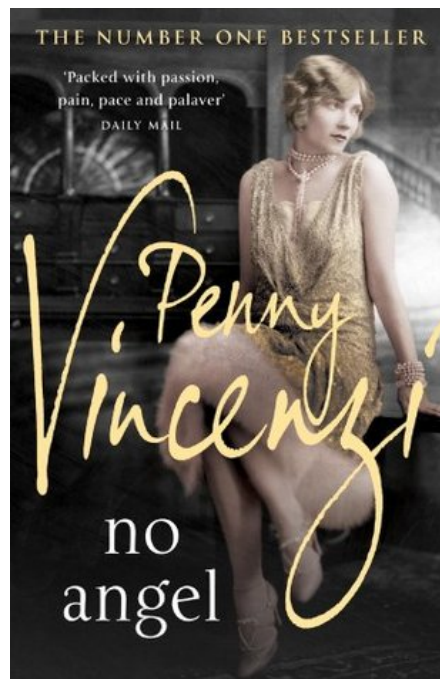




No Angel

Penny Vincenzi

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No Angel Penny Vincenzi

From the Sunday Times bestselling author Penny Vincenzi, NO ANGEL is the first novel in the acclaimed *Spoils of Time* trilogy. 'Penny Vincenzi dazzlingly combines the old-fashioned virtues of gripping storytelling with the up-to-the-minute contemporary feel for emotional depth and insight into the lives of the characters. She is a supreme stylist and clever writer. Reading her is an addictive experience'-Elizabeth Buchan

In pre-war London, Lady Celia Lytton is the perfect host. Beautiful, intelligent and determined, she throws glittering parties, publishes bestselling books, and enjoys her young family and loving husband.

But there are tragedies her family will not escape: the Titanic, the First World War, the flu epidemic. And beneath their perfect image, the Lyttons cannot ignore the changing world around them. In the shattering aftermath of the War, Celia is beginning to understand that there will be a price to pay for the life she has chosen, that is greater than she could ever have imagined...

No Angel Details

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Author : Penny Vincenzi

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From Reader Review No Angel for online ebook

Kristin says

This is what I picked up thinking, "Hey, my life isn't boring enough. I need some pallidly romantic, poorly researched, family-saga historical fiction, with love scenes written by someone with no limbic system.[<http://www.stanford.edu/.../braintut/...>]" That is exactly what I got. I have tried to use this mundane-at-best tome as a sleep aid on multiple occasions, only to be jerked out of a semi-dozing state by Vincenzi clumsily reminding her readers of the time line of the plot. This has caused me to want to get out of bed and launch the book out of the bedroom window.

Examples of such offenses:

Main characters are involved in women's suffrage in the UK

Female Protagonist 1 participates in a women's charity league

Female protagonist 2 (spinster) is dating a socialist and frequently rendezvous with him at dark-alley socialist gatherings.

FP1 illegally adopts daughter of her charity league client

They all catch influenza

FP1 and her husband score tickets for the maiden voyage of the Titanic, but they are saved from having to actually board the doomed vessel by the good luck of the adopted daughter's near death influenza experience.

FP1 & FP2 sig-others join the war.

FP2 finds out she's going to have a socialist baby.

Socialist baby-daddy is gassed to death in France

Vogue magazine is introduced, and FP1 & FP2 casually discuss it.

FP1 expresses that she'd like to give up wearing her restrictive corset.

I would like to tell you that the author rallies at some point and delivers a gripping scene of catharsis, but I just don't see it happening.

I feel victimized by this book.

Whitney (First Impressions Reviews) says

No Angel by Penny Vincenzi chronicles the lives of the Lyttons, a wealthy family who owns a publishing

house in London around the first world war. At the center of the story is Lady Celia Beckenham, a strong-willed, blue-blooded beauty who forces her parents to bless her marriage to the lower-ranking Oliver Lytton, by getting pregnant. Motherhood is not quite as fulfilling as she or others would have hoped and eventually works her way into Lyttons, becoming an accomplished editor and asset to the publishing house. As WWI breaks out, Oliver feels it to be his duty to enlist and leaves Celia in charge while he is away. Along the way she makes a discovery both professionally and personally that effects her outlook on life.

No Angel is a a page turner and what I felt to be an accurate account of that time of history; with references to the woman's suffrage movement, medicine, social affairs and the after effects of war. There are very few cliff-hanger at the end of No Angel as most have been tied up, but not in a cutesy "It's A Wonderful Life" kind of way. If this had been a stand alone novel, which it quite possibly could be; I would be extremely depressed that it was over, but fortunately, it is the first in the Spoils of Time trilogy and therefore have two more books to read in this amazing series.

