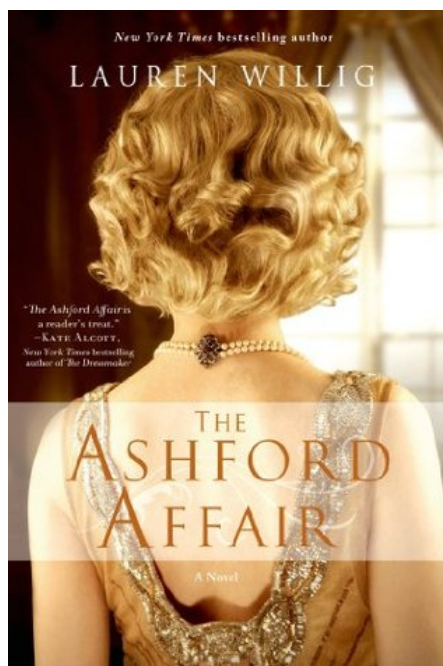




The Ashford Affair

Lauren Willig

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The Ashford Affair Lauren Willig

New York Times bestselling author Lauren Willig "spins a web of lust, power and loss" (Kate Alcott) that is by turns epic and intimate, transporting and page-turning

As a lawyer in a large Manhattan firm, just shy of making partner, Clementine Evans has finally achieved almost everything she's been working towards—but now she's not sure it's enough. Her long hours have led to a broken engagement and, suddenly single at thirty-four, she feels her messy life crumbling around her. But when the family gathers for her grandmother Addie's ninety-ninth birthday, a relative lets slip hints about a long-buried family secret, leading Clemmie on a journey into the past that could change everything. . .

What follows is a potent story that spans generations and continents, bringing an *Out of Africa* feel to a *Downton Abbey* cast of unforgettable characters. From the inner circles of WWI-era British society to the skyscrapers of Manhattan and the red-dirt hills of Kenya, the never-told secrets of a woman and a family unfurl.

The Ashford Affair Details

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Author : Lauren Willig

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From Reader Review The Ashford Affair for online ebook

Vanya Prodanova says

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Vicky Ziliaskopoulou says

?ταν μια αξι?λογη προσπ?θεια να μας μεταφ?ρει στον τρ?πο ζω?ς των βρεταν?ν αριστοκρατ?ν του
 προηγ?μενου αι?να, αλλ? δεν με κ?λυψε. ?σον αφορ? την μυθοπλασ?α ?ταν εντ?ξει και στις δ?ο
 ιστορ?ες (παρελθ?ντος, παρ?ντος και στο δ?σιμ? τους), αλλ? δεν υπ?ρχαν οι περιγραφ?ς που θα με
 βοηθ?σαν να κ?νω εικ?να με το μυαλ? μου τον χ?ρο στον οπο?ο διαδραματ?ζονταν τα εκ?στοτε
 γεγον?τα. Ο?τε για τους π?ργους ?κανα εικ?να ο?τε για τις εκτ?σεις στην Κ?ννα.

Υπ?ρχαν υπερβολικ? πολλο? δι?λογοι, με αποτ?λεσμα να μου θυμ?ζουν κ?τι απ? σαπουν?περα σε
 κ?ποια σημει?α τους. Και νομ?ζω ?τι π?γε κ?ποιες στιγμ?ς..... να δ?σει αν?λαφρο τ?νο; να κ?νει
 χι?υμο; δεν πολυκατ?λαβα, αλλ? ?τι και να ?θελε να πετ?χει εμ?να δεν μου ?ρεσε. Στην αρχ?
 σκ?φτηκα ?τι θα υπ?ρχει κ?ποιο πρ?βλημα με τη μετ?φραση, αλλ? επειδ? γνωρ?ζω τον μεταφραστ?
 (απ? το ?νομα, ?χι προσωπικ?, απλ? βλ?πω ?τι ?χει μεταφρ?σει πολλ? βιβλ?α που μου ?ρεσαν)
 αναγκαστικ? θα θεωρ?σω ?τι δεν μου ταιρι?ζει ο τρ?πος γραφ?ς της συγγραφ?ως.

