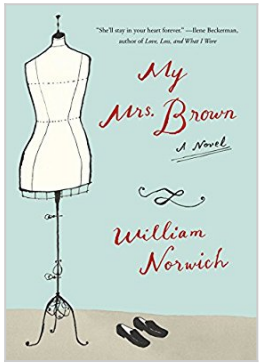

My Mrs. Brown: A Novel

By William Norwich

My Mrs. Brown: A Novel By William Norwich

From William Norwich, the well-known fashion writer and editor, an unforgettable novel about a woman with a secret who travels to New York City on a determined quest to buy a special dress that represents everything she wants to say about that secret…and herself.

Sometimes a dress isn't just a dress.

Emilia Brown is a woman of a certain age. She has spent a frugal, useful, and wholly restrained life in Ashville, a small town in Rhode Island. Overlooked especially by the industries of fashion and media, Mrs. Brown is one of today's silent generations of women whose quiet no-frills existences would make them seem invisible. She is a genteel woman who has known her share of personal sorrows and quietly carried on, who makes a modest living cleaning and running errands at the local beauty parlor, who delights in evening chats with her much younger neighbor, twenty-three-year-old Alice Danvers.

When the grand dame of Ashville passes away, Mrs. Brown is called upon to inventory her estate and comes across a dress that changes everything. *The dress* isn't a Cinderella confection; it's a simple yet exquisitely tailored Oscar de la Renta sheath and jacket—a suit that Mrs. Brown realizes, with startling clarity, will say everything she has ever wished to convey. She must have it. And so, like the inspired heroine of Paul Gallico's 1958 classic *Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris*, Mrs. Brown begins her odyssey to purchase *the* dress. For not only is the owning of the Oscar de la Renta a must, the intimidating trip to purchase it on Madison Avenue is essential as well. If the dress is to give Mrs. Brown a voice, then she must prepare by making the daunting journey—both to the emerald city and within herself.

Timeless, poignant, and appealing, *My Mrs. Brown* is a novel for every mother in the world, every woman who ever wanted the perfect dress, and every child who wanted to give it to her.

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My Mrs. Brown: A Novel By William Norwich Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review
“A contemporary fairy tale… a gentle rebuke to today’s hyped-up fashion culture, which ignores the needs of ordinary women.” (*The New York Times*)

"So genteel, so old-world, so self-effacing, so full of surprises--Mrs. Brown's entrance into the world of high fashion will delight you. She'll change the way you look at certain women, and she'll stay in your heart forever. Only Bette Davis could portray her remarkable excursion to New York when she goes on a secret mission that will bring you to tears." (Ilene Beckerman, author of Love, Loss, and What I Wore)

"In the gentle hands of Billy Norwich, the tale of the odyssey of a simple woman, an "invisible" woman, to the city becomes a wise and sensitive statement of the dignity and decency of ordinary lives. The moving and wonderfully entertaining Mrs. Brown has great heart and a real soul. Thank you, Billy, for this very human tribute to the women who too often pass unseen, quietly and courageously carrying on." (George Hodgman, author of Bettyville)

"I read this from cover to cover in a day. What a wonderfully written, beautiful story. When did we all become so noisy and important? Thanks @williamnorwich, for reminding us what real manners really stand for." (Nate Berkus)

"*My Mrs. Brown* is a delightfully charming and poignant story that gets to the essence of why style matters, as a deeply personal expression of both who we are and who we want to be." (Kate Betts, author of My Paris Dream)

“If there’s anything he innately understands, it’s the true importance of finding the perfect dress…he chronicles this seminal quest, not from the eyes of a fashionista or celebrity, but from the perspective of a modest woman.” (Tory Burch)

"Much like the classic Oscar de la Renta dress this charming book pays homage to, *My Mrs. Brown* is lovely, timeless, and a pleasure to behold." (Susan Rebecca White, author of A Soft Place to Land and A Place at the Table)

"Quietly extraordinary....considering a literary market that hungers for women who kill and men who cheat, what Billy Norwich has done is different and courageous. And he's done it so quietly and stylishly that his novel is impossible to overlook." (*Head Butler*)

