartments often filled with down on their luck actors, actresses and dancers. Vivian was suddenly thrust into a sparkling world of dazzling, artistic people and life-changing experiences. Some themes explored are loss of virginity, sexual hunger and prowess, and same-sex relationships at a time when it was "under the radar." Vivian was given an exquisite and spacious apartment in the building, which was actually meant for Aunt Peg's flighty actor/writer husband Billy Buell. Although they never officially divorced, Billy was living the Hollywood/playboy life clear across the country. But, that was okay. Aunt Peg had her stalwart mate Olive that oversaw everything at the theater like an army sergeant.

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This book lured me in from the first page with its beautiful narration by Vivian. Vivian is telling her life story to an unknown person named Angela, whom we don't get to identify until almost the end of the book. Vivian's story is told from 1940 to the present day, in epic fashion. An especially poignant and relevant time period discussed in the book is America's involvement in World War II. I was often deeply moved throughout this tome, and had a fixed vision in my head of the beautiful Vivian. The writing style was easy, flowing, and the pages turned effortlessly. I highly recommend this wonderful book for a rich, quality read. ...more

At 51% I'm done. I loved the voice and the writing but I'm growing very weary of hearing about Vivian's sexual exploits. I loved the era and the setting. The audiobook narrator was incredible. But it wasn't enough to save this book for me.

I'm all for women owning their sexuality but by the halfway point I'd like to see some growth and maturity. Promiscuity is not a step forward for women, it's a step backward. Vivian is rather a bore and this book is way too long given the subject matter.



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City of Girls

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Moving on....

I received an e-galley via Edelweiss in exchange for an honest review. ...more

## City Of Girls Pdf

Ninety five year old Vivian is telling her life story. She says she is good at two things in life and that's sex and sewing but another thing she excels at is focusing on Vivian. In the first twenty years of her life, the fact that there were other people out there, people who didn't have servants following them around, catering to their every need, never occurred to Vivian. She didn't even know she was rich, she thought everyone was as well off as her, all their monetary and other needs taken care of without a thought to how it happened. Then Vivian flunks out of her first year of Vassar because going to class didn't interest her and she is shipped off to live with her Aunt Peg, in New York City. Peg owns a falling down theater and offers plays to the poor, two plays a day, everyday, and Vivian uses her sewing skills to make costumes for the plays.

Vivian also spends all her spare time with the showgirls and every night partying and having sex with men. One of her few regrets in life, at ninety five years of age, is that she didn't have even more sex with men than she had. It's 1940 and the fact that there is a war going on and that the US is getting involved in the war totally flies over Vivian's head...she's busy partying and sexing and nothing would have stopped this thoughtless way of life except she becomes part of a sex scandal that brings her NYC life to a halt. Vivian runs home in shame (although her parents think she came home because she was homesick) and spends the next year moping. Aunt Peg rescues her to have her help put on plays for those working to support the war cause in NYC and Vivie actually begins to notice what is happening around her.

That is the first part of the book and it could have made a complete book. The parts I liked the most were the historical aspects of theater life in NYC and the part of living in NYC during WWII. We then enter the rest of Vivian's life, where she uses her sewing skills to run a bridal boutique, all the while spending many of her evenings having sex with men. See Vivian is ahead of her time, she is the sixties sexual revolution before it ever happened and she's going to tell us about how she and her friends have always been ahead of their times. But also, Vivian is going to use one instance in her life when she was being driven home, in shame after the scandal, where a young man insulted her concerning the scandal, to detail her entire life to a relative of his, seventy five years later. She claims she is telling her life story so that this lonely, hurt man can be known for the wonderful man he really was but I see it as a way to continue keeping the focus on Vivian...it's always Vivian...Vivian is good at sex, sewing, and focusing on Vivian.

This is a long book and I kept waiting for Vivian to get to the point but she is the point. This book is about her, with part of the book focusing on the theater world and WWII, also. I could have used a lot less about Vivian but since she is narrating the story and she's the star of her world, that was not going

## City of Girls

to happen. I enjoyed much of the book and wish I could have liked Vivian better but I must say that this story is true to the personality of Vivian and maybe shouldn't have been written any other way.