<http://kiallovivlio.blogspot.gr/>

JoAnne Pulcino says

THE ASHFORD AFFAIR

Lauren Willig

I didn't think I'd ever find a down side to being an obsessive reader, but I'm afraid I've found that slippery slope. There have been so many wonderful books written about a lost letter, a forgotten diary or a buried family secret, I am becoming a little jaded, and having trouble really becoming engaged. Despite this lack on my part, I have to say this is a very good book.

THE ASHFORD AFFAIR is a departure from Ms. Willigs Pink Carnation Series, and a standalone novel.

Clementine Evans ambition has finally paid off as she is about to become a partner in her Manhattan law firm when her broken engagement and the long hours and sacrifices really don't seem worth it. At her grandmother, Addie's ninety nine birthday party, Clementine discover a secret that will send her on a journey into the past, and change her life completely.

Early in the twentieth century, Addie who has lost her parents is sent to the grand English house of her aunt, uncle, and beautiful cousin, Bea. Addie and Bea bond into a great relationship that is a lot like sisters until the bond of sisterhood cannot withstand the life changing events that are stronger than any sisterhood.

THE ASHFORD AFFAIR is an artfully written saga of three generations of a family containing all the lust, power and loss necessary for a great read. The two women are in different eras, different continents and are bonded by the deeply buried secrets. The novel takes us from England to Kenya to New York, from World War I to the present time.

Cassandra says

Clemmie ist eine vielbeschäftigte Anwältin, die kaum Zeit für ihre Familie hat. Als ihre geliebte Granny Addie ihren 99. Geburtstag feiert, ist sie erschrocken, wie sehr die alte Dame abgebaut hat. Sind es die neuen Medikamente, oder warum spricht sie ihre Enkelin mit Bea an?

Der Roman springt zwischen 1906 und 1999. Es gibt Familiengeheimnisse an denen niemand zu rühren wagt, die sich aber ihre Wege an das Licht der neuen Generationen suchen. Ich mochte den Wechsel zwischen dem Herrenhaus Ashford Park, den Charlestonjahren in London und dem Farmleben in Afrika und dem hektischen Leben in New York. Ein schöner Familienroman mit leidenschaftlicher Liebe und verschlungenen Schicksalswegen.

Emily Crowe says

Sadly, this wasn't the book for me. It was just good enough to finish reading at night when I was tired from work but not ready to go to bed. Admittedly, I had high hopes when it was described as Out of Africa meets Downton Abbey, and really, it reminded me of neither.

The story weaves back & forth between Addie in the 1920s in England and Kenya (though precious little of Kenya), who is a cast-off cousin of a wealthy aristocratic family, and Clementine (called Clemmie, which is a name that grosses me out) in 1999 New York City, who is Addie's granddaughter. Or is she?

I think there is supposed to be a lot of suspense surrounding the real story of Addie and her cousin Bea and how one came to pose as Clemmie's grandmother. Clemmie certainly took the revelation badly, but she's a spoiled workaholic attorney in her thirties who can't see beyond herself and can't figure out that the reason she can't make relationships work is because she's not present for them.

For me, Addie was an interesting character and I'd much rather have seen more of her than of Clemmie, but it was not to be.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Quite morose in tone, however I was drawn into this family drama of a novel that travels smoothly between the early 20th century and the last decade of that same century. Very emotionally involving, although certain characters were hard to feel sympathy for. Recommended to readers who are interested in the WW1 years and the 1920s.

Reviewed for Affaire de Coeur Magazine in the April issue. <http://affairedecoeur.com>

Sarah says

I'm so glad the days of the sweeping generational saga are back. *Downton Abbey* and Kate Morton both deserve credit for this, imho, and I couldn't be more pleased; my personal reading tastes have become fashionable at last!

The Ashford Affair is a departure for Lauren Willig in some ways but not in others. While leaving Napoleonic spies behind, she incorporates the same smart dialogue and multiple-time format in her newest book, which follows the lives of two women over 70 years apart who are linked through family ties and secrets. I sped through it in just under two days, regretting the intervening time when I had to go to work and sleep.

