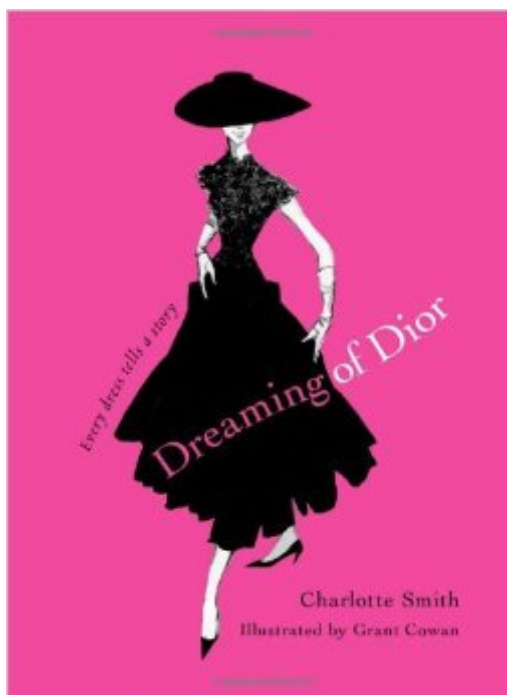


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# Dreaming Of Dior: Every Dress Tells A Story



## Synopsis

Charlotte Smith had already had more than her fair share of fabulous dresses and adventures. She lived life to the fullest in London, Paris and New York before falling in love with Australia and making it her home. Then she discovered that she had inherited a priceless vintage clothing collection from her American Quaker godmother, Doris Darnell. When the boxes started arriving, they were filled with more than three thousand pieces dating from 1790 to 1995, from Dior and Chanel originals to a dainty pioneer dress. But when she unearthed her godmother's book of stories, the true value of what she had been given hit home. This wasn't merely a collection of beautiful things; it was a collection of lives. Women's lives. Tiny snapshots of our joys and disappointments, our entrances and exits, triumphant and tragic. This is a book for any woman who knows a dress can hold a lifetime of memories. Charlotte Smith is Curator of The Fashion and Textile Gallery in Sydney which is also home to The Darnell Collection, the 5000 piece vintage collection Charlotte inherited from her godmother, Doris Darnell. Born in Hong Kong and raised in the United States, Charlotte has a degree from Hollins College in Art History and has lived and worked in America, England, and France for Impressionist art dealers. She moved to Australia in 1998 and opened a shop selling French country antiques. Charlotte has one daughter. Grant Cowan has worked as an illustrator on magazines like Harper's Bazaar, Glamour and Red magazine. He studied fashion design and lived in London before moving to Australia to teach fashion illustration. Grant is a freelance fashion illustrator and works with fashion schools in Sydney.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From the introduction, in which author Charlotte Smith describes how her godmother Doris Darnell presented her with a priceless collection of couture clothing, to the exquisite illustrations, to the stories behind each ensemble, this book is pure magic. Now the curator of the Darnell Collection, Smith wrote this book as a tribute to her "fairy" godmother as well as the women who wore the amazing outfits. Every dress (yes, they are mostly all dresses) has a story, whether it's laced with anecdotes about famous people, spiced with humor or infused with poignant recollections of loss. Inspiring and full of affection, this book is something to be shared, not only among fashionistas, but as a celebration of bonds between women.

My wife has an affinity for fashion books, and wanted to begin growing her collection. This is the second book I purchased for her collection. She loves the book, and has added it to our coffee table. The hardcover book is bound nicely as well as having good quality paper. The images are also very crisp and colorful. As the title states, this is a great little book to get for your loved one as a "just because" gift. It's priced great, and with Prime you can't beat the free shipping! also has special boxes that they use for their books, so you're not getting some huge box just for a book. Good job !

My attention is on the illustrations, lovely and creative to aid the imagination when thinking about some of the stories and people. The book will make a wonderful gift to those who love fashion, art, and vintage clothing.

Charlotte Smith inherited a collection of beautiful vintage clothing from her godmother, Doris Darnell. Her godmother collected not only the clothing but the stories of the people who wore them. At first, Charlotte was overwhelmed and didn't know what to do with all of the clothing (over 3,000 pieces), but once she read the stories, she knew she had to share the collection somehow. She couldn't bear the thought of it being broken up, so she didn't want to donate it to museums. Luckily for us, she has created a beautiful book. *Dreaming of Dior* by Charlotte Smith is an absolutely gorgeous book - from the flocked dust jacket to the beautiful endpapers to the heavy weight paper to the stunning illustrations. Because of the high quality paper used, this book has some heft to it. After a short introduction, approximately 140 items of the collection are shown off in the pages of the book. The left hand page tells a story about someone who wore the dress and the right hand page features a frame-worthy illustration by Grant Cowan. These garments date from the 1800s to the

modern day. The stories tell about the person who wore them and when I read them, I felt like I was living vicariously through them. I particularly enjoyed the stories that featured the author or her family. I've never been much of a "girly-girl," but I adored this fabulous book! First of all, the illustrations are just amazing - bright and vibrant on vivid backgrounds - and they were so much fun to study. It's hard for me to describe just how beautiful they are. The stories are wonderful too - they made me dream of times past. I'm sure I'll continue to flip through this book for years! This is a must have for every fashion lover out there.

My godmother and I lived a 30 minute walk from each other. We rarely saw each other except on my birthday and Christmas where we dutifully exchanged gifts. The year we gave each other the same clutch wallet for Christmas we decided to stop sharing gifts and just send cards (even after I moved to another state.) Imagine having a godmother who loves fashion as much as you do, and when she goes to fashion heaven leaves you an amazing legacy. Quaker Doris Darnell collected vintage clothing and accessories (dated 1795-present.) The pieces came from acquaintances and friends who also sent letters, stories and photographs about each piece Doris received. Charlotte Allen inherited the collection and began chronicling the pieces - especially the dresses and the personal stories that came with them. This first book in the series shows stories on one page in paragraphs and snippets with beautiful illustrations of each dress by Grant Cowan. What we really get is a view of social history from the stories - how women lived in different centuries and decades and what they endured to keep fashionable with their times. Whether you are a fashion historian, fashion designer or a fashionista, *Dreaming of Dior* and the follow up book *Dreaming of Chanel* belong in your fashion library.

I am almost done w/*Dreaming of Dior*. It's insightful, alluring, charming and maintains the mystique of bygone times, the adventures of others and the confluence of events experienced by the original owners of these fashion pieces. I'm moved by many of the stories who owned and wore these outfits,, intrigued by the fashion items themselves and I understand completely the author's and her godmother's, desire to share all of this with us. Something inside me sighed with relief as I began reading this book. I was relieved to be able to immerse myself in a book that celebrated each woman who adorned herself with these outfits. I was relieved to know that this yearning I've had about fashion, especially vintage fashion, was shared by others with how it relates to the whys, hows and whens of an outfit and its previous owner. I love the illustrations, too, but I wish there were photos of the actual pieces accompanying each story. I understand why there are not, but checking

out the pieces online, worn by models, has helped me picture them better. I recommend this book for those not just into fashion, but for those who appreciate all aspects of womanliness, whose inner self wants to be expressed by outer dressing.

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