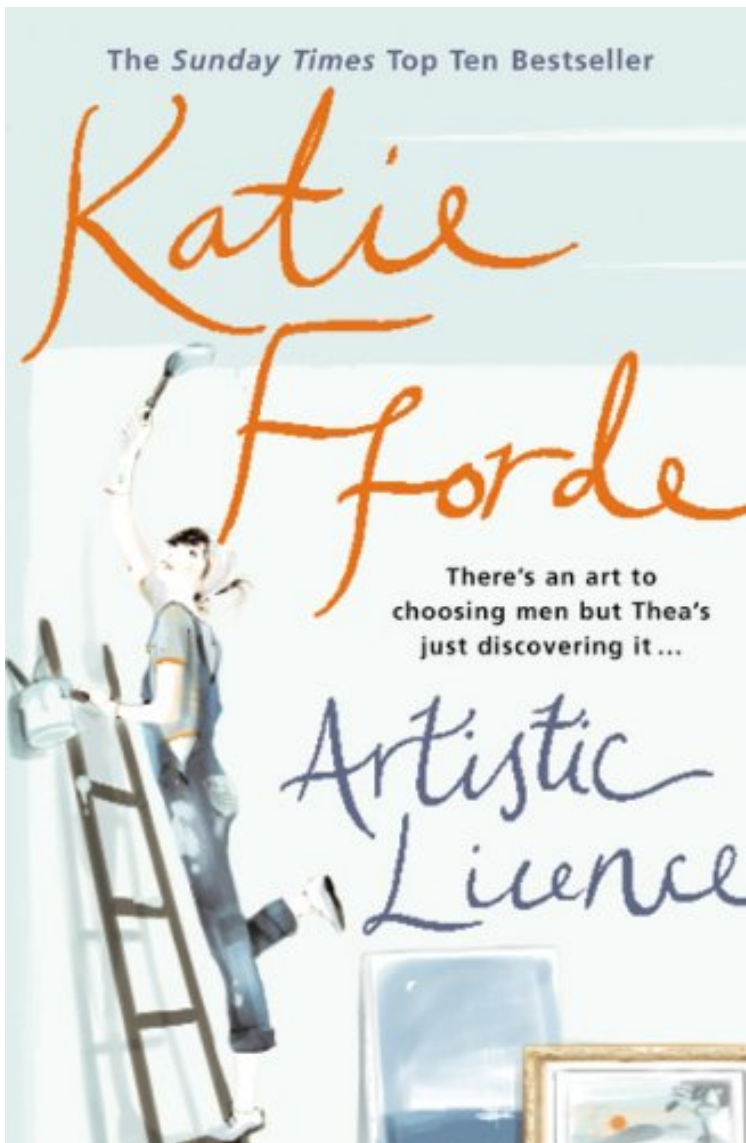


[PDF] File size: 61.Mb

# Artistic Licence



Par Katie Fforde  
ePub / \*DOC / audiobook / ebooks /  
Download PDF

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les  
ventes : #315266 dans eBooksPubli  
le: 2010-12-07Sorti le: 2010-12-  
07Format: Ebook Kindle

[PDF] Artistic Licence

**Par Katie Fforde : Artistic Licence**  
before purchasing it in order to gage  
whether or not it would be worth my  
time, and all praised Artistic Licence:

Download

Read Online

## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurFrom the best-selling author of Flora's Lot. There's an art to choosing men ... but Thea's just discovering itFed up with looking after a houseful of students, Thea Orville throws caution to the winds and takes off to Ireland with Rory, a charming but feckless artist. But Thea's old life isn't so easily cut off.

The arrival of Molly, her bossy friend, demanding to see Rory's stunning paintings (and to find out what Thea is up to) is bad enough, but why did she have to bring Petal, Thea's most annoying lodger, along for the ride? And worst of all, Petal is accompanied by her uncle, the enigmatic Ben, a man Thea has sworn never to like. The timing is terrible - Rory's dog is about to have puppies - but even more alarming is that the more Rory pursues Thea, the more maddeningly attractive she finds Ben...ExtraitChapter OneThea was standing in the rubbish bin, trying to crush its contents enough to get the lid on, when she heard people approaching

