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The Dressmaker
Kate Alcott, 2012
Knopf Doubleday
320 pp.

Summary
A vivid, romantic, and relentlessly compelling historical novel about a spirited young woman who survives the Titanic disaster only to find herself embroiled in the media frenzy left in the wake of the tragedy.

Tess, an aspiring seamstress, thinks she's had an incredibly lucky break when she is hired by famous designer Lady Lucile Duff Gordon to be a personal maid on the Titanic's doomed voyage. Once on board, Tess catches the eye of two men, one a roughly-hewn but kind sailor and the other an enigmatic Chicago millionaire. But on the fourth night, disaster strikes.

Amidst the chaos and desperate urging of two very different suitors, Tess is one of the last people allowed on a lifeboat. Tess’s sailor also manages to survive unharmed, witness to Lady Duff Gordon’s questionable actions during the tragedy. Others—including the gallant Midwestern tycoon—are not so lucky.

On dry land, rumors about the survivors begin to circulate, and Lady Duff Gordon quickly becomes the subject of media scorn and later, the hearings on the Titanic. Set against a historical tragedy but told from a completely fresh angle, The Dressmaker is an atmospheric delight filled with all the period's glitz and glamour, all the raw feelings of a national tragedy and all the contradictory emotions of young love. (From the publisher.)

Author Bio
Kate Alcott is the pen name of author Patricia O'Brien, who is the author of Harriet and Isabella, The Glory Cloak and co-author of I Know Just What You Mean, a New York Times bestseller. She lives in Washington, D.C.

A New York Times article explains the reason for O'Brien's new pseudonym:

Patricia O’Brien had five novels to her name when her agent, Esther Newberg, set out last year to shop her sixth one, a work of historical fiction called The Dressmaker. A cascade of
painful rejections began. Ms. O’Brien’s longtime editor at Simon & Schuster passed on it, saying that her previous novel, Harriet and Isabella, hadn’t sold well enough.

One by one, 12 more publishing houses saw the novel. They all said no.

Just when Ms. O’Brien began to fear that The Dressmaker would be relegated to a bottom desk drawer like so many rejected novels, Ms. Newberg came up with a different proposal: Try to sell it under a pen name.

Written by Kate Alcott, the pseudonym Ms. O’Brien dreamed up, it sold in three days.

Book Reviews
The book, a story of a scrappy seamstress who survives the sinking of the Titanic,... ushered in by sparkling reviews (Kirkus said it had “an appealing, soulful freshness”) and with translation rights sold in five countries, something that had never happened to any of Ms. O’Brien’s books before.

Julie Bosman - New York Times

An unashamed girlie-book....we learn a good deal about what it was like when the ship went down. But we also follow Tess as she learns about the high-fashion business in New York.

Washington Post

Why write a Titanic story not really about the Titanic? Because what happens to the survivors makes for interesting reading.....compelling.....Her research into the Titanic, its sinking, and the hearings subsequently prompted is impeccable....fascinating.....actual historical figures become intricate characters in Alcott's hands.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

The 1912 sinking of the Titanic is the stone at the center of a ripple expanding to encompass the rest of the world in this fictionalized account of real historical persons and events. It is a layered story highlighting class differences and the public and private personas people put on as easily as high-fashion dresses, illustrating both the tragedy’s individual torment as well as a larger wave of survivor’s guilt. Multiple points of view bring many perspectives to the witch-hunt atmosphere and courtroom drama of a shocked world looking for someone to blame. By setting the story mainly in New York City, Alcott contrasts Lady Duff Gordon’s lush, glittering world of high society with reporter Pinky Wade’s tenement squalor and seamstress Tess Collins’s ambition and longing for freedom. Tess, the fulcrum of a star-crossed love triangle with two fellow survivors, a twice-divorced wealthy American and a sailor with a talent for woodcarving, never loses her integrity as she struggles to make sense of everything. These small stories stand
for hundreds of others whose voices were stolen by the tragedy as survivors faced the consequences of indiscretion and quick tongues. A low hum of background action—suffragettes and union tensions—mirrors the human costs in the disaster that besets the Titanic....will find much to think about in this story shaped by the inherent desire to know more about one of the most documented and researched tragedies in human history

*Library Journal*

It's *Titanic* revisited, in a romance focused on the survivors and the scandal, seen from the perspective of an aspiring seamstress whose fortunes intertwine with real characters from the epic tragedy....interesting historical facts...an appealing, soulful freshness to this shrewdly commercial offering.

