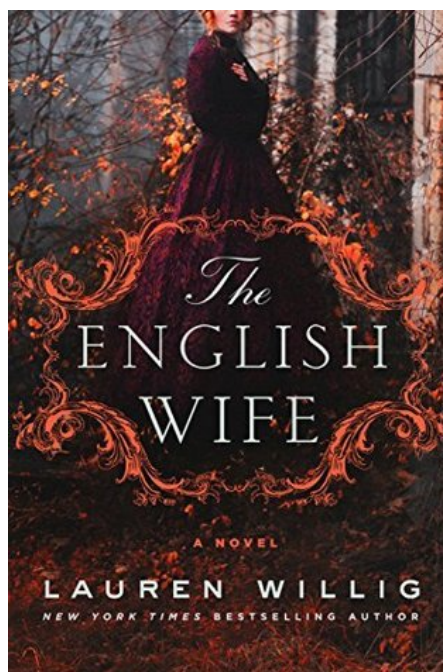




The English Wife

Lauren Willig

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From the *New York Times* bestselling author, Lauren Willig, comes this scandalous New York Gilded Age novel full of family secrets, affairs, and even murder.

Annabelle and Bayard Van Duyvil live a charmed life: he's the scion of an old Knickerbocker family, she grew up in a Tudor manor in England, they had a whirlwind romance in London, they have three year old twins on whom they dote, and he's recreated her family home on the banks of the Hudson and renamed it Illyria. Yes, there are rumors that she's having an affair with the architect, but rumors are rumors and people will gossip. But then Bayard is found dead with a knife in his chest on the night of their Twelfth Night Ball, Annabelle goes missing, presumed drowned, and the papers go mad. Bay's sister, Janie, forms an unlikely alliance with a reporter to uncover the truth, convinced that Bay would never have killed his wife, that it must be a third party, but the more she learns about her brother and his wife, the more everything she thought she knew about them starts to unravel. Who were her brother and his wife, really? And why did her brother die with the name George on his lips?

The English Wife Details

Date : Published January 9th 2018 by St. Martin's Press

ISBN :

Author : Lauren Willig

Format : Kindle Edition 379 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Mystery, Fiction, Romance

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From Reader Review The English Wife for online ebook

Karen White says

With gorgeous writing, complex characters and a twisty plot to keep the reader guessing—this book is a must-read!

Heidi The Hippie Reader says

The year is 1899. The Van Duyvils are an extraordinarily wealthy and established family in New York. One night, at a holiday party, there is a murder... or is it a suicide?

The newspapers whip the public into a fury with their sensational headlines. They ask, 'Who are the Van Duyvils and who is the new English wife?'

And there, our story begins.

Lauren Willig has created a lovely mystery/historical fiction with snappy dialogue and enough layers to keep readers guessing to the very end.

I loved Janie Van Duyvil, one of the main characters in this tale *"There were times when she wished she had been born a male, that she might make her own way, that she might marry as she pleased and live as she would."* loc 45, ebook.

As she desperately tries to piece together the clues to find the murderer, Janie also comes into her own and begins to stand up to her tyrannical mother.

"It is her marriage," Georgie pointed out drily. "Surely, she has some say." "If you can think that, you haven't met my mother." loc 1179, ebook

I also enjoyed the role of the press in this story. James Burke is a reporter for 'The News of the World.' He wants to get the scoop on the murders. But, part of his job, is to sell papers. *"The man had the gall to widen his eyes in innocence. "We prefer to call it investigative reporting, Miss Van Duyvil." "I call it scandal-mongering, pure and simple."* loc 252, ebook.

My favorite scene is when Janie goes to 'The News of the World' building and readers get a glimpse into the crazy newsroom. *"There was an undeniable energy to the room, the clacking typewriters, the shouting voices, that put energy into her step and color in her cheek."* What fun.

Willig seems to have a handle on what makes reporters tick. She even captures the gallow's humor that they use to maintain their sanity. *"Will it appear in an illustrated supplement in The World?" "Not unless there's a body hidden there." Mr. Bruke grimaced. "Sorry. In the newsroom, we... well, the worse it is, the more of a joke we make it. It's a way to get through the day without being sick."* loc 2765, ebook.

Recommended for readers who want to lose themselves in a mystery with some romance along the way, *The English Wife* may just fit the bill.

Thank you to NetGalley and St. Martin's Press for an advance digital copy of this book. Reminder: the brief

quotations in this review may vary from the final printed form.

Tiffany PSquared says

I usually really like historical fiction, but this one never took off for me. It had a really s-l-o-w start and despite an interesting mystery at the heart of it, it never seemed to pick up any speed or make me any more interested.