“An unassuming yet magnetic older woman becomes possessed by the notion of acquiring an Oscar de la Renta dress. [A] fairy tale of a novel by fashion writer Norwich…Despite her plain Yankee exterior, [Mrs. Brown] has a dignity and luminosity of spirit that draws people to her… Like its main character, appealing, sweet, old-fashioned—and, at heart, very sad.” (*Kirkus Reviews*)

“Meet a delightfully old-fashioned heroine in My Mrs. Brown…Even if you find Mrs. Brown anachronistic, with a gentle conservatism of an age long-gone, you come to like and respect her. Then, you come to love her…Goodness really is its own reward, says Norwich’s gentle-hearted book. Better yet, sometimes goodness is rewarded.” (*BookPage*)

"Smart and touching." (*Dujour.com*)

“Mrs. Brown's incredible adventures in storming the gates of haute couture...details of heroic persistence, culture and manners and all of the rest of what we are mostly missing these days.” (Liz Smith *New York Social Diary*)

“As a fashion journalist, William Norwich - Billy to his friends – knows a thing or two about celebrities getting dressed. But it was the anti-celebrity who inspired him to write My Mrs. Brown.” (*W Magazine*)

"Norwich crafts Mrs. Brown with the sensitivity of a seasoned sculptor....a flawless and immensely enjoyable tale of empowerment." (Patrik Henry Bass *NY1*)

“Noted author and editor William Norwich has dazzled with his second novel, *My Mrs. Brown*, an elegant morsel reminiscent of Edith Wharton’s novellas. This book is certain to be tucked into fancy beach bags all over the East End this summer.”
(*Hamptons*)

About the Author
William Norwich is a writer, editor, and video and television reporter. He is the author of the novels *My Mrs. Brown* and *Learning to Drive* as well as the children’s book *Molly and the Magic Dress*. Norwich also has written introductions and essays for many pictorial books. Currently the editor for fashion and interior design at Phaidon Press, he has also written and edited for *The New York Times Magazine*, *Vogue*, *Town & Country*, *Architectural Digest*, and *New York* magazine. Norwich is a graduate of the writing program at Columbia University (MFA), Hampshire College (BA), and the Pomfret School. He lives in New York City.

My Mrs. Brown

EARLY ONE SEPTEMBER NOT long ago, a rural woman with a secret grief traveled to New York City in pursuit of a dream, to buy the most beautiful and correct dress she’d ever seen.

The occasion wasn’t a joy trip. Without tremendous effort before her trip, and a lot of luck, the dress was hardly anything she could have ever afforded. As for going to New York City, where she’d never been before? It was a terrifying prospect, dangerous and disorienting, but she did it.

The dress wasn’t at all what you might expect. It wasn’t a riot of feathers and chiffon. It wasn’t designed to catch a man or reawaken her youth. It had nothing to do with a paparazzi-lined red carpet or the glories of shopping, “It” bags, “It” designers, or must-haves. The dress—and the lady’s use for it—was something else.

This daring voyager was Emilia Brown, or Mrs. Brown as she was generally known in her hometown, Ashville, Rhode Island. She was sixty-six years old, a widow; if she was a scent, she was tea with honey, but if she was a color, she was a study in gray. Whether from the friction of living without life’s buffering luxuries and engaging ambitions, or by the reduction of dreams and expectations that comes with age: gray. Mrs. Brown was drained of color. Except for her green-brown eyes. If and when she smiled, well, it was like watching a rose open in one of those time-lapse films, and her eyes, spring flowers at twilight, lit up her face.

To say that she was overall gray isn’t to say she was a sad sight or threadbare. It’s just that in a world where status is measured in how much space one takes up and how much noise one makes—and noise takes up its own kind of space, as any pollution does—a quiet person like Mrs. Brown falls invisible.

Mrs. Brown was genteel. That's not a word used much anymore, except maybe when people talk about some of the characters on PBS shows. As it relates to Mrs. Brown, it signifies a graceful way, someone free from vulgarity and rudeness. Aristocratic in a manner having nothing to do with money, fame, and celebrity.