*Kirkus Reviews*

Discussion Questions

1. The sinking of the Titanic in 1912 remains in many people’s eyes a symbolic dividing line between a world with rigid class divisions and one with a rising middle class. Tess yearned to be part of the glamour and Jim wanted to be free of its constraints. Can a happy medium be found between these two desires, not only for Tess and Jim, but for anyone in similar circumstances?

2. Tess and Pinky were two young women in a rapidly changing world, on the cusp of a time when women could actually make choices about their lives and work. Describe how the choices for women one hundred years ago differ from today, and how they remain the same.

3. Tess and Pinky are both smart, competent women who experience moments of both conflict and companionship with one another. What ultimately draws them together and bonds their friendship?

4. In many ways Tess is unflappable and emotionally direct, but at times, she can be anxious and uncertain, especially around Lucille. Dealing with design—fabric, texture, and color seem to be the best route to confidence. What does this say about Tess’ personality?

5. What is your overall impression of Lucile? Is she a villain or simply misunderstood? If her arrogance and sense of privilege are what got her into trouble, what redeeming factors—if any—do you see in her?

6. How would you argue Lucille’s case? Compare her treatment to that of celebrities of our own time who get caught in controversy.

7. Fashion is its own character in the book—both glamorous and fickle. Is the fashion industry viewed differently now than it was in 1912? Who is Lucille’s design equivalent today? Or was Lucille incomparable?
8. If Lucille’s career had not declined after the sinking, do you think she could have evolved as a designer and conformed to society’s new opinions of the female figure and fashion? Or were both Lucille and her designs destined to become obsolete?

9. Only one of twenty lifeboats went back for survivors. Many people felt anguish and regret; others believed they had no choice. Can you picture yourself in that same situation? Husbands, children in the water—what comes first, the instinct to survive or to save others? How would you hope you would act?

10. Officer Harold Lowe was criticized for declaring he waited until the pleas for help from the water “thinned out” before going back on a rescue mission. This kind of blunt honesty shocked those who heard it. Are we still adverse to hearing hard facts from those whom we want to be heroes?

11. Using the “whitewash brush,” as a ship officer put it, the White Star Line did its best to deny all responsibility for the Titanic tragedy. Its officers even falsely claimed at first that the ship had not sunk, raising the hopes of the families waiting on land. What parallels do you see with White Star’s corporate reaction and current corporate self-protectiveness?

12. Did you find out anything new about the Titanic from reading the book? Were you aware of the hearings that occurred after the sinking?

(Questions issued by publisher.)
WASHINGTON — Patricia O’Brien had five novels to her name when her agent, Esther Newberg, set out last year to shop her sixth one, a work of historical fiction called “The Dressmaker.”

A cascade of painful rejections began. Ms. O’Brien’s longtime editor at Simon & Schuster passed on it, saying that her previous novel, “Harriet and Isabella,” hadn’t sold well enough.

One by one, 12 more publishing houses saw the novel. They all said no.

Just when Ms. O’Brien began to fear that “The Dressmaker” would be relegated to a bottom desk drawer like so many rejected novels, Ms. Newberg came up with a different proposal: Try to sell it under a pen name.

Written by Kate Alcott, the pseudonym Ms. O’Brien dreamed up, it sold in three days.

Ms. O’Brien and Ms. Newberg had cannily circumvented what many authors see as a modern publishing scourge — Nielsen BookScan, the subscription service that tracks book sales and is
at the fingertips of every agent, editor and publisher — with a centuries-old trick, the nom de plume. It has been employed by writers from Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain) to Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) to Stephen King (Richard Bachman).