Janie Van Duyvil finds her brother dead and her sister-in-law missing during their Twelfth Night Ball. Was it a murder-suicide as the newspapers claim, or is there more to Bay's death than anyone could ever imagine?

Told across two different (very close) timelines - which was often very confusing - and also told from different perspectives, the book's storyline felt labored and the writing over-explanatory. I felt like I was trudging through the book instead of enjoying it.

So why three stars instead of two? Two-star books usually aren't enjoyable AND they make me mad at some point. This one got three because I wanted it to be good so badly, there were exactly two characters that I was rooting for, and the underlying mystery was rich enough that I wanted to know what really happened. So those things kicked it up a star.

See this review and others on my blog, [That New Book Smell!](#)

JanB says

2.5 stars

The description of the book as a gothic murder mystery set in the Gilded Age piqued my interest. The first pages start off with a bang with a murder on the night of a grand ball. From there the story is told in a dual storyline, alternating between the recent past and the present as the murder victim's sister, Janie, teams up with a reporter to discover what really happened to her brother Bay and his missing wife. There are plenty of family secrets and intrigue to uncover. The ending had a surprising twist, and it was satisfying to see one character in particular get her comeuppance, even if the method didn't quite work for me. Janie was my favorite character and I enjoyed seeing her gain confidence as the story progressed.

Unfortunately, after such a strong beginning, the pacing was off and I found the story slow and often confusing. I found myself skimming parts of it. This was my first book by this author and the writing style and the tone often read like a romance novel, which is a genre I dislike, so this is a case of it's me, not the book.

Recommended for fans of the author and those who like their mysteries melodramatic and slow burning, with a very large dose of romance.

*I received an e-galley of this book from Netgalley

Sheila says

4 stars--I really liked it.

This is a gothic romance in the vein of Rebecca--lots of atmosphere, human cruelty, and family secrets, but no supernatural happenings. It's also quite sad.

It's been a long time since I read a historical novel, and this really brought the Gilded Age to life. Characters were finely drawn (and not static!), and I especially liked doomed Annabelle and clever Janie. The plot kept me reading (and guessing) until the end.

There are lots of allusions to Shakespeare's comedies in this book--ironic since it's a tragedy. I received this review copy from the publisher on NetGalley. Thanks for the opportunity to read and review; I appreciate it!

Lyuda says

The best way to keep someone was to let him go.

Riveting mystery that left me guessing up until the end. Compelling and heartbreaking love story(s). The book should come with the warning: "Consumption of the product can lead to sleep deprivation". My kindle is full of highlights. My eyes are full of what feels like sand from reading almost all night. You know the feeling: "one more chapter, one more chapter". Marvelous writing, masterful characterization, beautifully constructed dialogue brings to life what already is a fascinating time period- the Gilded Age. The only reason it's not a 5-star for me is the ending which left couple of storylines unresolved. I hope the author writes a follow-up.

January 1899. Annabelle and Bayard Van Duyvil are throwing a "Twelfth Night"-inspired ball for New York's 400 society celebrating their newly built home. The festive evening takes a tragic turn when Bayard (Bay) is discovered stabbed in the garden and Annabelle is missing. Bay's last word was "George".

KNICKERBOCKER MURDERS WIFE AND KILLS HIMSELF! MURDER AND SUICIDE ON THE HUDSON!

While the scandal sheets can't seem to decide if it was a murder-suicide by Bay (as revenge for his wife's alleged affair with an architect), or a murder and escape by Annabelle (as revenge for her husband discovering said alleged affair), Bay's sister, Janie, determined to find the truth. Nothing would bring her brother back but couldn't she rescue the memory of him?

The story alternates between two timelines that end up converging: 1899, as Janie seeks to find the truth behind the murders and the past, starting five years before, when Bay and Annabelle first met. I'm not a fan of dual stories/timelines as usually one story overpowers the other and leaves it in a dust as a placeholder. Not the case here. Both stories are compelling, interesting and ended up reinforcing each other.

The story of Bay and Annabelle is beautiful, heartbreaking, shrouded with secrets revealing which would be major spoilers.

Janie's story is not only a story of uncovering these secrets but most importantly it is a discovery of self-worth for a woman who slowly comes in to her own from the pawns of her domineering mother and becomes a woman worthy of love and admiration.

Highly recommended for historical fiction fans.

Thanks to the publisher for providing an ARC through NetGalley in exchange for my honest review.