Nor is saying that someone is genteel necessarily the same as saying that someone is humble. We put so much stock and pride in being humble these days that humility has become a brand, not a state of grace.

Mrs. Brown has a noble spirit—the honorable loneliness of the American grown-up. A life sustained by quietude and the energies of tolerance, kindness, courtesy, and acceptance. In a blustery world, it's courageous to move quietly, claiming few, if any, treasures except one's solitary dignity.

She was not a career woman, hadn't been to college; she had always worked. Hers were always blue-collar jobs—a Thermos factory before it went bust, cleaning houses, babysitting, taking in washing and sewing. She was a very good seamstress, as was her mother, who had taught her how to sew and to make clothes using inexpensive Simplicity and Vogue patterns. Most recently her job was the cleaning up and helping out, six days a week, seven to seven, at Bonnie's Beauty Salon on the main street in Ashville.

A good three hours from Boston, and at least five hours from New York, Ashville wasn't a suburb of any city. Its residents relied on the local economy for their living, the stores, the businesses, and Guilford College, one of the oldest in the country. No one had gotten rich in Ashville in decades, but most felt that they were well compensated nonetheless by the lasting Currier & Ives patina of their village, founded in 1649.

Here Mrs. Brown was born, an only child. In Ashville she had met and married her late husband. Older by some ten years than she, Jack Brown was a fireman for the Ashville Fire Department. He died fifteen years ago. Heart attack in his sleep.

Everyone said it was the best way to go, never sick for a day then, pop—you up and leave this mortal coil. Everyone said Jack Brown had gone easier into his death than anything he'd ever done in his uphill life.

Mrs. Brown made do. Financially, emotionally, she made do. As one does.

She avoided excesses of any sort—shopping, overeating, drinking, feelings, and lottery tickets.

Especially lottery tickets. It wasn't because she was risk averse, but because lottery tickets were bedazzlements possessed by expectation. Buying them overexcited the ladies at the beauty salon. Customers and employees alike, chattering a mile a minute, screaming to be heard over hair blowers, describing how and where they would spend the money. Then the next day, crashing so low when they didn't win.

Mrs. Brown tried never to let a tear to drop. (Of course tears dropped, in private, late at night, in the morning light when shadows haunt.) If she never expected too much, she'd never be bankrupted by disappointment.

This was all very New England of her.

Mrs. Brown didn't have a "bucket list," and she never shopped to cheer herself up. She had her clothes for years and had made the majority of them—a few pairs of pants—gray, black, brown summer and winter weight—a couple of wool or cotton cardigan sweaters, cotton blouses—and wore them for the duration, repairing them when needed. Sewing cheered her up, and helped restore her universe to order, one concentrated stitch at a time.

And although she was good-looking enough—her Yankee slender, high cheekbones and her healthy skin, her hair always clean and brushed—she did not encourage anyone, including the gentlemen, to look.

She took care of herself, but never indulged. Even when Mrs. Brown was most tempted, when it would be so lovely not to cook—so wonderful in the dead of winter to walk home after work carrying a warm supper in her hands—she never bought the costly takeaway food from the Village Cheese Shop. No restaurant dining either. She always ate at home, always cooked at home.

Dull?

Mrs. Brown never took vacations. The big cities she had visited were Providence, one hour away, and Hartford, two hours away. As mentioned, she had never been to New York City, although, admittedly, sometimes those advertisements on the television for Broadway musicals were tempting.

Who Mrs. Brown was, her vocation if you will, was to be a good person and to live an ordered, simple life.

When a student at Guilford College came by Bonnie's one day doing a survey about women's rights, she asked Mrs. Brown if she considered herself a feminist.

Mrs. Brown smiled and answered that, yes, she did.

The college girl seemed surprised.

"Liberated not always by circumstances that I'd have chosen for myself," Mrs. Brown said.

"What's your first name?" the student asked so she could put it on her survey sheet.

"Mrs.," answered Mrs. Brown.

"Your first name is . . ."

"Mrs."