“It meant that the story I had wanted to tell had sold,” said Ms. O’Brien, a chatty 70-something who wears her hair in a smooth brown bob, talking over a tray of herbal tea and lemon cookies this week in her spacious apartment in the Wyoming building in the Adams-Morgan neighborhood here. “My book wasn’t getting a fair chance. And choosing a pen name gave it a fair chance.”

The book, a story of a scrappy seamstress who survives the sinking of the Titanic, went on sale this week, ushered in by sparkling reviews (Kirkus said it had “an appealing, soulful freshness”) and with translation rights sold in five countries, something that had never happened to any of Ms. O’Brien’s books before.

Doubleday has 35,000 copies in print after two printings, said Todd Doughty, a spokesman for the publisher. That gives “The Dressmaker” a major head start over “Harriet and Isabella,” Ms. O’Brien’s previous novel, which was considered a flop. It has sold 4,000 copies, according to BookScan, which tracks about 75 percent of retail sales of print books.

Ms. O’Brien, who has also written three nonfiction books, said she did what she had to do to get her book published in a time when publishers are being unusually cautious about which books they can invest in and how much they can pay in advances. The rapid rise of e-books has thrown out the old rules of traditional publishing, and publishers have been more conservative with advances than in the past.

“I have friends who are getting one-fifth of their last advance for new books,” Ms. O’Brien said.

There is a long history of employing pen names in publishing, for reasons both varied and simple. Some women have written under male names so that their work would be taken more seriously.

J. K. Rowling, who is known as Jo, created a gender-neutral version of her name so that boys would be more likely to read her books. Doris Lessing wrote two novels under the name Jane Somers — an experiment, she once said, in showcasing the problems that unknown writers face.

Some famous authors publish under pseudonyms so that they can get a fresh reading of their work. In 1987 Joyce Carol Oates released a book under the name Rosamond Smith but apologized and swore off pseudonyms when her publisher discovered what she had done.

Doubleday executives said they were unruffled when they discovered that Kate Alcott was really Patricia O’Brien.

After the 13 rejections last year Ms. Newberg sent the manuscript bearing Kate Alcott’s name to Melissa Danaczko, an editor at Doubleday, part of Random House.
“I realized that the book was not being judged on its merits,” Ms. Newberg said. “It was being judged on how many books she has sold. I needed somebody who couldn’t look on BookScan. And no, I didn’t feel guilty at all.”

Ms. Danaczko, 28, who said she had seen the 1997 movie “Titanic” perhaps a dozen times, instantly loved Ms O’Brien’s dramatic retelling of the disaster and its aftermath. But when she was piqued by curiosity about her unknown author and typed “Kate Alcott” into Google, nothing significant popped up.

“I guess I hadn’t really thought about the possibility that she might be working under a pen name,” Ms. Danaczko said. “I was operating under the assumption that she was somebody Esther had pulled from the slush pile or was an old friend.”

She shrugged off the lack of a digital footprint. Within days they agreed upon an advance in the high five figures, a respectable sum for fiction these days.

Keeping up her identity as Kate Alcott required a bit of deception on Ms. O’Brien’s part. She created a new e-mail address, alcott.kate5@gmail.com, that she used for corresponding with Ms. Danaczko. She was spare with her biographical details, telling Ms. Danaczko only that she lived in Washington, had four children and used to be a newspaper reporter (all true). And even after the book contract was signed, the two had never met.

That began to crumble last fall when Doubleday asked Ms. O’Brien for a publicity photo that it could use for promotions and to include on the book jacket. She produced a picture that was a decade old, in black and white.

“Her face was almost fuzzed out,” Ms. Danaczko said. “She looked like someone on ‘Dateline.’ ”

Even though Ms O’Brien briefly worried that Doubleday would cancel the book, Ms. Newberg finally told them that Kate Alcott was Ms. O’Brien. A new publicity photo was taken, and Ms. O’Brien came to New York to meet her editor for the first time over lunch.