The heroines are Addie Gillecote, who arrives at Ashford Park, a grand English country house, in 1906 as an orphaned poor relation; and her granddaughter, Clementine Evans, a workaholic attorney in New York City in 1999. Clemmie's high-pressure legal career has resulted in a broken engagement and has made her late for her Granny Addie's 99th birthday party, to her mother's dismay.

Within the book's first chapter, a tantalizing genealogical conundrum presents itself. Clemmie also gets her first hint about a long-held family mystery when her grandmother, her mind drifting with old age or overmedication, calls her by an unfamiliar name. She becomes curious about the reason why and receives help in her quest from her aunt's stepson, Jon, a university professor with whom she shares witty quips (and memories of a weekend in Rome years ago that they've agreed not to talk about).

From the outset, the plot darts quickly among several eras and locales, forcing readers to trust the author to reveal each piece of her tale in its appropriate time. Fortunately the novel's structure is sound and easy to grasp.

Addie's changing relationship with her sophisticated cousin Bea sits at the center of the earlier storyline. Bea befriends Addie as a child and shelters her from the snippy remarks of her mother, Lady Ashford, who had opened her house to Addie only reluctantly. The two girls grow up together in a glittering prewar era of

debutante balls and instruction in the social graces. But by 1926, when Addie arrives in Nairobi to stay with Bea and her husband Frederick on their coffee plantation, their closeness has become awkward... and it has everything to do with the as-yet-unknown past she shared with Frederick.

All of this takes place within the first few chapters, and I won't say more about what occurs. The background behind these situations is revealed bit by bit, and the telling held my attention throughout. The ending is fabulous, also, going one step above what I expected.

Historical fiction readers will likely take greater interest in Addie's story than Clemmie's, and not only because the earlier time period is intrinsically fascinating. These characters are moving through events that shaped the modern world, and the author illustrates how World War I shifted priorities and ruined lives, even those of the individuals fortunate enough to survive. The action sweeps from upscale Jazz-Age London soirees to the red dust and intense heat of Kenya; it succeeds at providing a wide-angle look at the times while tracing one woman's personal journey.

In addition, for me Addie was the more likeable and admirable character, doing her best with the lot she'd been given. Clemmie, while obviously a brilliant career woman, needs more than just a nudge to have her eyes opened to what truly matters in life, and with her frenetic schedule, it's no wonder she was unable to sustain a romantic relationship.

The Ashford Affair is billed as "bringing an *Out of Africa* feel to a *Downton Abbey* cast of characters," which is valid to some extent. I would have liked to have seen more of Addie's later life in Kenya, in addition to the nostalgic photographs which Clemmie comes across decades later, although maybe it's fitting that some aspects of the past remain elusive. As a saga, I found it very satisfying overall, and I'd certainly recommend it to anyone interested in the WWI and post-Edwardian eras.

Thanks to the publisher for providing an ARC as a FirstReads giveaway on Goodreads.

Leona says

More like "Out of Africa" meets "Harlequin Presents". I enjoyed it, but there were mechanical issues with the book that prevented me from giving it more than 3 stars.

- 1) The timing was off. There were places where things just seemed to drag and other spots where I couldn't stop turning the pages.
 - 2) Morally bankrupt cast of characters; one dimensional and a bit predictable.
-

Tandie says

I received a free ARC through Goodreads and St. Martin's Press. Thanks!

I've never read anything by Lauren Willig, so I wasn't sure what to expect. By chapter two, I had at least decided that her writing style is excellent. By chapter three, I was fully engaged in both stories & couldn't wait to see how they tied together. My favorite part was the early 1900's story with Bea and Addie. Bea was

such a spoiled princess. Right away I knew that I was rooting for Addie. This novel was obviously well researched & the way it slipped back and forth, from past to almost present day, kept up the suspense.

I didn't agree with the back cover description 'Out of Africa feel with a Downton Abbey cast'. I think the story is engaging & imaginative, but not at all like either show. I will definitely check out the author's Pink Carnation series after reading The Ashford Affair.