Marialyce says

It is the gilded age where money, power and prestige reign. Called such by the author Mark Twain, it was a period that dated from the 1870's until about the early 1900's. It was a time of amassing great wealth and the people who populated this age had last names like Astor, Carnegie, and Vanderbilt.

In all this luxury and unlimited money live Bayard and Annabelle VanDuyvil. They seem to have it all, he being part of an old Dutch family and she growing up in an English Manor in England. They met in London, fall in love, and marry returning to New York and the VanDuyvil way of life. Twins are born to the couple and though there are rumors of an affair between Annabelle and an architect hired to design a home just like the one Annabelle grew up in, things seem to be tense but life seems to be going forward. As we know in life what seems to be is not always what is true.

Bayard, at the coming out ball for the new home, is found murdered and Annabelle is the likely culprit since she is missing. This is high society and of course the newspapers go nuts with the headlines and stories, many of which are not true. Bayard's sister, Janie meets and starts to confide in a newspaper reporter. They pledge to one another to speak only what is the truth and a friendship forms between these two separated by society views. As his investigation continues, Janie learns more and more about her brother and the woman he married. Janie is constantly thwarted by her mother, a denizen of high society who never permits anything that she considers untoward occurring and has a cold nature. The mother is not bendable, clearly believing in herself and her moral ways. She imposes her views and her stringent ways on all her family including a niece, Anne who lives with them.

Who really are Bayard and Annabelle? Are things really as they seem to be? This family carries secrets, deep ones, that will eventually bring them to ruin and death and be the headline grabbers that Mrs VanDuyvil fears.

This was a riveting story told with a Gothic flair that keep the reader quite engaged as the truth is finally revealed and the killer brought to poetic justice.

Thank you to NetGalley and St Martin's Press for an ARC of this novel in exchange for an unbiased review.

Holly B says

I found the characters confusing and the plot was hard to follow. I liked the premise of a gothic mystery set in the New York gilded age, but it didn't live up to my expectations. I enjoyed some parts, but the flow was not working for me.

It begins with Bayard Van Duyvil found with a knife in his chest on the night of a Ball at his family home. I thought this mystery would be center in the plot and that suspects would be drawn out and examined, but there were too many side stories and discussions of how family members met years before. It felt disconnected and the big reveal at the end was disappointing and honestly not at all worth reading nearly 400 pages to get too.

The book was too long, too confusing, too many side stories and had too many characters with similar

names...George, Georgiana, Georgie, Giles, Georgina....honestly.

I was hoping for a gothic mystery with a historic setting, but was ultimately disappointed. The book has some very high ratings, so you might want to read those if you are interested in giving it a go!

Thanks to St. Martins Press and Netgalley for my ARC. Pub. date is Jan.9,2018

Jonetta says

Something terrible happens on the night of Annabelle and Bayard (Bay) Van Duyvil's Twelfth Night ball celebrating the completion of their new family home in Cold Spring, New York. Bay is found dead with a knife in his chest and Annabelle is missing, feared drowned. Janie, Bay's sister finds herself trusting and teaming up with a reporter to seek the truth about what happened and why.

At first I thought this story moved a bit slowly, almost plodding along as it shifted immediately from the night of the ball to five years earlier when Bay and Annabelle first met in London. Without context, it was a little confusing. However, I trusted the author knew what she was doing and she did. It's a slow build to developing these characters and that was brilliant because near halfway, that intimate knowledge of these two becomes vital to feeling their story, connecting with their emotions when so much more is revealed. From that point forward, I literally could not put this book down, finishing it in one day.

There are hosts of surprises, twists and subterfuge embedded in an historically authentic prose and background. The matriarch of the Van Duyvil family sets the tone from which everyone revolves, maddenly so. The intrigue is almost palpable through the stunning conclusion. It's my first experience with this author and now I'll read the other books of hers that are languishing on my shelf. This was not an easy read but well worth the journey. Loved it.

(I received an ARC from the publisher in exchange for an unbiased review)

Carrie says

Bayard Van Duyvil and his wife Annabelle seemed to be living such a charmed life when one night Bay is found dead with a knife in his chest and Annabelle is nowhere to be found. With Annabelle thought to be drowned and a murderer to be found the press is all over the story of how this privileged couple ended up the way that they did on that fateful night.

Bay's sister Janie is convinced that someone out there killed her brother and did harm to his wife and is determined to find out what happened. Janie forms an alliance with a reporter to uncover the truth of that night. With rumors flying all around of affairs and murder everything Janie thinks she knew starts to unravel.

The English Wife by Lauren Willig is a historical fiction novel with a bit of a mystery and a touch of romance within the pages. The story is told by alternating looks into the past to build the characters and their story that led to that night along with keeping up with the events in their current time of 1899.