“It was an interesting twist, but it didn’t affect the way I felt about Pat,” said Ms. Danaczko, who just bought another novel by Ms. O’Brien. “During the editorial process I became incredibly fond of Kate Alcott.”

A version of this article appeared in print on February 23, 2012, on page C1 of the New York edition with the headline: Book Is Judged By the Name On Its Cover.
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/23/books/patricia-obrien-as-kate-alcott-sells-the-dressmaker.html?_r=0
Since first viewing James Cameron's *Titanic*, 15 years ago, I've been fascinated by the history surrounding the tragedy and the passengers aboard the "unsinkable" ship.

April 15, 2012, marks the centennial anniversary of the sinking of the RMS Titanic. One hundred years have passed since that fateful day, when the bow of the ship brushed an iceberg in the northern part of the Atlantic Ocean and became legend.

Captain E.J. Smith and crew were actually trying to avoid hitting the iceberg altogether, but instead it pierced the hull along the rivet line, causing catastrophic damage. The hull was ripped open, forcing water into five compartments, and eventually tipped forward into the ocean.

Two-and-half hours later, Titanic sunk. Of the 2,223 on board, 1,503 passengers and crew perished. There were only 20 lifeboats. The majority of survivors were first class passengers, women and children.

The Titanic's final resting place lies 12,500 feet below the ocean. Approximately 5,000 priceless artifacts have been recovered from the wreck, which have been preserved and put on display in exhibits throughout the world.

The legacy of the Titanic and its fated passengers has spurred countless fiction and non-fiction books, films, documentaries, and museums devoted to the White Star Liner, including a new historical novel, *The Dressmaker* by Kate Alcott.

The story is about a young maid, Tess Collins, who wants to be a dressmaker. Having heard about the Titanic's upcoming voyage to America, Tess takes this as a sign to better her life. But first, Tess needs to figure out a way to get on the vessel. On the docks, she accidentally meets Lady "Lucile" Duff Gordon, a famous British fashion designer who is traveling on the Titanic to New York. Overhearing a conversation between Duff Gordon and her sister, novelist Elinor Glyn, about needing a maid, Tess approaches the couturier with an offer. But what Tess, of course, doesn't realize when she takes the position, is that she will become embroiled in the tragedy and aftermath... and her life will never be the same.

What drew her to writing about the Titanic, Alcott explains:
"I've been fascinated by the Titanic story for a long time, and knew the 100th anniversary of the sinking was rapidly approaching. The sinking itself has been well covered, and I knew I didn't want to dwell on that. But very little attention has been paid to the aftermath. I felt drawn to that, and set out to trace the reverberations on the lives of the survivors."

While reading *The Dressmaker*, I felt as if I were actually living and breathing the events before, during and after the tragedy, especially when the ship hits the iceberg. It's a very emotional scene -- one you know is coming, but hope-against-hope it doesn't. The novel is filled with the atmosphere, clothes, and historical figures of the times, including the Astors, "The Unsinkable" Molly Brown, and J. Bruce Ismay, the White Star's Managing Director, who cowardly boarded a lifeboat before others.

Of her extensive research on the novel, Alcott says:

"I tried to immerse myself in the era. That meant reading books written then to soak up the flavor of the time -- the class distinctions, the political gossip, the cultural and social values. It meant not only reading old newspaper accounts of the Titanic sinking, but the transcripts of the testimony of crew and passengers at the U.S. Senate hearings."

She further explains:

"Reading what these people, so fresh from surviving such a raw and terrible event, had to say gave me some insight into how they coped with their feelings and their decisions. One hundred years fell away -- it was as if they were in the same room with me. I also read every non-fiction account I could find about the Titanic. There was no dearth of material. In fact, I had to protect against losing myself in various fascinating byways that would have weakened my story."

