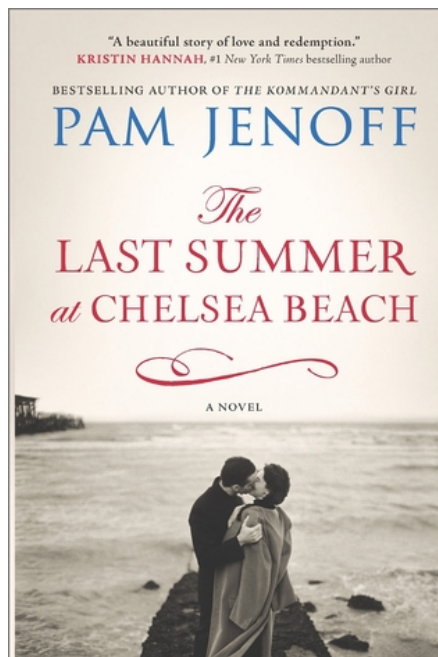




The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach

Pam Jenoff

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The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach Pam Jenoff

Summer 1941

Young Adelia Monteforte flees fascist Italy for America, where she is whisked away to the shore by her well-meaning aunt and uncle. Here, she meets and falls for Charlie Connally, the eldest of the four Irish-Catholic boys next door. But all hopes for a future together are soon throttled by the war and a tragedy that hits much closer to home.

Grief-stricken, Addie flees—first to Washington and then to war-torn London—and finds a position at a prestigious newspaper, as well as a chance to redeem lost time, lost family...and lost love. But the past always nips at her heels, demanding to be reckoned with. And in a final, fateful choice, Addie discovers that the way home may be a path she never suspected.

The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach Details

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Author : Pam Jenoff

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From Reader Review The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach for online ebook

Betsie says

This story was based in a believable history with an unbelievable storyline. Addie relates to everything as so far in the past when in reality everything occurred recently -- within 3 years. That is no lifetime. I like her as a person, but the amount of depth of emotion she has for things that require more time to build is not accurately displayed. More years should have gone by. The relationship between her and Charlie is just not developed enough for the actions she takes and you can't help and wonder about the rebounding with his brother. There just seemed to much complexity that was not executed well in the book. I needed more depth. More time in developing a substantial relationship with her and the characters in the book. I still do not understand how she had three men in love with her when she was kind of portrayed as simple and reckless. Then she ends up with the brother kind of as an after thought. She just seems to be drifting and trying to take control, yet running to and away from people that she claims to have feelings for.

Jill says

The story begins with sixteen-year-old Italian Jewish immigrant Adelia ("Addie") Montforte arriving in America in 1941, having been sent by her parents to take refuge from the Germans with her aunt and uncle in Philadelphia.

Addie is despondent, but perks up when the three of them go to the New Jersey seaside for the summer and she meets the Connally family next door. Irish-Catholic and full of life and fun, the parents and their four boys take Addie into their lives immediately. She loves them all, but in particular is attracted to Charlie, the oldest of the boys; he is her first crush. But when America enters WWII, Charlie is gung-ho to sign up and go abroad.

Before he takes off, however, tragedy strikes the Connally family, and they pack up and leave for parts unknown without a word to Addie. Addie herself flees - first to Washington, and then, after an unexpected encounter with her past, overseas to work in the London office of "The Washington Post." There, she steps into roles unusual for women, but suited to the woman of talent and moxie she has become. But she can't forget Charlie, nor the calamity that tore them all apart.

In the end though, there is a realization by the characters that the old world didn't exist anymore, with all of the bittersweet implications that epiphany produced. Still, there is an opportunity for redemption, and hope for a better future.

Discussion: Jenoff is a good writer who pulls you in right from the beginning, adding historical elements that impart interest and significance to the story. I didn't like Addie a lot, however; I thought many of her actions were selfish, especially regarding her behavior toward her aunt and uncle. Even in the end, when she was supposed to be "wiser" about what mattered, she sort of blew off her aunt, who was in a time of great need. Nevertheless, it's a good story, and one I continued to think about after I had read it.

Rating: 3.5/5

Christina (Confessions of a Book Addict) says

Adelia Monteforte boarded a ship, alone, during the summer of 1941 in Italy. Her parents sent her to America to escape the political situation in Italy. She made the entire voyage on her own and met up with her aunt and uncle whom she has never met. Adelia now lives in Philadelphia, but for the summer she is spending it at her aunt and uncle's beach house in Atlantic City. There she meets four Irish-Catholic brothers, the Connallys. They become her first real American friends; she even hits it off with Mrs. Connally forming a special bond with her. During the summer, the boys help Adelia break out of her shell and even smile again. Once summer is over and they return to Philadelphia, but things change as war is looming. Adelia's secret crush on Charlie Connally becomes even more real than she ever thought imaginable, but then tragedy strikes. Adelia flees to Washington D.C. to try her luck at a newspaper and then finds herself in London, which is even closer to the war than before. Pam Jenoff's epic historical romance swept me away. *The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach* is one of my favorite books of the year.