Susanna Kearsley says

Full disclosure here, because Lauren is a friend of mine and I love her writing and her books, but I honestly think she outdid herself in The Ashford Affair. Highly recommended.

Andrea Seaver says

Really, there should be a half star selection here, as I would have rated it 2.5, simply for Ms Willig's writing style. I picked this up from the library, where I had been on the waiting list for the release, so that should tell you that I anticipated this novel, it wasn't a spur of the moment selection.

I have ready and enjoyed the Pink Carnation series, for the lighthearted but entertaining novels they are. I was hoping for a deeper, and possibly darker, tale in The Ashford Affair. I was truthfully, not invested in these characters. Populating the 1926 era of the novel were Addie and Bea, the poor relation and the spoiled debutante, whose characters seemed driven by those exact descriptions. There was no duality to them for me, no deeper level than the surface character. Clemmie, our modern era narrator, was much the same, and her search for a mystery in her family's past (which was not a very great secret, mind you) triggered nothing much in me except exasperation for the way she comports herself.

The timing of the novel, the births (late babies to explain away decades) and setting itself (1999) was stretched so much to make the novel work, that it left the story itself feeling so contrived. It disconcerted me enough to google when Blackberry released their first (as Clemmie spends a great portion of her time either hearing it or imagining it buzzing in her bag) and, you guessed it.. in 1999.

The "past" story line itself: poor girl, falls in love, loses him to rich cousin, goes out to Africa, hopes she's over him, oh, she's not, cousins a whore, love of life realizes he was an idiot, etc read much like a formulaic romance novel. The "modern" story line seemed to encompass more time than the more interesting 1926 story, and had the added detraction of seemingly up to the minute cultural references that are over a decade ahead of their time.

I will read the new novels in her Pink Carnation series, but this one, hopefully, will not be indicative of how any stand alones will be in the future

Khanh, first of her name, mother of bunnies says

Interesting story, well-written, but I didn't end the book with much like nor attachment for any of the main characters.

This book spans roughly the early 1900s through the mid 1920s in England and Kenya, and runs parallel to 1999 London and New York.

In 1906, six year old Addie's parents died. Her father was the son of an Earl, and her mother a writer of

novels, which rendered them persona-non-grata in their circles. Addie is then brought to live, as a poor relation, with her uncle's family, at their family seat. The lonely, scared, and unwanted Addie is befriended by the bright and lovely Bea. Addie continues her life with the family as the unwanted poor relation, and shadows Bea throughout their early lives, but the two maintained a close relationship. The willful Bea breaks off her loveless marriage to a marquess to run away with her lover Frederick (who had previously been seeing Addie) to Kenya. It is in Kenya where things unfold that would change their lives and that of their descendants, including that of present-day Clementine.

Clementine is a stereotypical modern woman, working a thankless job as a lawyer and with a failed love life. Her story in this book begins with an invitation to the 99th birthday party of her ailing grandmother Addie (the aforementioned). She is unsatisfied with her life, and an encounter with a stepcousin hints at a rekindled romance. Tensions gather at her grandmother's party, and resentful old aunt Anna (I really find it hard to imagine a whiny, spoilt 70 year old, but there you have it) reveals some family skeletons that nobody discusses.

I felt that, with the exception of Addie, the characters were mostly one-dimensional. Bea is the willful, spoilt debutante to a tee, and Clemmie is too much chick-lit protagonist to have an actual personality of her own. Also, for a rational lawyer nearing her middle age, she reacts like a horrified teenager to one little family secret that, in my opinion, isn't even that big. No spoilers here, since we know this as the reader, but Addie turns out not to be her grandmother. She has been there for Clementine her entire life, and has been a mother, if not the biological one, for her mother and aunt all of their lives. It therefore makes little sense that the grown Clemmie would act like this is such a huge heartbreaking betrayal that this is kept from her.

There are also some holes in the plot that I felt could have been fleshed out, with Bea's story after Kenya. With our omniscient view as reader, and with all that we know, it doesn't make sense to leave such big gaping plot holes.