The novel primarily focusses on the Titanic Disaster Hearings chaired by U.S. Senator William A. Smith of Michigan. Smith who conducted the hearings, initially at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City, was adamant about what happened on April 15th. The hearings were eventually moved to Washington, D.C. and a total of 82 witnesses recalled their knowledge of the event and the aftermath.

Aside from real-life figures, *The Dressmaker* also features some intriguing fictional characters -- from Tess, who is charming and doesn't exactly know how to fit into her new high society world, and her two suitors (yes, there's romance in the novel) to an intrepid *New York Times* reporter, Pinky Wade.

Alcott's favorite character to write was Wade, of which she says:

"Pinky Wade pretty much bounced out of my head whole and onto the computer screen. I am very fond of her. I built her in part on the life and grit of Nellie Bly, whom -- as a former newspaper reporter myself -- I much admire. So there is some of me in her as well."

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Titanic's maiden voyage, the 1997 feature film, *Titanic*, will be released in 3D. Oscar and Emmy-winner, Julian Fellows (*Gosford Park, Downton Abbey*) also bit by the Titanic bug, is producing a four-part mini-series for television. The Port of Cork, the Titanic's last port of call, will host a program of events to commemorate the ship and
its passengers. And Guernsey’s Auctioneers & Brokers will auction off more than 5,000 artifacts, including a section of the hull to one lucky buyer, who agrees to preserve the items and put them on occasional public display.

As for her novel, Alcott, relays, this:

"The one thing I would like readers to take away with them after reading The Dressmaker is how difficult it can be in a crisis to make split-second life-changing decisions -- and then to live with those choices the rest of your life. The survivors of the Titanic sinking suffered greatly, and -- as is usually the case in real life -- there are multiple and contradictory truths about who they were and what they did."

Alcott is a pseudonym of author and journalist, Patricia O'Brien, who has six novels and three non-fiction books to her credit.

The Dressmaker was released February 21. Pick up a copy and enjoy!

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/julie-a-carlson/the-dressmaker-review_b_1301203.html
Lucy, Lady Duff-Gordon

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Lucy Christiana, Lady Duff-Gordon (née Sutherland) (13 June 1863 – 20 April 1935) was a leading fashion designer in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, best known as "Lucile", her professional name. The first English designer to achieve international renown, Lucile was a widely acknowledged innovator in couture styles as well as in fashion industry public relations. Apart from originating the "mannequin parade", a precursor to the modern fashion show, and training the first professional models, she launched liberating slit skirts and low necklines, popularized less restrictive corsets, and promoted alluring, pared-down lingerie. She opened branches of her London house, Lucile Ltd, in Paris, New York City, and Chicago, dressing a trend-setting clientele of royalty, nobility, and stage and film personalities. Lucy Duff Gordon is also remembered as a survivor of the sinking of Titanic in 1912, and as the losing party in the precedent-setting 1917 contract law case of Wood v. Lucy, Lady Duff-Gordon, in which Judge Benjamin N. Cardozo wrote the opinion for New York's highest court, the New York Court of Appeals.

Early life

Daughter of civil engineer Douglas Sutherland (1838–1865) and his Anglo-French-Canadian wife Elinor Saunders (1841–1937), Lucy Christiana Sutherland was born in London, England and raised in Guelph, Ontario, Canada, after her father's death of typhoid fever. When her mother remarried in 1871 to bachelor David Kennedy (d. 1889) she moved with them and her sister, the future novelist Elinor Glyn, to Saint Helier on the Isle of Jersey. Lucy acquired her love of fashion through dressing her collection of dolls, by studying gowns worn by women in family paintings, and later making clothes for herself and her sister. Returning to Jersey, after a visit to relatives in England in 1875, Lucy and Elinor survived the wreck of their ship when it ran aground in a gale.