Read the rest of my review here:

<http://www.confessionsofabookaddict.c...>

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot...>

Pam Jenoff has been one of my go-to writers for a while. I always enjoy the time I spend with her stories and I think that is why I put off reading *The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach* for as long as I did. I'd flagged it as a comfort read and kept it in my back pocket to distract me when I found myself in rough patch.

The story surprised me in many ways. I found it slower than Jenoff's other novels, but it is a story of self-discovery so the pacing was actually quite appropriate to the action. Adelia Monteforte is a young girl when Jenoff introduces her and it takes years for her to experience the events that shape the woman she becomes. It is a process that unfolds as she enters each new phase of her life and I liked how Jenoff structured the story to emphasize that idea.

Another thing I like about this piece was how it highlighted America's pre-war years. Europe was a world away and the United States didn't really understand the magnitude or fear experienced by those on the other side of the Atlantic. I know the era through my own research, but I appreciated Jenoff's effort at illustrating the naivety that existed in America and showing her audience how blissfully unaffected the average American was prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

The heart of the story, however, is the idea of family, the roles each individual plays in it, how those roles change over time, and how they play into the choices we make as adults. It's a subtle idea with no flashy bells and whistles, but it's elegant and moving nonetheless. It takes a while to get there of course, the narrative spans a handful of countries over a period of years, but there a sense that it comes full circle in the end and I liked how everything came into focus in the final chapters.

The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach is a heartfelt coming of age novel of love and renewal. It's not the heaviest historical I ever read, but I'd definitely recommend it to readers of period romance and/or women's fiction.

Kimberly Belle says

War stories are sometimes hard for me to read, but this one blew me away, and in a good way! Pam Jenoff's prose is gorgeous, and her characters are so real. I highly recommend this one.

Amy Lignor says

Readers know that, every once in a great while, stories appear which are retained forever because of their capacity to overwhelm and delve into a person's heart so deeply, that the tale becomes a part of them. Upon saying this, it will come as no surprise to learn that behind the power, suspense, romance and history found in this one amazing creation, is author Pam Jenoff.

When we begin, Adelia Monteforte is put on a ship bound for America by her parents. The tide is turning and the end is near for their family in fascist Italy, and her parents want nothing more than for Adelia to be safe and have a shot at a life. This brave young girl arrives on America's shores and ends up living with her aunt and uncle. Although they are a nice couple, they seem to be more than awkward when it comes to raising their niece. What they do for her, however, is head every summer to a place called Chelsea Beach. And here is where Adelia runs into her destiny. An incredible Irish-Catholic family, consisting of four boys who each have their own attitudes and emotions, envelop Adelia and bring her 'in' as part of their family. They all grow up, experiencing emotions from anger to envy to love; yet, even as they are having fun, the fear of WWII going on across the ocean hangs over them like a veil of darkness.

Adelia falls in love with the eldest boy, Charlie, but their hopes for a lovely life are dashed when Japan bombs Pearl Harbor and America enters the frightening battle. Pain occurs on Chelsea Beach which sends Adelia running straight into, and not away from, the war. Her job on a newspaper, helping children in an orphanage, dealing with the youthful emotions that have strengthened over time – all of these cause Adelia to find herself stuck in tragedies. The Germans seem almost easier to deal with, considering the fact that every time Adelia turns around, the past comes back to haunt her.

"The Kommandant's Girl" was the first amazing novel by this author that dove into readers' hearts and stayed there. With this new story, readers will once again be in awe of the power and beauty of these characters that will never let them go. I have to say, Pam Jenoff has yet to make one mistake when it comes to delivering the best of the best in literature.

Laura Kay Bolin says

I loved it. Adelia "Addie" has come to America to live with her Aunt and Uncle. Her parents are still in Italy, but they send her over to protect her. Addie is taken to her Aunt and Uncle's beach house where she meets the Connally family. Four Irish Catholic boys. Over the years she becomes like a daughter/sister to the Connally family even with people looking at them because they are different. It makes no difference. Then Pearl Harbor. The eldest Connally boy, Charlie wants nothing more than to fight. Promises are made. The family is afraid of what war would mean especially with all the boys, but it is an unexpected accident that throws the future of the entire family into a tail spin. Addie runs. She runs to Washington and later to

London not wanting to deal with her own grief.