The college student didn't know how to respond. "Mrs.?" She wouldn't forget Mrs. Brown anytime soon.

Keeping grateful was essential to Mrs. Brown. But she didn't need to write a "gratitude list." Gratitude was an energy she could summon up on a daily basis, grateful for what she had and for what remained after so many years of the rumble and the tumble.

One major contributor to her gratitude was that she owned her own house, a cozy two-unit wood-shingled nest built at the turn of the twentieth century, when Ashville's mills and factories were thriving. Sure it was just like all the other houses on her street—except this one was hers. She thought it lovely, all she needed or wanted. And because Ashville was built on the steep, mossy banks of the Fogg River, when the leaves fell in autumn, Mrs. Brown could see the slate and brindle–colored river from her second-floor windows.

The two-story house was divided into two units. Both units had identically proportioned front rooms, kitchens, a bath, and a bedroom downstairs, and upstairs two more small bedrooms. The units shared a front stoop.

Many years ago Mrs. Brown had rented the second unit to Sarah Fox, a widow whose circumstances were similar to Mrs. Brown's. Except Mrs. Fox's purview, you might say, was wider.

Sarah Fox had been a proud salesperson at the Ashville Bookshop, until it went out of business several years ago. This is where the students from Guilford bought their textbooks until shopping online proved easier for them, and this is where Mrs. Fox, who started working at the bookshop when she was a high school junior, tried to be more than just the local source for the latest potboilers and bodice rippers but also a beacon for the advancement of literature, even the most controversial, dating back to that frigid Saturday morning in 1969 when she insisted bravely to the waspish owner of the store that Mr. Philip Roth's novel Portnoy's Complaint should not only be available upon request at the cash register but also displayed proudly in the front window of the store.

Mrs. Fox felt it was always important to be up to speed on not just the latest books but also movies, television, and current events. She'd been to New York several times. She longed to go to Paris before she died.

Most recently, she had gone all the way to Vancouver, Canada, when Clara, the eldest of her two children, daughters in their forties now—had asked her to please come help care for Clara's first grandchild, and Mrs. Fox's first great-grandchild, a boy named Aaron. Sadly, but sadly not uncommon, Aaron's mother and father, emotionally unprepared for parenthood, had split soon after he was born. The young mother was heartbroken, back at her work by day, bookkeeping and scheduling service appointments for a Land Rover car dealership, and thoroughly exhausted at night, so it became Clara's responsibility—"my opportunity," she said when she explained all this to Mrs. Fox—"to help raise my first grandchild."

But Clara needed her mother's support. Could Mrs. Fox please come to Vancouver for a few weeks to help, because Clara also worked full-time as the office manager at a cardiologist's clinic, a great job she was in no financial position to give up. Of course Mrs. Fox could, and she did, but never suspecting that a few weeks would turn into nearly a year.

In Mrs. Fox's place, Clara's youngest daughter, Alice Danvers, twenty-three, had moved into her grandmother's home in Ashville. She'd come to help Mrs. Fox pack, and while so doing discovered that there was a teaching position for the second grade at the local grammar school. Alice had majored in education at college back home. Since she hadn't found a position yet in Vancouver, and she was itching to try living someplace else, Alice applied for the job in Ashville and to her amazement was hired.

"We love your grandmother," the principal said when she told Alice the good news. "I miss being able to visit her at the bookstore."

Would Alice be able to last an entire school year in Ashville? She had some very real doubts. But a job is a job, especially a first job in one's profession of choice, and the only way to get to your dream job is to start somewhere. Alice accepted the offer to teach in Ashville but with many conflicted feelings.

Ashville was, just, so . . . "effing," one of Alice's favorite words, quaint and mumsy. It was the complete opposite of where she saw herself living and working.

Could she, would she, ever fit in?

When her first day of teaching school came, she panicked. Among her chief concerns what the effing hell was she going to wear? She didn't own any floral prints and corduroy, which she assumed all the teachers

would be wearing. Beware of any enterprise that requires new clothes, she'd once read. So she wore what she'd have worn wherever she was. Alice's teaching uniform consisted of a pair of black jeans, black cotton T-shirts—her favorite said I'LL STOP WEARING BLACK WHEN THEY INVENT A DARKER COLOR in big block letters across the chest—and motorcycle boots. No one at school seemed to mind.