Kelly says

A friend at the bookstore I work at has recommended this Lytton Family trilogy for years, and now I know why. Utter delight! I am reminded of the "Winds of War" and "War and Remembrance" sagas I read in college and so loved. This time it is a British family that owns a publishing company in the early 20th century. The female characters are what make this book come alive. They, and especially one, Celia Lytton, know what they want and are not shy about going after it, whether that be love, meaningful work, or – gasp! – sex! Change the clothes and a few background events and this book could be the 1960s. But why change anything?? The place and time (London, 1900-1930) is so rich and fascinating and the perfect setting for a plot that offers behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing in the publishing business, romantic manipulations, steamy infidelities, as well as the ordinary stuff of daily life. Now on to Something Dangerous (#2) and Into Temptation(#3)!!

Alison says

If you're missing Downton Abbey (soapy elements and all), this book would be a good choice. It's set in the same time period as Downton Abbey and hits the same historical events: Titanic, WWI, flu epidemic, etc. And they share themes that I suppose any story about the early 1910s-1920s would - how families cope with the war and what happens when all the wounded soldiers return, how class lines began to blur, and how women's roles in society change. I almost always enjoy those types of plots.

What I didn't enjoy so much in the story was the excessive use of manufactured suspense. For example (minor spoilers), we have the main character announcing "I will be leaving to board the Titanic at exactly 10:00! I am so excited for its maiden voyage! I hope nothing happens to stop me at 9:59!" (paraphrased, but barely.) And of course something stops her at 9:59. That kind of thing happens again and again, someone rushing to deliver a vital message moments before a life-changing decision is made, or a character misses an important phone call by mere moments. Since the story focuses on relationships, work, school, and the daily grind, it seems unnatural to squeeze in so many attempts at nail biting moments.

And I had to mention, for a story about a publishing company, with a skilled editor as the main character, there sure were a lot of typos in this book.

Overall, it's fun and thought-provoking, but certainly not perfect. I'll probably take a break before grabbing

the next book in the series. Maybe next time I have a long layover.

Heather says

April 2011 book club choice- loved it! Story of a prominent English family from 1904 to 1920ish. My favorite story lines revolved around the publishing house.

One thing I absolutely loved was the dialogue between the extremely entertaining characters; it is so realistic. (I hate it when books have ridiculous, sappy dialogue which is beyond unbelievable...)

I was intrigued by all of the strong women characters. The Lady Celia Lytton character, who leaves something to be desired in the parenting category but I liked the way she nudged her way into the publishing business and wouldn't let go, is a handful as is her mother!

Also, the Barty dilemma is fascinating. Like Celia, I probably wouldn't have realized that Barty was being exiled into a no man's land.

I highly recommend this to historical fiction readers (if you don't mind having to read about love affairs). I so enjoyed this book that I immediately started reading the second book of the trilogy, *Something Dangerous*, and was shocked right from the start. I didn't like it at all!

Kimberly Kolansky says

This book had the potential to be a good book due to the premise/overall concepts that the book was built on. Though there were so many issues I had with this book, that I was forced to not finish the book. The book was EXTREMELY slow moving- and trust me I gave the book a complete chance, hoping that it would improve or the pace of the story would pick up by chapter 8. It just dragged on and added more and more characters to the point where I came close to losing track (this is coming from an avid reader). The author also made the characters seem so emotion-free, once husbands/boyfriends started dying off at war, they all seemed to move forward and cope so easily. It just was not realistic. Along with the obviousness of missing the Titanic, or receiving a letter at just the perfect time- all of these coincidental incidents in the book just made it less believable and less relatable, and more soap opera like. I'm confused how someone could enjoy this book, unless this person of course is extremely patient and willing to wait for a climax in a story or is a gullible person that doesn't mind fantasy intertwined with history/reality.

Jill says

The first book in a trilogy, *No Angel*, opens in 1904 London and follows the lives of the, upper middle class, Lytton family. Largely set around their publishing house, it has a bit of everything. Love, infidelity, drama, tragedy, as well as history.

The main character is Lady Celia Lytton. She's a selfish, disillusioned woman and rather wanting in the parenting department; there were times I wanted to shake some sense into her. Nevertheless, I did feel a certain empathy for her situation and admired her determination to follow her dream to work in publishing at a time when women's main purpose in life was expected to be support for their husband's career, producing an heir, social pursuits and good works. There are many other characters, of course, and equally interesting.