Thank you to Riverhead Books/Penguin Publishing Group and Edelweiss for this ARC. ...more

Vivian Morris is an elderly woman recounting the days of her youth in this frolic through 1940's New York. She's a nineteen-year-old virgin when she journeys to the city to live in her Aunt Peg's crumbling theater, the Lily Playhouse. Hers is a tale of late-night carousing and rambunctious sexual exploration, followed by war, maturation, and the mundane trivialities of becoming an adult.

In the preview to this Advanced Uncorrected Proof, Gilbert writes that she wants this book to "go down like a Vivian Morris is an elderly woman recounting the days of her youth in this frolic through 1940's New York. She's a nineteen-year-old virgin when she journeys to the city to live in her Aunt Peg's crumbling theater, the Lily Playhouse. Hers is a tale of late-night carousing and rambunctious sexual exploration, followed by war, maturation, and the mundane trivialities of becoming an adult.

In the preview to this Advanced Uncorrected Proof, Gilbert writes that she wants this book to "go down like a champagne cocktail - light and bright, crisp and fun." And it nearly does, thanks to occasional bursts of humor, its lively cast of characters, and the glitz and glam of theater life. The narrative starts slow but really picks up once the characters band together to put on a boisterous play they hope will bring some desperately needed funds to the Lily. And the story of Vivian's awkward first sexual experience is the height of hilarity.

Vivian's youthful exploits include free love, beautiful showgirls and handsome men, but the book hardly delivers on its promotional promise of being an erotic, rollicking adventure. It's more sensual than erotic, and the narrative is quite somber and melancholy.

Most perplexing is the decision to tell the story through the eyes of an aged Vivian. She periodically interrupts to explain the significance of certain moments in her youth, bringing the narrative to a halt. She conveys everything through a hazy film, robbing the narrative of immediacy and putting everything at a remove. With this kind of narrator, there needs to be an arc or epiphany - not in her youth, but in her elder years - some moment that makes it worthwhile to convey the story with hindsight, but Vivian's final revelations are unsurprising.

Approach City of Girls with tempered expectations. Instead of the lyricism and gravity of *The Signature of All Things* or the velvet glamour of graphic dalliances and erotic encounters, anticipate a peach-hued coming-of-age with hints of memoir, a nostalgic and sentimental ode to redefining family and discovering oneself.

If I'd been more wise and attentive, I might have realized that America was eventually going to get pulled into this conflagration. [. . .] And I might have realized that some of the fun young men with whom I was cavorting every night in New York City were just the right age to be put on the front lines when America inevitably did enter this war. If I'd known then what I know now - namely: that so many of

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those beautiful young boys would soon be lost to the battlefields of Europe or to the infernos of the South Pacific - I would have had sex with even more of them.

If it sounds like I'm being facetious, I'm not.

I wish I'd done more of everything with those boys.\*

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\*Note: Quote taken from an Advanced Uncorrected Proof.

Many thanks to the kind people at Penguin Random House for providing a free ARC in exchange for an honest review. ...more

## City Of Girls Kindle

Before I start, I'd like to mention a few things Elizabeth Gilbert wrote at the beginning of the book, which attracted me to it, and also explains the book very well. She says:

"I've longed to write a novel about promiscuous girls whose lives are not destroyed by their sexual desires", then she introduces Vivian Morris, who's our narrator and the main character of this book.

And Gilbert says: "My goal was to write a book that would go down like a champagne cocktail- light and bright, crisp and fun."

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So she did :)

This is a coming of age story of Vivian, a very likeable and vivid character. She's 19 when we start following her, a college drop out coming from a wealthy family. She moves to New York to live with her eccentric aunt Peg, who owns a theatre, and then, her adventures begin. We follow Vivian until she's very old.

I can easily say, Vivian is a character you'd want to follow, you'd want to listen to her stories because she's very energetic, sassy, free and fun.