Where Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Fox were the same age, born just two months apart and both Ashville natives, Alice and Mrs. Brown were worlds and generations apart. Nevertheless, her grandmother had asked for just one favor when she told Alice she could live in her place rent-free.

To please look in on Mrs. Brown daily, and make sure she never felt lonely or neglected.

It was the night before Mrs. Fox left for Vancouver. Alice was helping her pack.

"Emilia isn't like the women of your generation," Mrs. Fox said. She handed Alice a silk scarf with a rose print on it that she hadn't worn in years, and wasn't planning to bring to Vancouver.

"You tend to overshare, dear."

"What? I don't overshare, Granny," Alice said, tying the scarf around her neck. It looked very 1950s, and she liked that. It was corny and glamorous. In her all-black wardrobe it would strike a cool note of irony, she thought, especially in quaint Ashville, if anyone here would ever notice and get the message.

"Emilia is very private," Mrs. Fox said.

What was her grandmother really talking about? Alice wondered. She kept quiet, and listened.

Mrs. Fox explained further. "It's not that she is secretive, it's just that still waters run deep in Emilia."

Now whenever she spoke to her grandmother on the phone, which was usually once on the weekend and once midweek, Alice was expected to update Mrs. Fox on how Mrs. Brown was getting along. Meanwhile, Mrs. Fox and Mrs. Brown were communicating by letter, if you can believe people still do that, handwritten letters sometimes as long as three pages each.

And, so, a routine emerged for Alice that year in Ashville. As had been her grandmother's habit most evenings when Mrs. Brown got home from work, Alice sat at the older woman's table and visited, sometimes eating supper, sometimes not, depending on their appetites, and always sharing the day's news.

This happened not every single night—a woman has a life, even in as small a town as Ashville—but many nights, five out of seven on average—Alice visited with Mrs. Brown. At first she did it because she'd promised her grandmother, but soon enough something about Mrs. Brown's manner—even if it was sometimes perplexing—also very much appealed to her.

The nightly visits, the ongoing narrative, and the reliable exchange of kindness between them became an anchor for Alice. They were different generations for sure, but she came to respect their differences. On many occasions Alice held her tongue—and swallowed the swearing words that otherwise peppered her vocabulary when she was speaking to her peers online or in person.

This particular evening in November, more than three months since her move to Ashville, Alice sat at Mrs. Brown's kitchen table drinking a cup of mint tea, listening to her enthuse about her day off tomorrow,

actually two days off because she had worked seven straight in a row last week. Mrs. Brown was very much looking forward to assisting in the inventory taking at Millicent Groton's house. In fact, she was thrilled.

For generations Mrs. Groton's family had lived in an exquisite Federal-style house in the best part of Ashville. According to an Architectural Digest magazine article that Mrs. Brown had once read at the Ashville Public Library, the house had twenty-two rooms filled with important American furniture and paintings. And for as long as Mrs. Brown could remember—back when she was a little girl walking with her mother from their part of town to the finer section of Ashville for church on Sundays—the house had never failed to glisten behind its massive wrought-iron fence. The mansion was painted white as a heavenly cloud and exuded a halo of gold. It was the most majestic thing she'd ever hope to see.

Mrs. Groton's arrival every July in time for the Ashville Rose Festival—landing in a purl of grandeur like Queen Elizabeth coming home to one of her countryside properties in England—was the high point of the year for Mrs. Brown.

Mrs. Brown could not afford to buy an expensive benefit ticket for the opening ceremonies at the rose show—she was content to go two days later, when Ashville was admitted for free. But the afternoon of the opening ceremony, there always was a crowd waiting to see Mrs. Groton and her houseguests. Over the years they had rather famously included the Duchess of Windsor, Gregory Peck, Ginger Rogers, Betty Ford, Nancy Reagan, and Lady Bird Johnson. There were artists and literary people whom she didn't always recognize, but it didn't matter. Mrs. Brown trusted that they were all distinguished people. Everyone looked so grand. Shiny people. Sparkling like freshly minted silver dollars.

