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## Kate Mosse's favourite wardrobe item

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As told to David Hayes OCTOBER 11 2013



My favourite item in my wardrobe? It's a pair of shoes. They are black 4in platform "brothel creepers" from [British high street chain] Office. I bought them from the Carnaby Street branch to celebrate the publication of my novel *Citadel* in 2012. They definitely feel like my "book" shoes. I wore them for everything to do with that book, for radio and television interviews; I even wore them to appear on the BBC *Breakfast* sofa. I'm only 5ft 1in tall – people will hear me on the radio and then, say, "I thought you would be taller," when they meet me.

I wear these shoes all the time. I don't have loads and loads of shoes like most women – I find a pair I like and wear them until they fall apart. I will be wearing these shoes until they fall apart. And I will be grief-stricken when they do. Before these I had a pair of Spice Girls trainers that my children bought me and I wore them and wore them until my daughter took me aside and had a word with me.

I've never worn heels. I like to feel rooted to the ground and secure. I don't understand why women wear shoes that they can't walk, run or ride a bike in. I walk a lot and ride a bike at home in Sussex so these shoes are great for that. The other great thing about the platform soles is when it's raining you are so far off the ground your feet don't get wet. And I must like the extra height – though it's not something I consciously think about.

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I'm a woman in my fifties and started to think about clothes as something more than what my mother bought me to wear in the 1970s. I think I might be stuck in that decade for ever; stuck with bands like Slade and Showaddywaddy. The 1970s were a pretty unisex decade – everyone, boys and girls, had long hair and wore platform shoes, those awful cheesecloth shirts and flared jeans so tight that you had to lie on the floor to zip them up. It was a much more liberated time, much less sexual. I wanted to look like my older cousins. I played in an orchestra as a teenager and I wanted to look more grown up – but not grown up like an adult, just older, if you get what I mean?

I don't use descriptions of clothing in my writing as much as many other writers. My books are mainly adventure stories set in the historical past so clothing is often not about creating a shorthand for a character but more about period detail, and the restrictions that the clothing of the time imposed on women. And about class; clothing has always been about status.

My latest book, *The Mistletoe Bride*, is a collection of ghost stories and there is one set in the mythical past where clothing only matters so much as the character needs to be able to conceal a knife in her dress.

I've never been overly interested in fashion but I want to look good by my own definition, something which has nothing to do with fashion trends and what is in or not. I've learnt what suits me. I don't wear jewellery because I'm too much of a fidget. I like to be comfortable; for the latest book tour I will probably end up in these shoes, a pair of trousers and a sweater. I want to put clothes on and not have to think about them so that I can concentrate on talking about my work or whatever it is I am doing. When I dress up I go for a long dress so I can put it on and forget about it too.

I was lucky enough to have parents who did their own thing and encouraged my sister and I to do our own thing too. I think women – and increasingly men – are under so much pressure to look good all the time these days. The one good thing about getting older is you get more comfortable in your skin. You don't have to be, as the song goes, a "dedicated follower of fashion". I know lots of people approach dressing up like an art form – and I appreciate that and think, "Good on you." But it's not for me.

Having said that, I do like to have fun with clothes sometimes. I have a 1970s pink and yellow jumpsuit from a charity shop that I wear if I'm in the mood. There are so many buttons to do up, though, so I really have to be in the right mood.

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'The Mistletoe Bride and Other Haunting Tales' (Orion) is published in the UK on October 24

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