Marriage and family

In 1884 Lucy married James Stuart Wallace, with whom she had a child, Esme (1885–1973) (later wife of the 2nd Earl of Halsbury and mother of Anthony, 3rd Earl of Halsbury). An alcoholic, Wallace was regularly unfaithful, and Lucy sought consolation in love affairs, including a long relationship with Dr. Sir Morell Mackenzie. The Wallaces separated in about 1890, and Lucy started divorce proceedings in 1893. In 1900 Lucile married Scottish landowner and sportsman Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon.
Fashion career

In order to support herself and her daughter after the end of her first marriage, Lucy began working as a dressmaker from home. By 1894 she had opened Maison Lucile in Old Burlington St, in the heart of the fashionable West End of London. In 1897 a larger shop was opened at 17 Hanover Square, before a further move (c. 1901–04) to 14 George St. In 1903 the business was incorporated as "Lucile, Ltd" and the following year moved to 23 Hanover Square.

Lucile Ltd served a wealthy clientele including aristocracy, royalty, and theatre stars. The business expanded with branches opening in New York City, Paris, and Chicago in 1910, 1911, and 1915 respectively.

Lucile was most famous for her lingerie, tea gowns, and evening wear. The gown illustrated at right typifies a classically draped style often found in Lucile designs. It was designed in Paris for the spring 1913 collection.

She is also widely credited with training the first professional fashion models (called mannequins) as well as staging the first runway or "catwalk" style shows. These affairs were theatrically inspired, invitation-only, tea-time presentations, complete with a stage, curtains, mood-setting lighting, music from a string band, souvenir gifts, and programmes. Another innovation in the presentation of her collections were what she called her "emotional gowns." These dresses were given descriptive names, influenced by literature, history, popular culture, and Lucile's interest in the psychology and personality of her clients.

The designer was especially noted for luxurious layered and draped garments in soft fabrics of blended pastel colours, often accentuated with sprays of hand-made silk flowers, which became a hallmark of her work. However, Lucile also created simple, smart tailored suits and daywear.

Some well-known clients, whose clothing influenced many when it appeared in early films, on stage, and in the press, included: Irene Castle, Lily Elsie, Gertie Millar, Gaby Deslys, Billie Burke, and Mary Pickford. Lucile costumed many theatrical productions including the London premiere of Franz Lehár's operetta The Merry Widow (1907), the Ziegfeld Follies revues on Broadway (1915–21), and the D. W. Griffith silent movie Way Down East (1920). Her fashions were also frequently featured in Pathé and Gaumont newsreels of the 1910s and 20s, and she appeared in her own weekly spot in the British newsreel "Around the Town" (c. 1917–1919).

Lucile also wrote a weekly syndicated fashion page for the Hearst newspaper syndicate (1910–22), and monthly columns for Harper's Bazaar and Good Housekeeping magazines (1912–22).

In addition to her career as a couturière, costumier, journalist, and pundit, Lucile took significant advantage of opportunities for commercial endorsement, lending her name to advertising for shoes, brassieres, perfume, and other luxury apparel and beauty items. Among the most
adventurous of her licensing ventures were a two-season lower-priced, mail-order fashion line for Sears, Roebuck & Co. (1916–17), which promoted her clothing in special de luxe catalogues, and a contract to design interiors for limousines and town cars for the Chalmers Motor Co, later Chrysler Corporation (1917).[19]

RMS Titanic

In 1912, Lucile travelled to America on business in connection with the New York branch of her salon. She and her husband, Sir Cosmo Duff Gordon, booked first class passage on the ocean liner RMS Titanic under the names Mr. and Mrs. Morgan, a possible explanation being that they hoped to avoid publicity on landing in New York. Lucile's secretary, Laura Mabel Francatelli, nicknamed "Franks," accompanied the couple.[20] On 14 April, at 11:40 pm the Titanic struck an iceberg and began to sink. During the evacuation the Duff Gordons and Franks escaped in Lifeboat 1. Although the boat was built to hold about 63 people, it was lowered with just half full – most of them crewmen.

Some time after the ship sank, while afloat in boat 1, Lucile reportedly commented to her secretary, "There is your beautiful nightdress gone."