Lyuda says

Knowledge can be a double-edged sword. You need to decide whether it's worth cutting yourself on it...

Absorbing and captivating three-generational journey from pre- and post-WWI England to Kenya of the 1920s to America in the 1970s and 1990s.

The narrative masterfully navigates through different timelines, places and points of view, bringing layer after layer to the story, to its characters and their motivations. In a hand of a less skilled author, this constant switching of times, places and points of view would've been confusing and incoherent but not here. Here, it's actually enhances the story, brings it all together.

Clementine (Clemmie) Evans, 34-year-old New York firm lawyer lives for her job and not much else. Her love life in disarray, her recent engagement failed due to her hectic work schedule. She hasn't seen or talked to her beloved grandmother, Addie, for several months even though they live in the same city. And now, she is running late to attend Addie's 99th birthday party, a fateful day when some long buried family secrets started to unravel. Their slow unraveling would change the way Clemmie thinks of her family and ultimately herself.

Upon the untimely death of her parents in the early 1900, six-year-old Adeline Gillecote was reluctantly taken by her estranged father's family to their grand Ashford House. Though brought up with her cousins, Addie never overcame the status of a poor relation except where her cousin Bea was concern. Beautiful, precocious Bea immediately takes Addie under her wing earning her love and loyalty. Their strong bond and

connection tested again and again through relationships and challenges, and WWI that changed the face of Europe irrevocably. But what happens when something finally comes along that can't be shared?

As with her other book *The Other Daughter* the author perfectly captures the atmosphere, the feel of the Roaring Twenties; a time of contrasts, the consequence of "War to end all Wars" when hedonistic, escape reality lifestyle of 'Bright Young Things' was the norm for the sons and daughters of the aristocracy.

The story is so well written that I couldn't put it down! The characters were realistic, and, at times, did unlikable things but the narrative brings their emotions forth giving us wonderful insight into their reactions, feelings, and motivations. It is not good guys are good and bad guys are bad tale.

There were certain things that made me lower the rating. My biggest issue was very neat, very convenient and somewhat unbelievable resolution. There were also some developments that left unanswered, some characters remain unexplained and not flashed out. But overall, this was engrossing, emotional, and fascinating read.

Chris Mara says

This book is a sweeping, multi generational story spanning over 100 years and across the continent.

The story is extremely well told, in chapters that go back and forth in time from the early 1900's to the late 1990's; from London's British society to the hot, dry, red dirt hills of Kenya to the shimmering skyline of New York.

The main character, whom the story basically surrounds itself, is Granny Addie who is 99 years old who has quite a few secrets of her own. She is the family's matriarch and loving grandmother of Clementine.

Clementine is, young, bright, and unfortunately, a workaholic at a prestigious law firm in Manhattan. She is in line to becoming partner at the firm and has a real jerk of a boss. Her fierce determination and hard work ethic has caused her important time away from personal, family and serious relationship issues.

Unfortunately, Granny Addie's health and memory are quickly slipping away and her long buried secret(s) might go to the grave with her if the family as a whole don't know it or don't want it exposed.

Granny Addie has two living children, Anna, an outspoken and highly flirtatious, rather eccentric aunt, married four times. This is Aunt Anna. The other daughter is Marjorie, Clementine's mother, who is totally opposite in character to Anna. They "get along to get along" but are in constant opposition with each other especially when it comes to Granny Addie and her life; what they know or try to hide about their mothers younger, former life.

Granny Addie and her husband, Frederick have/had a very close, special and loving relationship, the kind to be admired and wanted in our own lives, but...there is a unique, surprising, twisted story behind their relationship from the day they met, past the day he died, and this story takes you through it all. It's really unique, and it's really compelling and it also heavily involves Bea.

So who is Bea? Bea is the oldest daughter of Addie's aristocratic aunt and uncle. When Addie's parents pass away, Addie is taken to their home to be raised side by side with their family. Bea and Addie become so much closer than sisters. One is so different from the other in style and personality. However, through thick

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