

The background is a solid, bright pink color. Several pieces of bright blue fabric are draped and flowing across the scene, creating a sense of movement and elegance. The fabric appears to be a smooth, possibly silk-like material, with highlights and shadows that give it a three-dimensional appearance. The fabric pieces are positioned at the top, bottom, and sides, framing the central text.

**SUSANNAH
HARDY**

Loving
Lizzie
March

*Folly, fashion and
flailing in love*

READING NOTES



Blurb

Life is not going to plan for failed fashion designer Lizzie March, and then she finds herself pregnant to super-hot bad boy Jake Wheeler.

Convinced that he's The One, now all she has to do is make him realise that she is The One for him!

But is it possible she's been looking for love in all the wrong places? Maybe everything she has ever wanted is right under her very own stilettos.

Author biography

Susannah Hardy is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in countless print and online publications such as *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Domain*, *Country Home Ideas*, *Modern Home*, *Peppermint*, *Babyology* and *Practical Parenting*. Originally an actor, Susannah completed a Bachelor of Arts at the University of New South Wales before running away to study acting in Paris. Returning to Australia, her work has involved anything from film and television roles to being one of two singing and rollerblading Carmen Mirandas, *Tutti & Frutti* (she was Frutti), and creating sketch comedy for Foxtel.

These days, in between covering real estate, home interiors and parenting issues, Susannah enjoys writing women's contemporary fiction and creating stories about the more comic side of life and love. *Loving Lizzie March* is her first novel.

Susannah lives in Sydney's inner west with her husband, two daughters and a puppy. Find out more about Susannah on her website at www.susannahhardywriter.com



Questions

1. *'I know relationships can hurt but I didn't think I'd end up in hospital as a result. Total accident. No one's fault. I just happened to be passing by his home. Yes, I was a good forty-five minutes out of my way, it was getting late and I wasn't exactly invited, but somehow, before I knew it, I was standing outside his house! Complete coincidence.'* (page 1)
 - a. *Loving Lizzie March* sits firmly in the genre of romantic comedy, which has traditional codes and conventions (meet cutes, humour and happy endings etc.). How does the novel fit within the romantic-comedy framework? Are there ways in which it subverts the framework, and how? Why do some people gravitate towards romantic comedies? What does this genre make you feel?
 - b. Most of the characters in *Loving Lizzie March* – Lizzie, Dr Mitch, Clem and Cherie – are chasing their dreams. In which way is each character chasing their dreams and how do they succeed? Specifically, why do you think Lizzie failed in fashion design to begin with? Even though this plays into the 'happy ending' trope, why do you think this is an important part of romantic comedy?
2. *'I've never trusted anyone since. Is it any wonder, then, that I found myself indulging in a little bit of casual stalking? Hence my 'checking in' on Jake. Nothing creepy, just an attempt to find out what's really going on.'* (page 28)

The story begins with Lizzie standing on a wheelie bin looking through Jake's window. Do you consider this stalking or an act of desperation? Do you think her actions are justified? Why or why not?

3. *'Not every guy is The One. And in the unlikely event any guy had the potential of being The One, you scare him off by doing insane things and causing him or others physical harm.'* (Clem, page 18)

'Love' and the search for 'The One' are pervading themes throughout the novel. How does *Loving Lizzie March* explore 'love' as a theme? Lizzie, Clem and Lizzie's mum all have different thoughts about Lizzie's approach to finding 'The One'. What are your thoughts on the concept of 'The One'?
4. Lizzie's romantic relationships with Dr Mitch and Jake are polar opposites. Discuss the differences between these two relationships. Why is Lizzie so compatible with Dr Mitch? Why did Lizzie believe she needed to make it work with Jake? What does her relationship with Jake say about dating in a contemporary world, with the ease of text messaging and meeting people on dating apps and speed-dating?



5. Lizzie March is exasperatingly endearing. She wears her heart on her sleeve, she is clumsy, and, like all great characters, she is flawed. Discuss Lizzie's character and her journey as a protagonist. Do you relate to her? Why or why not? How does Lizzie grow to love herself?
6. *'Most conversations with my mother centre around the same subject: Mr Right. And how and when I'm going to meet him. As far as she's concerned, being thirty and single is a tragedy.'* (page 26)

Lizzie feels societal pressures to be in a perfect relationship, be a model daughter and have a successful career. What does her journey say about the unrealistic expectations that society puts on women? What does it say about success and perfection?

7. *'My heart starts racing as Clem continues to unleash a fury the likes of which I never thought her capable. Here I was assuming that Clem was more than happy to sort through the constant stream of dilemmas I seem to face, but never have I stopped to consider how stressful her life is.'* (page 120)

Consider Lizzie's friendship with Clem. Why do you think they remained friends throughout the years? What makes their bond so strong? In what ways is Clem a good friend to Lizzie? Does Lizzie sometimes take Clem for granted? How and why? Compare their friendship to your own friendships.

8. *'Dad and I never talk about anything too emotional so his simple affection and concern is touching.'* (page 296)
 - a. Lizzie's mum and dad parent her in very different ways. Discuss some of these differences, and their effectiveness or lack thereof.
 - b. Lizzie's parents represent traditional gender roles. How does this affect the novel and their relationships with Lizzie? Similarly, how does her mum's point of view of the perfect daughter permeate her relationship with Lizzie?
9. *'Mum's chatter fills the silence. She gives me a hug and I cling to her, silent tears soaking into her David Lawrence blouse. The fact that she doesn't tell me how common miscarriage is makes me cry even more.'* (page 198)

The trauma of miscarriage is a theme that should be approached with compassion, care and sensitivity. Discuss how *Loving Lizzie March* has approached this theme. Why is it important that this theme is explored in fiction?



10. *I pretend to know what [onesies] are, but Clem is not fooled. “They’re all-in-one outfits that newborn babies wear,” she says, slowly, like she’s explaining something to a small child. “You can never have enough of them.”*

“I know what a onesie is, Clem,” I say, even though I’m grateful she has clarified this. I make a mental note to add that to my list of things to google.’ (page 112)

How is *Loving Lizzie March* a commentary on pregnancy and the pressures and fears placed on new mothers? Do you think the baby-product industry plays into these fears? Why or why not?

11. *‘She gives me her card, saying if I ever need a cab to call her directly. My eyes are brimming with tears. Thank God Cherie picked me up.’ (page 105)*

Cherie L’Amour’s role in the novel is delightfully unexpected, and she is always there when Lizzie needs her. What role does she play in Lizzie’s journey? How does Cherie fall into the ‘wise woman’ archetype?