down the hallway. They were talking. 'Come into the kitchen and excuse the mess, it's always a tip,' she heard as she crushed a pizza box beneath her heel. Petal, her youngest and most demanding lodger, followed by a man Thea had never seen before, entered the kitchen. 'Hi, Thea! What are you doing in there?' Petal said, curious but not interested enough to hear the answer. 'This is my Uncle Ben. Oh, that's my phone.' While Petal searched in her bag for her fifth limb, Thea tried to step out of the waste bin without falling over. There was nothing to be ashamed of in compacting takeaway cartons, cereal packets and Pringle's tubes, thus reducing landfill, but she could have done without witnesses. Petal, having dived on her mobile phone like a gull on a fast-food leftover, went out of the room, talking hard. Thea, unreasonably annoyed, reached for the wall to balance herself. The bin teetered and her foot penetrated the layer of cardboard to the substratum of detritus beneath. Trying to pull herself free, the heel of her shoe caught round the loop of a drinks can holder and Thea began to lose her balance. For an instant she had an image of herself lying prostrate on the floor, surrounded by eggshells, banana skins and coffee grounds. She put out a hand, groping for something to hold on to, but couldn't reach the wall. The stranger, seeing her predicament, crossed the room and caught the flailing hand and then her body, steadying the bin and holding Thea upright. Maybe, if she hadn't been in such a bad mood, she could have seen the funny side and laughed up at him. As it was, she just blushed furiously while he supported her, unwilling to see if he was laughing at her. 'Thank you so much,' she muttered to the bin, as she rammed the lid back on. 'What a ridiculous thing to have happened.' Petal quite often managed to make Thea feel more disagreeable than the most caricatured seaside landlady and she felt very tempted to tell her so-called uncle that it was all Petal's fault; she had promised to get some new bin liners, having used up Thea's entire roll. But although this was the truth, it would be extremely petty, and it was bad enough to appear bad-tempered and ridiculous in front of strangers without being small-minded as well. 'That's OK,' he said. 'It could happen to anyone.' To anyone foolish enough to climb into a rubbish bin, she thought, but didn't say. To direct his attention away from the tea bag that had got trapped down the side of her shoe, Thea nodded towards Petal. 'That girl burns the telephone at both ends. I hope it doesn't fry her brain.' Petal's uncle, who had been surveying Thea and her surroundings with a sort of mystified concentration, said, 'Possibly it already has.' Thea struggled to get her usual good humour back, but it was difficult. He was tall and dark, with deep-set eyes, and it was easy to take his quiet, serious demeanour as disapproval. She wished she could tell him to go and wait for Petal in the hall, but unfortunately she was chronically hospitable, unable to have people in her house, however unwelcome and uninvited, without offering them food or drink. 'Would you like a cup of coffee? Tea?' She slid the kettle over to the hot part of the Rayburn. She was desperate for a cup herself and didn't feel she could have one if he didn't join her. 'I don't think we're staying. I just came with Petal to collect some things.' 'Does that mean Petal is taking her artwork home at last?' This was such good news that Thea couldn't help a feeling of benevolence breaking over her. She smiled widely at the thought that she would soon be able to get into the attic, her bedroom and the bathroom, without tripping over the component parts of a dragon, a princess and a castle, all made of papier ma<sup>^</sup>che and covered with Thea's bin bags. 'You might as well have some tea. She'll be ages.' And it'll give us something to do, so we won't have to talk, she thought. Perhaps her glee was rather too much of a contrast from the grumpy woman he'd helped out of a dustbin because the man frowned. 'I can't stay long. I've got to get back tonight.' 'Suit yourself, but if I don't have something my tongue will cleave itself permanently to the roof of my mouth.' 'Then, thank you,' he said, looking somewhat surprised. Her euphoria faded a little. Petal's Uncle Ben appeared to have no social skills. Why didn't he comment on the filthy weather or something? 'Do you have far to get back to?' 'Well, after I've dropped off Petal's things, I've got to get back to London.' That would take him at least three hours at this time of day. Thea found an unchipped mug and put a tea bag in it. At that moment the phone rang. Thea manoeuvred her way across the kitchen and picked it up. It was an old and dear friend who liked a good half-hour per phone call, and that was if she was in a hurry. Thea talked to her for a couple of minutes, then took evasive action. She picked up a box of matches and a candle, kept there for the purpose, and lit the candle. Then she reached out into the hallway and held it under the smoke alarm. It shrieked obligingly. 'Darling,' she told her friend. 'I've got to go. Something's on fire!' 'Sorry,' she said to Petal's uncle, who was looking at her with stunned amazement. 'That always works. Although I do worry that I'll have a real fire one day as a punishment. Now, where were we? Tea!' 'I really mustn't be long and I was supposed to call in on Molly - er - Petal's aunt, too.' 'You don't have to have any, but I'm gasping.' The man sighed. 'Actually, so am I.' As she poured boiling water into mugs, she glanced over her shoulder. 'Is that Molly Pickford? I know her. It's through her I got Petal.' It was Thea's turn to sigh as she wondered why she'd let herself in for having Petal as a lodger. She

