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The Case Against Fragrance



Synopsis

Kate Grenville had always associated perfume with elegance and beauty. Then – the headaches started. Like perhaps a quarter of the population, Grenville reacts badly to the artificial fragrances around us: other people's perfumes, and all those scented cosmetics, cleaning products and air fresheners. On a book tour in 2015, dogged by ill health, she started wondering: what's in fragrance? Who tests it for safety? What does it do to people? The more Grenville investigated, the more she felt this was a story that should be told. The chemicals in fragrance can be linked not only to short-term problems like headaches and asthma, but to long-term ones like hormone disruption and cancer. Yet products can be released onto the market without testing. They're regulated only by the same people who make and sell them. And the ingredients don't even have to be named on the label. This book is based on careful research into the science of scent and the power of the fragrance industry. But, as you'd expect from an acclaimed novelist, it's also accessible and personal. – The Case Against Fragrance – will make you see – and smell – the world differently. When I was little, my mother had a tiny, precious bottle of perfume on her dressing-table and on special occasions she'd put a dab behind her ears. The smell of Arpege was always linked in my mind with excitement and pleasure – Mum with her hair done, wearing her best dress and her pearls, off for a night out with Dad. When I got old enough to have my own special occasions I also had my favourite perfume. I loved the bottles: those sensuous shapes. I loved the names and the labels, so evocative of all things glamorous. Kate Grenville is one of Australia's most celebrated writers. Her bestselling novel *The Secret River* received the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, and was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the Miles Franklin Literary Award. *The Idea of Perfection* won the Orange Prize. Grenville's other novels include *Sarah Thornhill*, *The Lieutenant*, *Lilian's Story*, *Dark Places* and *Joan Makes History*. Kate lives in Sydney and her most recent works are the non-fiction books *One Life: My Mother's Story* and *The Case Against Fragrance*. – One spritz of aftershave or perfume can leave other people retching and clutching their heads – you never see that in the ads. – Kaz Cooke – Beginning with her own physical reaction to fragrance that begins with a headache a lot of us know ourselves, she investigates the fragrance industry and its side-effects and interweaves these facts with the personal to create an accessible work of non-fiction. – ArtsHub – Fact-dense and extensively referenced, the book is a delight to read and never gets bogged down – While some of the science has been simplified, the book generally conveys the sense of it correctly – Well developed and thoughtful. Read *The Case Against*

Fragrance and you will never think about fragrance in the same way again. If you have been suffering fragrance in silence, you will know you are not alone. **Conversation** In this appealingly written exploration, Kate uncovers the dark side of the fragrance industry, from the carcinogens in after-shave to the hormone disruptors in perfume that mimic oestrogen. **Child** An insightful and frightening book. **Readings**

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A well written, well researched, and lively discussion of an important topic. As one of the roughly 35% of the population with a fragrance sensitivity I wish more people would read it. If I had contact details, I would buy a copy for the person who sat next to me on a recent flight.

The arguments are very well researched and fairly presented. A very good presentation on the topic with more than adequate under pinning references.

"I hadn't realised just how hard it was to avoid fragrance in one

form or another. But I learned cunning. I sprinted through the scented foyers of hotels with a scarf over my nose. In cabs I sat in the back, asked the driver to remove the fragrance diffuser, opened the window and stuck my head into the slipstream like a dog, arriving bedraggled and windblown.

•The Case Against Fragrance is the second non-fiction book by award-winning Australian novelist, Kate Grenville. It came about when she realised it was fragrance that was the cause of her headaches and discovered the dearth of objective information available about sensitivities to fragrance. You may think you don't use very much fragrance, but you are probably unaware of just how insidiously your fragrance load accumulates. Your own personal load, unless you are using fragrance-free products, will go something like this: you wake from sleeping between sheets washed in fragranced laundry detergent; you shower with fragranced soap or gel, use fragranced shampoo and conditioner; you rub fragranced lotion into your skin, use fragranced hair products, put on deodorant, all that before you even reach for the spray bottle of scent that will be your intentional use of fragrance for that day. You wear clothes washed in fragranced laundry detergent; you might have an air freshener in the loo, and your loo paper might be fragranced too; your dishwashing detergent probably smells of lemon; your cosmetics may well be fragranced. Then you walk out the door: does your car have a deodoriser? Or maybe the taxi has a diffuser going; or you sit next to someone on the bus who's just refreshed their perfume, so you get to share that. Are there fragrance diffusers going in your workplace? Are the cleaning products they use fragranced? So what? you say. Because you might be one of the many lucky ones who is apparently not adversely affected by fragrance. But you might just be inflicting your fragrance load on someone who is sensitive, someone who gets a headache or starts to wheeze at a strong whiff of fragrance. Or there may be effects, on others and also on you, that you never dreamt of. Because what exactly is in fragrance? The only people who know are the manufacturers, and they're not telling. Even more shocking is that all the regulation of and research into ingredients is controlled by the fragrance industry, so adverse findings might never make it to the public eye. Without being excessively alarmist, Grenville explains how we are exposed to compounds that might have as profound effects as some drugs, without our knowledge, and why. Grenville presents a wealth of facts about fragrance, and the fragrance industry, but her explanations are accessible to everyone: you don't need to be a scientist to understand what she's telling you. Twenty pages of comprehensive notes supporting Grenville's text are evidence of her extensive research into this subject. She tells it simply and even occasionally with humour, but the result is a surprising and disturbing revelation. Grenville's latest oeuvre is a quick but salutary read that will change the

way you think about fragrance. Essential reading for all humans.

I was shocked to learn that 30% of people are affected by fragrances: with headaches, asthma, skin irritation, etc. I intensely dislike artificial fragrances and thought I was unusual, since they are everywhere that most everyone must like them. Why are they so pervasive, when so many can't stand them? But it turns out we are all affected by fragrances, even if the consequences are not so immediate and obvious. They contain carcinogens and hormone dysregulators that affect us all, babies and children most of all. Many of the hormone dysregulators are highly persistent in the environment and are concentrated in the animal food chain. There are other causes, but the extensive use of these chemicals is likely part of our ongoing infertility crisis. The book is not only well researched and eye-opening, it is also a pleasure to read. Many thanks!

I just realized that I'm not the only person who couldn't stand fragrance. I thought it was just me and this book gives me a good understanding about the danger of fragrance chemicals. The Case Against Fragrance (Paperback) by Kate Grenville is well written and well researched, I recommend for everyone to read this book. I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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