Since she was a schoolgirl, Mrs. Brown had made sure she got to the Rose Festival way ahead of the crowd for a good position up front, so she could watch. Let anyone try to stand in front of her, and she was atypically assertive.

For the past few summers, fearing each might be the elderly Mrs. Groton's last time at the festival, Mrs. Brown had asked Mrs. Fox to please come with her. It embarrassed Mrs. Fox, she was no one's groupie, but she went along anyway because it seemed so important to her friend.

"She's like a rose herself," Mrs. Brown had whispered to Mrs. Fox as the frail older woman, Mrs. Groton, assisted by a niece, arrived at the flower show (held on one of the village's center greens not far from the Groton homestead). As always, even in her nineties, Mrs. Groton was impeccably dressed, wearing a hat and white gloves and three-and-a-half-inch heels.

Mrs. Brown remembered that last sighting. "The thing of it is, Alice, is how comfortable in her skin Mrs. Groton was."

Alice shrugged, and sipped her tea. "That was probably very expensive skin, Mrs. Brown. You would be comfortable, too. And how many face-lifts do you think she had?"

Mrs. Brown took the question personally and was offended on behalf of the deceased. "She never had a face-lift. She just had good skin, that's all," she said, stiffly stirring her coffee. Within seconds, though, she forgave Alice. She was coming to love Alice despite the darker, sarcastic view of life she seemed to have, or at least that was the quality expressed in her humor.

With age, she expected Alice would soften. Isn't that what happens? Some people grow older and more cynical. Some people become just the opposite. Life hurts without hope, and cynicism, once a luxury,

becomes unaffordable.

“The glass must always be half full, not half empty, Alice,” Mrs. Brown said. “When you’ve bumped along as long as I have, you realize that if you’re going to be happy and get any peace and satisfaction from the world, you just have to begin seeing that the glass is half full and refilling itself all the time.”

Alice debated getting into anything akin to an argument tonight. But she wasn’t a proponent of positive thinking.

“And you know all those positive-thinking books—about things like thriving and mindfulness—you know, Mrs. Brown, that they’re written by people who are rich. Easy enough for them to see everything that way, lean in and thrive, and telling everyone to repeat positive-thinking memes . . .”

“Memes?” Mrs. Brown asked.

“Ideas that you spread,” Alice said.

“But, Alice, you don’t affirm thoughts and positive thinking to convince yourself of something. You do it to remind yourself these sayings are true.”

Why argue? Alice changed the subject, slightly.

“I just think for tomorrow you should try not to have high expectations of anything. You don’t know who will be there, and for all you do know, if there are a lot of city people—auction house experts and the like—they might not let you even see the house and put you somewhere, like in a garage, where you are just packing up bits in boxes.”

“I know that, Alice. Really, I do,” said Mrs. Brown.

She remembered when she was seven years old. That year at the Rose Festival was the first time she ever saw Mrs. Groton. She didn’t know who it was; she thought Mrs. Groton was Glinda, the good witch in The Wizard of Oz.

She was in awe, total awe.

She’d seen the film only months before, in its first telecast, in 1956. The beneficence, the light-colored hair, the dress that appeared to sparkle all seemed the same person.

Mrs. Brown’s mother, who’d brought her child to the Rose Festival, did nothing to dissuade her daughter. Far better to have your daughter grow up admiring a woman of substance, even one with unattainable wealth, than a flighty starlet somewhere, she figured.

“How can I explain this?” Mrs. Brown paused to think. “Try this: going tomorrow to Mrs. Groton’s house after all these years; I feel like Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz before she met the wizard. Remember?”

Alice shook her head. “He was a fake, Mrs. Brown. That’s what I remember.”

“No, he wasn’t, Alice!” Mrs. Brown shot back. “He was an idea. A very, very good idea!”

Later, before turning off her bedside light for sleep, Mrs. Brown thought more about Mrs. Groton.

