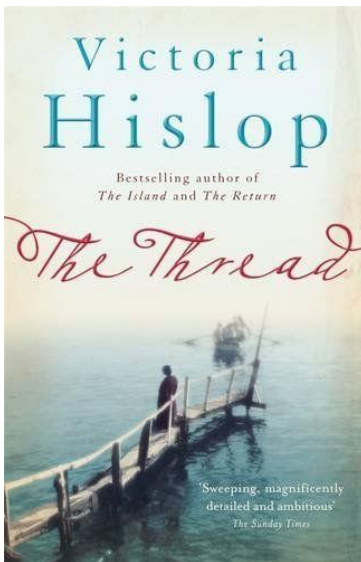


## **Review of “The Thread” by Victoria Hislop**

The story starts in Thessaloniki in 1917 when Dimitri Komninos is born and a devastating fire sweeps through the thriving Greek city where Christians, Jews and Muslims live side by side. Victoria Hislop then realistically recounts the numerous challenges of mostly dreadful daily life for three generations of family and friends from 1917 to 2007 and for Thessaloniki itself as it is knocked down and rebuilt after heaving earthquake, licking tongues of fire, rocket attacks, periods of famine, fear, great hardship and the careless boots of occupying oppressors. Katerina Sarafoglou's home in Asia Minor is destroyed by the Turkish army and she flees across the sea to an unknown destination in Greece. Soon her life will become entwined with Dimitri's, and with the story of the city itself, as war, fear and persecution begin to divide its people. The poignant love story between medical student Dimitri and expert seamstress/embroiderer Katerina is gently told. They are a pair always destined to be together despite being pulled apart by years of civil war and sabotage.



**This book had a mixture of reviews from members of our group from one person who :-**

*"..couldn't get on with this book at all as I found Victoria Hislop's prose completely off-putting, ranging from gushing to pedestrian. I only made it to page 80."*

**Some felt that:-**

*"I found the book slow going and long winded but certainly informative. I thought the main plot, re the eventual marriage of Katerina and Dimitri through the first 25 or so years of their lives rather too obvious. Most of the characters, apart from the ghastly Komninos, the textile factory boss, seemed too passive and sugary, the writing of daily events too repetitive .....But the author's research, knowledge and recording of historical events in Thessaloniki and surrounding areas was impressive."*

*"This was quite a long book, at times tedious and predictable and I felt that her characters somehow lacked substance, so it was not something that I particularly enthused over."*

**But others felt :-**

*"I liked this book depicting major events in world history on the lives of ordinary people, in this case, the population of Thessaloniki."*

*"Enjoyable, engaging read .... believable characters facing unexpected situations"*

*"I really enjoyed reading this book. I read it very quickly and would have to read it again to get all the information in chronological order. The story carries you along wanting to know what is going to happen next. It covers 90 years from 1917 to 2007. The main characters are Katerina and Dimitri but other characters have stories too. Katerina is always a dressmaker/seamstress/embroiderer. Dimitri trained and wanted to be a doctor but wasn't allowed because he had been a communist though he did practise in the internment camps."*

*"The Thread is a clever title because it references both the connections of the main characters in the story and their links working with textiles in different ways.... .. but it remains essentially a love story. Victoria Hislop has painted a picture of Thessaloniki through turbulent times. She has shown the good in people and the greed, self-serving and*

*cruelty to other but all of them were seeking to survive through a time of rapid change, of fear and uncertainty and for many deprivations and dehumanisation.”*

*“The descriptions are so good, eg. The sewing box on pg 177. I also loved the chapter in which Victoria Hislop describes Thessaloniki and how she decided on the main characters of her book. ...The writing is so good it almost becomes real ...The description of the street battles which Dimitri took part in made me wonder if it was fiction or not. Story telling at its best”*

**But one thing that almost everyone agreed on was the amount of historical fact that had been researched :-**

*“There was a lot of research gone into producing this book and I feel that Victoria Hislop did a good job in presenting this period of history.”*

*“intro to a 20<sup>th</sup> century bit of history in familiar Thessaloniki”*

*“would have to read it again to get all the information in chronological order.... It covers 90 years from 1917 to 2007..... Historical facts are woven into a story of hope and love .”*

*” the author’s research, knowledge and recording of historical events in Thessaloniki and surrounding areas was impressive.”*

*“the author has thoroughly researched the relevant history of the time span of 90 years covered in her novel.”*

*“Read before but this time realised how detailed her writing is. I can’t imagine how much research she must do.”*