hoped it wasn't because she was too feeble to say no to Molly, but she feared it was. Molly had insisted that her god-daughter and niece would be quiet and reliable, and able to pay the rent. While the last bit was true, which was important, Molly had forgotten to mention that Petal was extremely demanding. Thea often thought that even if she paid twice as much, she still wouldn't be worth it. 'Milk? Sugar?' She handed her guest a mug, with suitable additions. 'Are you related to Molly, too? Petal referred to you as her uncle, but it doesn't necessarily follow that you are.' Usually, by this time, Thea would have got over her feeling of awkwardness at being caught with her kitchen at its worst, but as he kept looking around him like a character in a science fiction movie beamed down into a strange land, she felt obliged to distract him with questions she didn't want to know the answer to. 'We're some sort of cousins. You'd have to ask Molly about how many times removed we are. She loves that kind of detail.' Thea warmed to him a little. She picked up a pile of papers from a chair and indicated he should sit down. 'Sorry, I didn't catch your surname?' 'Probably because Petal didn't tell you it. It's Jonson, without an "h". Ben Jonson.' 'Like the poet?' 'Yes.' His slight surprise that she should have heard of one of the sixteenth century's most famous poets annoyed her. 'I love his poems, especially the one he wrote about his son.' She bit her lip. 'His best bit of poetry . . . His glance made her feel she was strangely almost human, and yet not quite. 'He said "piece", actually. His best piece of poetry.' Thea's moment of sentimentality evaporated and her irritation returned. 'Well, I knew it was something like that. You'd better sit down; Petal might be hours. Now, I hope you don't mind if I get on with my cooking? In a moment of madness I agreed to give my lodgers an evening meal.' 'Every night?' 'Not Fridays or Saturdays, as they're usually out, or home for the weekend, but I always do a big meal on Sunday night.' It was Sunday now and Thea had been making a bolognese sauce for the lasagne on and off all day. She silently urged Petal to come back before she felt obliged to invite her uncle to supper. The lasagne might stretch, but the salad and French bread wouldn't. 'Please sit down, you're making the place look untidy.' She didn't turn round to see if he realised she'd made a little joke; she was almost sure he had no sense of humour, but she didn't want it confirmed. Petal came back into the room, still talking: 'Must go, see ya, doll.' Almost the moment she had disconnected, the house telephone went. 'Oh,' said Petal, breezily confident, 'that'll be for me.' Thea took a gulp of tea, wishing it were red wine. Now Ben was seated, she couldn't get past him to the fridge. 'Would you mind very much passing me a bottle of milk? And the lump of cheese? The fridge is just behind you.' He had already seen her kitchen, so the inside of her fridge should be no shock to him, although Thea wouldn't let anyone very nervous look in it. 'The semi-skimmed, in the door.' He handed her the milk and cheese. Petal was still on the phone, making arrangements. Soon, Thea's other lodgers would begin to arrive back from their weekend haunts, and the kitchen would be more crowded and cooking would be more difficult. 'I do wish Petal would get off the phone,' said Ben and Thea together. They looked at each other and Ben smiled. It transformed him, but as Petal hung up the phone at that moment, Thea looked away before she could work out why. When she looked back again the smile had gone. 'Oh, by the way, Thea,' said Petal. 'Aunt Molly's coming over later.' 'Oh, God, why?' Too late, Thea realised that this must have sounded extremely rude to Molly's relatives. 'I mean, I'm just so busy at the moment.' Thea tipped the milk into the pan. 'Do you know why?' 'Some art appreciatio... Revue de presse' 'Can be scoffed at one sitting Tasty' (Cosmopolitan) 'Joanna Trollope crossed with Tom Sharpe' (Mail on Sunday) 'The romance fizzles along with good humour and is a good, fat, summery read' (Sunday Mirror)