In the 1950s, especially in small New England towns like Ashville, the most valued lives were those emblematic of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love.

By that standard, Mrs. Groton was a woman of great value and success. People, even those who struggled for their income, forgave her wealth because it was the means by which she lived a rich life of service to her community. Happily, the people of Ashville weren't wrong in their estimation.

As so many around the country, they got to know Mrs. Groton from her published writing. Throughout the 1970s and well into the 1980s, Mrs. Groton wrote a column for one of the popular women's magazines, dispensing style and manners advice for "women of a certain age," and sharing her experiences of the world. Mrs. Brown looked forward to the twentieth of every month, give or take a few days, when she would receive in her mail the latest issue of the magazine.

Over the years Mrs. Brown had clipped and saved many of Mrs. Groton's columns. One of her favorites was how, year after year in the magazine's Christmas issue, after Mrs. Groton suggested various ideas for presents, glittering things she'd seen in the shops, she always concluded with this spirited advice:

If you can't afford to shop this year, by all means celebrate nonetheless. Write letters to everyone on your list and tell them how and why you appreciate them, especially this year. Be specific. Cite examples. And this advice isn't just for women whose budgets preclude shopping. It's also for women who shop at the holiday, and maybe shop too much. Especially to children and grandchildren, let your note, even more than your present, be the real gift. Why not? If it is written from your heart, it's a keeper, and far more lasting than the pair of new gloves soon lost in a taxi.

Even though the people, places, and things described were not of Mrs. Brown's experience, she identified with the feelings in Mrs. Groton's columns.

There was the one about meeting Eleanor Roosevelt—"focused and determined with the kindest heart and concern for people of all races and economies."

Another column was from London, where Mrs. Groton had just met the Queen. "Talking to her, you realize that Her Majesty is at heart a young mother and wife like you once were, or may still be. But she is the most grown-up woman I've ever known. Already through so many trials and tribulations she is par excellence the most elegant survivor I expect I'll ever be so privileged to meet."

And the column Mrs. Groton wrote about her housekeeper in New York, the mother of a soldier who was killed in Vietnam.

"When a child dies, not just all mothers, but all women, become one in grief," Mrs. Groton wrote.

Everyone in Ashville understood. Mrs. Groton's only child, her son, David, had been killed in the Vietnam War the year before. Of that, she never wrote, but the depth of her feelings, and her courage, was never doubted.

David's memorial service was held at St. James' Church in New York, but he was buried in Ashville. There were a few people left, now of a certain age, including Mrs. Brown, who never forgot the hearse down Main Street the autumn day he was put to rest, the crackling sounds of the car's slow wheels on dry October

leaves, and seeing Mrs. Groton through the window, having chosen to ride with David rather than in a separate car. Her gloved hand on the flag on his coffin; keeping it in place, holding on.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Angela Jones:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or maybe read a book allowed My Mrs. Brown: A Novel? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have additional opinion?

Morgan Woods:

What do you regarding book? It is not important along with you? Or just adding material when you really need something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your time? Or are you busy man or woman? If you don't have spare time to accomplish others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have spare time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. They have to answer that question mainly because just their can do in which. It said that about guide. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is proper. Because start from on jardín de infancia until university need this kind of My Mrs. Brown: A Novel to read.

Marjorie Brown:

Is it anyone who having spare time and then spend it whole day by means of watching television programs or just laying on the bed? Do you need something new? This My Mrs. Brown: A Novel can be the response, oh how comes? It's a book you know. You are consequently out of date, spending your extra time by reading in this new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

Melissa Parra:

As a student exactly feel bored in order to reading. If their teacher asked them to go to the library or to make summary for some guide, they are complained. Just minor students that has reading's spirit or real their interest. They just do what the professor want, like asked to the library. They go to right now there but nothing reading really. Any students feel that reading through is not important, boring along with can't see colorful photos on there. Yeah, it is for being complicated. Book is very important for you. As we know that on this period of time, many ways to get whatever you want. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore , this My Mrs. Brown: A Novel can make you sense more interested to read.

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