A fireman, annoyed by her comment, replied that while the couple could replace their property, he and the other crew members had lost everything in the sinking. Cosmo then offered each of the men £5 to assist them until they received new assignments. While on the RMS Carpathia, the Cunard liner that rescued Titanic's survivors, Cosmo presented the men from Lifeboat 1 with cheques drawn on his bank in London, Coutts. Later this action spawned gossip that the Duff Gordons bribed the crew in their boat not to return to save swimmers out of fear it would be swamped.[22]

These rumours were fuelled by the tabloid press in the United States and, eventually, in the United Kingdom. On 17 May, Cosmo Duff Gordon testified in London at the hearings of the British Board of Trade inquiry into the disaster and on 20 May Lucile took the stand. Their testimony attracted the largest crowds during the inquiry.[23]

Cosmo Duff Gordon faced tough criticism during cross-examination while his wife "had it slightly easier". Dressed in black, with a large, veiled hat, she told the court she remembered little about what happened in the lifeboat on the night of the sinking, and could not recall specific conversations. Attorneys did not seem to have pressed her very hard.[24] Lucile noted that for the rest of her husband's life he was broken-hearted over the negative coverage by the "yellow press" during his cross-examination at the inquiry. The final report by the inquiry determined that the Duff Gordons did not deter the crew from any attempt at rescue.[25]

The Titanic episode is one of the most tangible aspects of Lucile's life, thanks partly to motion pictures. The films, however, portrayed her without great attention to accuracy: in cameo by Harriette Johns in A Night to Remember (1958), produced by William MacQuitty, and again by Rosalind Ayres in James Cameron's 1997 blockbuster Titanic. In the latter film the role of Lucile's husband Cosmo was portrayed by the actress' own husband, Martin Jarvis. In the 2012 British miniseries Titanic, Lucile was played by Sylvestra Le Touzel.

A faded grey silk kimon with typical Fortuny style black cord edging, for some time thought to have been worn by Lucile as she escaped the Titanic, is now understood to have belonged to her daughter Esme, Countess of Halsbury. The distinctive print on that garment, designed by
Mariano Fortuny, dates the item to post World War One. Fortuny suffered from failing sales following business problems in 1915, when his business assets were seized. The company reopened with a new name later that year, and following further changes, opened a new factory in 1919 with new, more commercial designs using new patented techniques. \[26\] Letters written by Lucile do reveal the features of two 'warm, padded' bathrobes she wore. One pink, one purple, and both chosen for warmth. One was a partially made garment she describes grabbing in a rush from the Paris branch of her salon. She also described wearing a pair of pink Yantorny slippers, a blue head wrap and a squirrel coat and her 'motor hat'. \[27\] An apron said to have been worn by Lucile's secretary, Laura Francatelli, can be seen at the Maritime Museum in Liverpool, and her life-jacket was sold, along with correspondence about her experiences in the disaster, at Christie's, London, in 2007.

Lucile had another close call three years after surviving the Titanic when she booked passage aboard the RMS Lusitania on its last voyage. It was reported in the press that she cancelled her trip due to illness. \[28\] The Lusitania was destroyed by a German torpedo on 7 May 1915. \[29\]

**Wood v. Lucy, Lady Duff-Gordon**

In 1917, Lucile lost the New York Court of Appeals case of *Wood v. Lucy, Lady Duff-Gordon*, in which Judge Cardozo established precedent in the realm of contract law when he held Lucile to a contract that assigned the sole right to market her name to her advertising agent, Otis F. Wood, despite the fact that the contract lacked explicit consideration for her promise. Cardozo noted that, "A promise may be lacking, and yet the whole writing may be 'instinct with an obligation'" and, if so, "there is a contract." 222 N.Y. 88, 118 N.E. 214 (1917).

Cardozo famously opened the opinion with the following description of Lucile:

The defendant styles herself "a creator of fashions." Her favor helps a sale. Manufacturers of dresses, millinery, and like articles are glad to pay for a certificate of her approval. The things which she designs, fabrics, parasols, and what not, have a new value in the public mind when issued in her name.