Addie wasn't a character I really took too right off. She seemed always a bit of a misfit. As she slowly evolved into part of the Connally family, the more I took to her. When the unexpected accident occurs (sorry not going to ruin the book by telling you!) My heart breaks for Addie. Once again she is left alone--the little girl sent off on a boat without her parents. Addie doesn't sit around feeling sorry for herself, but takes off to Washington. When her past shows up, she takes off in order to protect her heart. She runs off to London and a possible new future. Ok I would LOVE to start giving some major story details, but I will refrain.

Basically, the story is a hit and miss love story. There is a war. There is devastation. Addie is trying desperately to help someone in a way she couldn't help someone she lost. All through the book I kept wondering if the two loves would find there way back to each other. Would she choose the new man who loves her and is desperate to help her? I got half way through this book and then couldn't put it down. What would happen? I sat reading thinking of course true love, young love wins...but then you see a love that is more devoted to her, more adult...is that enough? I won't tell you what happens, but I will tell you I was not prepared for how all things would end. It has a perfect and unexpected ending that I was personally thrilled with. A MUST READ!

Raven Haired Girl says

I found Addie frustrating. Her avoidance of issues by constantly running away was annoying despite her forced and abrupt departure to a new country alone, not completely understanding her parents insistence she flee Italy. I had empathy for her up to a point, quickly it manifested into annoyance and disappointment. Her strength, intelligence and somewhat independence did not match her poor decision-making in the romance department or her overall character. Part 3 is where Addie fell apart for me, I did not like her at all.

The romance twist bothered me terribly. Addie crossed a serious line, a move seemingly based on desperation more than love, emotional rebound in my opinion. Frankly the twist ruined the entire narrative, also it was fairly predictable but I kept hoping I was wrong, ultimately not the case.

I loved the setting – the tension and fear permeating London. The chaos and desperation of WWII palpable. Addie, Teddy, Claire and Charlie's roles added texture and really made WWII come to life, air raids, bombings were felt with the turn of every page.

I enjoyed the story, I only wish Addie wasn't flighty and such a contradiction. No surprise the romance element was a miss for me. I wish Jenoff ended it differently. No doubt this novel will appeal to fans of historical fiction, WWII and war romances.

<http://ravenhairedgirl.com>

Dawn says

I love a good historical fiction novel and this one did not disappoint. **4.5 Stars**

Starting out in the summer of 1941, during WWII, I was quickly swept up in the story of Adelia "Addie" as she traveled alone, young and scared, from her home in Italy to America to live with her Aunt and Uncle. Through her meeting and falling in love with the family next door and their oldest son, to one tragedy and heartbreak after heartbreak, back across the ocean right in the middle of the war and then back to America

again, this book tugged at my heart all the way. Great characters. This was the first book by Pam Jenoff I've read. Can't wait to find another.

Grace says

There are many engaging moments in this story by Pan Jenoff and the premise is really quite interesting! I was very excited to get this book from the library but as the story developed I became frustrated. I can certainly understand the challenges that Addie faces with her being dropped suddenly into a new life without her parents (they remained in Italy in WWII) in America with an unknown Aunt or Uncle. It's odd that Addie spends so much time with the neighbors and that she doesn't seem to make a connection with her Aunt and Uncle. It's extreme. Then Addie has a crush on one of her neighbors and he ends up returning the affection the day before he leaves for war. While all of this is easy to grasp the story becomes complicated as Addie "runs" away, doesn't learn from her mistakes and we see her as stilted or stunted emotionally. We lack information about her feelings and why she makes the poor decisions that she does. And she continues to make them. The last portion of the story was horrible. I couldn't empathize with the characters in this last portion - Charlie and Addie should have been together - their abandonment of one another after the book has built us up to having them together was cut short, lacked necessary information and besides being abrupt, it seemed poorly written/developed. Odd. Her friend in London was well developed and his expression of his feelings, intents, and the way his life was impacted by his feelings was very good! Overall, this story has left me in a funk today. I am bothered by the ending. Addie was a disappointment and just simply didn't make sense. I feel sorry for the Connally family.

Colleen Turner says

Find the full review at <http://aliteraryvacation.blogspot.com>.

I read Pam Jenoff's novel *The Winter Guest* last year and it was one of my favorite books of 2014. It was the kind of book that had me adding her backlog to my wish list, it was that good. She has a way of presenting complex, unusual stories set during WWII that somehow give you a new angle on a much discussed topic while also making what the characters go through seem relatable and entirely absorbing. I just couldn't put the novel down and I am happy to say *The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach* was just as captivating.

What I appreciate most about the characters in this novel is how imperfect and therefore realistic they all are. These are fully formed beings that are trying to live and love, the best they can, in a time in history that made life anything but predictable. Addie and the Connally boys, especially Charlie and Liam, make many mistakes across the novel, running away from pain and grief, changing their minds about what they should do and where they should go as well as who they should love, and for me this makes them endearing even as I want to shake them around sometimes until they stop making their lives so complicated. People are not perfect so I love novels that don't try to make the characters appear that way.