I see that some have described it as a soap opera, and I suppose, in a way, it is. But a good one! Anyway, if you are looking for a book that will sweep you back into the past, and at times keep you on the edge of your seat, I think you will enjoy reading, *No Angel*. I enjoyed reading it and plan to read the second book in the trilogy.

Kim Allen-Niesen says

I walked into the Corner Bookstore while visiting New York City completely exhausted with aching feet and two cranky kids. While I was sitting in a chair, a lovely woman asked what type of book I was looking for and when I told her about my day, she recommended this book. Within 30 pages I was swept away into another world. It's lovely family saga, the first of three volumes, I like this segment the best, that provides love, tragedy, drama, a bit of history, but most importantly, a vacation from life for the reader.

Jan says

4 1/2 stars. A friend gave me this to read when she started clearing out her bookshelf. Very happy she did. I'm drawn to historical fiction, so this WWI era was a great match for me. I really enjoyed reading the story of Lady Celia and LM is they came to the forefront at the Lytton publishing company during WWI. Family conflicts, class conflicts, personal turmoil...this saga has all of these. At times it was a bit overly consumed with trying to build suspense, but I certainly enjoyed this one and will be reading the next installment in this family saga.

Charity says

What a brilliant introduction to the Lytton family! I was quickly absorbed in their saga -- so much drama, deception, delight, and devastation -- in London during the years, 1904-1920 (verrrry Downton Abbey-esque). I loved some characters, then despised them, then loved them again. I felt my heart pounding as I flipped through the pages during some of the more dramatic moments in the story (and there were many!). And, of course, I was completely smitten reading about the triumphs, trials, and tribulations dealing with the Lytton publishing house -- BOOKS! *swoon* I am excited to dive into the next book in *The Spoils of Time* trilogy and see how the Lytton clan are thriving.

Becky says

I picked this book from my Mother-In-Law's shelf, out of sheer avoidance of my New Year's resolution to read five classics. I had started *Pride and Prejudice* and I am so tired from being pregnant that I can't focus and instantly fall asleep. This book, however, kept me not only awake, but awake way past my usual bedtime and on into the night. I love books like these. I think these are the closest thing to a love affair that I could imagine. I would literally wait all day to sneak into bed just to read for hours. I couldn't put it down, couldn't get anything accomplished until it was finished, and when it was, I went straight for the next book in the trilogy. This is half the reason why I haven't been able to focus on my blog. These books are wonderful.

This book takes place in England during the World War I time period. It starts by introducing Celia, the first of many strong and independent women in the book. It follows her through her life as a mother, wife, book publisher, socialite, and secret lover. She is a very complex woman that I want to hate, but I love her for her guts. I love this era and I am always intrigued by anything England, so this was the perfect book for me.

Kelly says

Yes ... this was a silly book and yes, I thoroughly enjoyed it despite it being like a Sydney Sheldon book on steroids. Set in the UK and starting before WWI and ending several years after the war. About a family involved in the publishing business. Everything was hyper-dramatic in the book ... from the characters to the plot. Almost every woman has large beautiful eyes and gorgeous flowing hair. Almost every man is tall, dark and handsome. Every woman (and man) has rapturous, earth-ending sex (though not described in dirty detail, which is just fine).

What I liked about the book is that it was absolutely filled with characters, and there were a lot of stories to follow. I admit that I stayed up late last night to finish as I wanted to see what happened. The end of the book manages to bring several story lines together in a suspenseful way and at a good pace - though, again, with lots o' drama. Literary fiction this is not.

This book is total brain candy ... but the sweet kind that makes you happy you splurged, not the sticky kind that makes you regret it and kick yourself afterwards for going off your diet. I found it in the bargain section of B & N for a mere \$5.00, which makes it less guilt-inducing. Bring it to the beach or by the pool this summer and enjoy!

Mila says

I thought I would like this because it's set in the same time period as *Downton Abbey* (a series that I just love) but that's where the similarity ends. I struggled to get through Part One (so bored) and then saw that there were so many more pages to go that I abandoned it (even though it's a Book Club book). Perhaps it's because I have so many other books that I want to read that I just didn't want to waste my time on this one.

I thought it would be:

But it turned out to be:

Lisa says

[Celia has an affair with Sebastian who is frankly the least likeable character in the whole book - talk about full-on! They made me feel sick (hide spoiler)]

Lori says

Really, really enjoyed this family saga set in London during WWI!!! Vincenzi follows each family member through the trials before, during and after the war... and she does this seamlessly!!! It is fast paced and never slows down... can't wait to read the rest of the series!!!