Although the term "creator of fashions" was part of the tagline in her columns for the Hearst papers, some observers have claimed that Cardozo's tone revealed a certain disdain for Lucile's position in the world of fashion. Others accept that he was merely echoing language used by the defendant in her own submissions to the court as well as in her publicity. \[30\]

**Later life and death**

Lucy Duff Gordon's connection with her design empire began to disintegrate following a restructuring of Lucile, Ltd in 1918–19, and by September 1922 she had ceased designing for the company, which gradually diminished in success after her departure. \[31\] Meanwhile, its founder (who continued to be known as Lucile) worked from private premises designing personally for individual clients. \[32\] She was briefly associated with the firm of Reville, Ltd., \[33\] maintained a ready-to-wear shop of her own \[34\] and lent her name to a wholesale operation in America. \[35\]
Lucile also continued as a fashion columnist and critic after her design career ended, and she penned her best-selling autobiography *Discretions and Indiscretions* in 1932. She died of breast cancer, complicated by pneumonia, in a Putney, London nursing home in 1935 at the age of 71.[36] The date of her death, 20 April, was the fourth anniversary of her husband's death.

**Legacy**

Lucile's former assistant, Howard Greer, published memories of his years working with her in the book *Designing Male* (1950). A dual biography of Lucile and her sister Elinor Glyn, called *The 'It' Girls*, by Meredith Etherington-Smith, was published in 1986, the title stemming from Elinor's popularization of the euphemism "it" to denote sexuality or "sex appeal."

A number of international museum exhibitions have featured Lucile garments in recent years, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "Cobism and Fashion" (1999), the Museum of the City of New York's "Fashion on Stage" (1999) and the Victoria and Albert Museum's "Black in Fashion" (2000). As of 2006, the V&A included a Lucile suit on permanent exhibit. The first exhibition devoted exclusively to Lucile's work was the New York Fashion Institute of Technology's "Designing the It Girl: Lucile and Her Style" (2005). It included pieces from the private 'Lucile Ltd' archive of British textile designer Lewis Orchard, known for his expertise on the subject.

The Victoria & Albert Museum in London published *Lucile Ltd* by Amy de la Haye and Valerie D. Mendes in June 2009. In 2011-12 Lucy Duff Gordon's great-great granddaughter, Camilla Blois, revived the Lucile brand, concentrating on alluring and elegant lingerie, as her ancestor had when she started in business in the 1890s. [37] The year marked a resurgence of interest in the couturière's legacy. In addition to the Sundance Channel documentary, "Love, Lust & Lingerie," which featured a detailed segment on Lucile's contributions to fashion history, the British-produced miniseries *Titanic*, written by Downton Abbey's Julian Fellowes, included a cameo portrayal of the designer. Two critically acclaimed accounts of the disaster, *Shadow of the Titanic* by Andrew Wilson, and *Gilded Lives, Fatal Voyage* by Hugh Brewster have extensive chapters on Lucile. Five other books published in 2011-12 explored Lucile's career. Among them are an illustrated biography, *Lucile: Her Life by Design* by Randy Bigham, and a novel based on her life, *The Dressmaker*, by Kate Alcott. Other titles include *Staging Fashion*, exploring the Lucile wardrobes of actresses Lily Elsie and Billie Burke, and *Performance, Fashion and the Modern Interior*, which includes a chapter on Lucile's salons. Finally, the couturier's 1932 autobiography, *Discretions and Indiscretions*, was republished under the title *A Woman of Temperament*.

Most recently, in the third season of Downton Abbey, airing in 2012-2013, Lucile was featured in the storyline as the designer of choice for fashionable trousseau lingerie. The dialogue between Dame Maggie Smith and Elizabeth McGovern in which the couturière was name-dropped intrigued female viewers of the hit series, reportedly inspiring a nearly 50% sales hike at Lucile, the relaunched label headed by Camilla Blois. [38]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucy,_Lady_Duff-Gordon