"I promise that I will try my best in these pages not to go on and on about how much better everything was back in my day. I always hated hearing old people yammering on like this when I was young. (Nobody cares! Nobody cares about your Golden Age, you blathering goat!) And I do want to assure you: I'm aware that many things were not better in the 1940s. Underarm deodorants, air-conditioning were woefully inadequate, for instance, so everybody stank like crazy, especially in the summer, and also we had Hitler."

The book started very strong, I loved Gilbert's note, I loved Vivian right away. She was so ready to throw herself out in the world and welcome all the experiences that was thrown back at her. I think her attitude for life was a good reminder of 'life is short' and we mustn't forget to live it while we can.

Gilbert gave so much life and energy to her characters that it really impressed me so much. They were all different than each other, all flawed, but amazing. Peg, uncle Billy, Edna, and many more. It was a parade of interesting people that we got to know so well. I just could picture all of them in front of my eyes, and I wished so badly I could transfer there to meet them.

For me, the highlight of this book is definitely how real and how vivid Gilbert writes. It could be mistaken for a real memoir.

"I was long and tall, that's all there was to it. And if it sounds like I'm about to tell you the story of an ugly duckling who goes to the city and finds out that she's pretty, after all-don't worry, that is not that story. I was always pretty, Angela. What's more, I always knew it."

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Another thing is the historical time Vivian was in, 1940s. It wasn't an easy period, when there was the war. Again, I felt like I was transferred to those times to New York. The amount of detail Gilbert put in her descriptions were so imaginative. The way she described the dresses, the society, the theatres, the effects of war on people, was just impressive. I loved it!

I wanted Vivian to be real so badly, I wanted her to be on TV so I could watch her telling her stories, even better, a friend so I could have coffee with her. It was also fascinating to watch her to get older and more mature. But, in any part of her life, she was interesting. I highlighted so many of her comments, and actually many more characters.

In my opinion, there's one thing that could be better in this book. Sometimes the energy went down a bit too long, some periods that were rather un-eventful took more space than it should. But, it didn't decrease my love for the book :)

But, all in all, I thought this book was fantastically written with interesting characters. Such vivid descriptions, a lot of energy, wit and wisdom. A surprise would pop out of the pages every now and then.

In some ways, it reminded me of *Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, but don't get me wrong here. The stories aren't even remotely similar. But, the way I wanted Vivian to be real so much reminded me how much I wanted *Evelyn Hugo* to be real. Because they were so well written, captivating characters.

I hope this was useful :) ...more

*City of Girls* is a genre-bending, uniquely-structured, light-hearted, deeply-profound kind of novel, whatever that means. I'm honestly still in awe of it. The first half has zero conflict and yet never fails to engage. I devoured every moment of being young and careless in 1940's New York, amid showgirls and theater personalities. This glorious fantasy is so enrapturing it doesn't matter if nothing goes wrong. In fact, I prefer it that way. Arguably, when the complications do show up, the novel *City of Girls* is a genre-bending, uniquely-structured, light-hearted, deeply-profound kind of novel, whatever that means. I'm honestly still in awe of it. The first half has zero conflict and yet never fails to engage. I devoured every moment of being young and careless in 1940's New York, amid showgirls and theater personalities. This glorious fantasy is so enrapturing it doesn't matter if nothing goes wrong. In fact, I prefer it that way. Arguably, when the complications do show up, the novel peters out. Writers are constantly taught that conflict is everything, but in a way Gilbert proves the experts wrong. Perhaps, as the novel suggests of the 1940s, this is a sign of the times. When the world is conflicted enough, we prefer pleasure over drama.

When the second half takes a more serious turn, it's a little disappointing. Everything was so wonderful! Why did you have to ruin it? The answer, of course, is that real life isn't all fur and feathers. Gilbert succeeds in the grittier sections by showing us that, even in the realm of adult consequences, it's possible to move beyond mistakes, be true to yourself, and ultimately live a fabulous life.

## City of Girls

Other than feeling a little long in places, I have no complaints. Full disclosure, I listened to the audio version which was so masterfully narrated that I have no doubt it enhanced the experience. Dancing through the streets of New York is a great distraction on the daily commute, but may struggle to demand my attention in bed after a long day. If anybody transitioned from book to audio, I'm curious to hear how the experience differed. ...more