



# The tailor's girl

By Fiona McIntosh

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## Genre & subject

Amnesiacs

Women tailor fiction

World War, 1914-1918 England

## Synopsis

A humble soldier wakes in a military hospital with no recollection of his past. Jones has only a few horrifying memories of the battlefield at Ypres, and his identity becomes a puzzle he must solve. A stunning seamstress dreams of her own high-fashion salon in London. After a fated meeting with Jones, Eden Valentine is driven by something more than charity to help the soldier. A mysterious and aristocratic man may hold the key to Jones's past - and to Eden's future. But the news that Alex Wynter bears will bring shattering consequences that threaten to tear their lives apart.

## Author biography

Fiona McIntosh (born 1960) is an author of adult and children's books who lives in Australia. She was born in Brighton, England and between the ages of three and eight, travelled to Africa due to her father's work. At the age of nineteen, she travelled first to Paris and later to Australia, where she has lived ever since. In 2007, she released a crime novel, *Bye Bye Baby*, under the pseudonym of Lauren Crow, however the pen name has since been dropped for the republished edition and for the sequel, *Beautiful Death*.

## Discussion starters

- Do you understand Eden's reasons for helping Jones escape from the hospital? Do you think she did the right thing?
- Is Eden Valentine the only female character in the novel to show an incredibly strong will?
- Discuss the emancipation of women during this period.
- In what ways did family duty play a part in the lives of these characters?
- Which hero did you prefer - Jones or Alex Wynter?
- Whose world do you think would offer Eden Valentine greater happiness?
- Discuss Benjamin and his role of the bad guy in this novel. Do you think he was harshly done by?
- Did you come to hate Penelope Aubrey-Finch, or love her?
- In a previous draft of this novel, the author killed off young Tommy in childbirth. Do you think it would have made for a stronger or weaker story without him?
- How important to your reading enjoyment was the time period for the setting of this novel?

- What role did fashion play in this book? Discuss the changes in clothes and decor as the Edwardian era gave way to the interwar period and the roaring twenties.
- Consider what life might have been like for soldiers returning from the Front, having lost relatives, mates, limbs, perhaps even their minds like our lead character...only to encounter Spanish flu, women who refused to return to 'being seen but not heard' and the Depression.
- Do you like happy endings or can you stomach a bittersweet conclusion? Fiona writes to no structured plan and as she approached the end of the novel she realised that it was highly likely that Eden Valentine would never meet Alex Wynter. She thought that they would miss seeing each other by a heartbeat and go their separate ways, never knowing how close they had come to being reunited. How would this ending have affected your reading experience?
- Do think this story would make a good movie and if so, who should play Eden, Alex, Madeleine, Benjamin and Penelope?

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