

The LIZ TAYLOR RING

The inspiration for the book by Brenda Janowitz

There's just something about jewelry. The sparkle, the glamour, the way it makes you feel when you put it on. A piece of jewelry can make you feel beautiful. It can make you feel loved. It can remind you of the person who gave it to you—make you feel like they are with you, even if they are long gone.

For every piece of jewelry that I own, I can tell you who gave it to me, what occasion it marked and where I was in my life when I got it: the delicate diamond studs, gifted to me by my husband, to mark the occasion of my first son's birth; the double strand of pearls, a twenty-first-birthday gift from my parents; and the gold ring with a star, given to me by my grandma Dorothy, after I told her it was the piece of her jewelry that I most loved. She took it off her finger and handed it to me, saying that I shouldn't have to wait for her to die to wear it. She wanted to watch me enjoy it while she was still alive.

Heirlooms, in particular, are so incredibly important to me—I wear the gold ring with the star from Grandma Dorothy all the time, and I love having a piece of her with me as I go through my day-to-day life. I also have two other rings that belonged to my grandmother that I treasure. On important days when I need to feel her spirit with me, I wear all three at once. I've worn Grandma Dorothy's rings to family bar mitzvahs (I wouldn't want her to miss a fabulous party), and I've worn them to important meetings (her spirit fortifying me to do well). I've worn them on trips to the supermarket and I've worn them to big fancy weddings. When I wear them, friends and strangers alike ask me about them, and I get the chance to talk about her. When I wear them, my kids ask me about her, the woman who gave them their blue eyes.

Thinking about heirloom jewelry gave me the idea for *The Liz Taylor Ring*—what if a ring that was thought to be long lost were to be found again? As with *The Grace Kelly Dress*, I wanted to tie an heirloom item to a famous actress, channeling my other obsession: old Hollywood. Once I decided to write about jewelry, there's no other Hollywood star that comes to mind but Elizabeth Taylor.

Elizabeth Taylor's jewelry collection is legendary, but for me, it was always about the Krupp diamond, which is now known as—what else?!—the Elizabeth Taylor diamond. I love that Richard Burton gifted it to Elizabeth Taylor for no reason at all. I love that it belonged to Vera Krupp, of the German munitions family, and Elizabeth Taylor often quipped that it was perfect for a “nice Jewish girl” like herself. I love that Elizabeth Taylor wore it every day of her life.

My seventh novel, *The Liz Taylor Ring*, pays homage to the rings passed down to me by my grandmother, as it traces a priceless family heirloom—a long-lost diamond ring inspired by the famous Krupp diamond—that reappears, leaving three siblings to determine its fate. Just as millions of fans have been swept away by the stories of Elizabeth Taylor's astonishing life, I hope that you, too, will be swept away by this story of sibling rivalry, an all-consuming love affair and an eleven-carat diamond.

The Liz Taylor Ring
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On sale February 1, 2022
Trade paperback original
9781525806476
\$16.99 US | \$21.99 CAN