For me this was one that I really wanted to love but unfortunately found myself struggling to connect and enjoy leaving me rating this at 2.5 stars. The biggest problem in my mind was simply the pacing was so incredibly slow with a lot of randomness added in that didn't feel necessary in my opinion. Also it was a bit

tough to connect to characters when struggling to remember who was who with a lot of them similarly named. This one just ended up not my cup of tea unfortunately but others just may enjoy the slow burn mystery.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress....>

Melisa says

DNF.

Rachel says

If I were prone to feeling guilt over enjoying the things I enjoy, I would classify this as a guilty pleasure book. This is more a nineteenth century soap opera of a novel than a literary gothic mystery, so you'll do well to check those expectations of a second coming of Rebecca at the door before starting *The English Wife*. But I have no reservations at all saying that I loved this.

Sure, the writing is occasionally sophomoric; characters let out breaths they didn't realize they'd been holding; the word 'belied' is used approximately eight thousand times; the dialogue is often trite and heavy-handed, but for whatever reason, I found myself not caring. I was swept away by this incredibly well-crafted mystery that blends suspense and romance with the vibrant atmospheres of Victorian England and Gilded Age New York.

The novel begins at a ball in upstate New York in 1899, when wealthy socialite Bayard van Duyvil is found with a knife in his chest, and his wife, Annabelle, has vanished, presumed dead. There are two point of views in this book - that of Bay's wife, in flashbacks, and his sister, Janie, in the present. Both were compelling heroines who I found myself rooting for wholeheartedly. This is the kind of book where every character has secrets, and uncovering them all is a highly entertaining process. Some of the twists are excellent, others are rather predictable, but it's an undeniably twisty ride from start to finish. And getting to the bottom of the identity of the novel's central character, Annabelle, was the most compelling element for me.

Bottom line: this book was fun and enthralling enough to compensate for its many flaws. Highly recommended for anyone looking for somewhat mindless Victorian escapism.

Lindsay - Traveling Sister says

2.5 stars

I had high hopes for this novel, but it fell flat for me. This genre is usually one of my favourites, but I had a hard time staying focused as I found my mind wandering between all of the side stories and different characters involved. I did enjoy the atmosphere and gothic tone, but the story itself felt quite drawn out and I wasn't pulled into the mystery.

This is my first novel by this author and I would be interested to try another one out as I do tend to enjoy these type of stories. Unfortunately, this one in particular just didn't work for me.

A big thank you to NetGalley, St. Martin's Press and Lauren Willig for providing an ARC in exchange for an honest review!

Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says

A murder in an aristocratic household? Unheard of and especially during a ball with hundreds of guests in attendance.

Bay, Annabelle's husband and Janie's brother, could not have killed his wife and then killed himself. Janie was determined to find out who the real killer was.

We follow the family as the book goes back and forth in time making the connections for us about who was who and what the circumstances were.

And what marvelous connections and secrets this family has.

The biggest bomb shell came right after Bay and Annabelle were killed.

A family member of Annabelle arrived at the house to give his condolences, but also gave some unsettling information about Annabelle.

THE ENGLISH WIFE was very proper, and the characters were portrayed as very proper as was expected in the 1800's, but were some who they said they were?

THE ENGLISH WIFE was difficult to connect with at first, but then the book became difficult to put down.

The ending revelations will be "burning" in your thoughts and have you wanting to talk about the book with everyone.

If you enjoy the 1800's, drama of privileged families, mystery, and secrets, THE ENGLISH WIFE will be a late-into-the-night read. 4/5

This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation by the publisher and NetGalley. All opinions are my own.

Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

4 scandalous, intriguing stars to The English Wife ? ? ? ?

The English Wife was off to a slow start for me, but once it picked up, I was glued to it. The Gilded Age is one of my favorite time periods, and instantly this book reminded me of a favorite book that Lauren Willig co-authored with Karen White and Beatriz Williams, The Forgotten Room.

Bay and Annabelle Van Duyvil appear to have it all, but when one of them is found murdered and the other

is missing, all bets are off. Janie, Bay's sister, sought the truth about what happened and befriended an unlikely ally, a news reporter. Janie was, in fact, my favorite character, as I watched her grow into her own, despite an overbearing and cold mother.

While the ending wasn't what I wanted to happen, it suited the storyline. Overall, a tantalizingly suspenseful historical! I binge read this one!

Thank you to Lauren Willig, St. Martins Press, and Netgalley, for the opportunity to read and review this ARC. The English Wife will be published on **January 9, 2018.**