For as much as occurs within the novel, it really doesn't eclipse that much time, just three short years. During that time we see our Addie go from feeling like an outsider in America to feeling like a part of a family with the Connally's, and then we see her go full circle with those feelings once again. We see a few love triangles, some poor decisions and one tragic accident that will break any reader's heart. While the war is always in the background and some of our characters do experience it head-on, *The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach* really isn't about the war as much as, say, *The Winter Guest* was, and for me this made it a very different read. At times I felt like I just had to hold on and weather the myriad of emotions these characters go through - love,

joy, loneliness, acceptance, anger, jealousy, blinding sadness, duty, acceptance - in order to reach the conclusion they all had to get to eventually: the past cannot be changed and should not be ignored, but should be accepted for what it is so you can move on to the future you are meant, and want, to have. Without the hardships and heartaches they each went through they wouldn't have become the people they needed to be.

Clearly from my review you can see this was a character-driven novel for me, which isn't to say that the plot wasn't solid. I was completely immersed in the settings as they shifted from America to war-torn Europe and Ms. Jenoff did a great job, as I expected, of creating this well drawn world in which her story could unfold. There were a few parts that I didn't know quite why they were included, such as a portion dealing with Addie's need to rescue some orphaned children from France, but even those parts were enjoyable and didn't pull away from the central story being told.

I've said it before and I'll say it again now, Pam Jenoff's novels are top shelf historical fiction. If you love novels that incorporate history, especially WWII, and want something unlike the usual novel set during this time pick up her novels. The Last Summer at Chelsea Beach was a little heavier on the romance than I was expecting, but even those that aren't big on romantic themes will find much to love here. I'm a firm follower of Ms. Jenoff's and I look forward to reading much more from her.

Mary Kubica says

I received an ARC of THE LAST SUMMER AT CHELSEA BEACH and quickly devoured it. Pam Jenoff has an incredible ability to bring together lush love stories within the desolation and devastation of war. Her characters are rich and authentic, and the setting and history so lifelike I felt I was living in the midst of World War II through the pages of the book. Can't wait to go back and read more of Pam's work (and see what she comes up with next)!

Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says

Adelia Monteforte was put on a boat alone to America in 1941 as WWII was underway. Her mother forced her into leaving Italy and living with her aunt and uncle that she had never met.

Adelia was grateful for her aunt and uncle's love, but she felt out of place with them and with her accent. When she met the Connallys, things changed. There were children her own age, children to play with, a family she felt very comfortable with, and their son she fell in love with.

Her aunt and uncle seemed distant but very kind to Adelia. Mrs. Connally was more of a mother to Adelia than her aunt, but I think Adelia made that happen as she chose to be closer to a stranger than her own relatives. She did upset me how she was closer to the family that lived next door at the beach than her blood relatives.

We follow Adelia who is a very strong-willed character and who makes decisions on her own even though she is quite young. I was surprised at her quick, poorly thought-out decisions. Some were decisions I definitely would not have made.

Adelia had become unsettled in her town after a while and also with the Connallys and left for Washington, D.C. to escape Charlie Connally. She then moved on to London when Washington, D.C. wasn't far enough away for her.

London wasn't what she expected, but Adelia was able to make new friends and continue to work at the same newspaper she worked for in the USA. Adelia never thought London would be as war torn as it was, but no matter what the circumstances or how far she went, she never could get Charlie out of her mind.

THE LAST SUMMER AT CHELSEA BEACH is filled with loss, growing up, learning about life, and a love story.

THE LAST SUMMER AT CHELSEA BEACH had a lesson about the importance of family and the importance of following your heart.

As always, Ms. Jenoff's books are well researched and very well written. You become part of her books and want to be one of the characters simply because of the marvelous way Ms. Jenoff tells a story.

If you haven't read THE LAST SUMMER AT CHELSEA BEACH or any of Ms. Jenoff's books, what are you waiting for? :)

You won't go wrong with any of her books. ENJOY....I know you will. 5/5

Carol Irvin says

Loved this book!!

Angel says

I devoted a significant portion of my day to reading this book - when I really needed to be doing other things - and in the end, I didn't even like it very much.

It did hold my attention, but the main character and her frequent running away got to be a bit much, and she sounds so meek and plain and yet these wonderful men are crazy in love with her. (To the author's credit, at one point a character does very bluntly say to her that she can't quite figure out why it is two great guys are falling all over themselves for her.)

I would have liked the book much better if it had ended before part three. I could have handled the book ending with the conclusion of part 2, it was sad, but it made sense to me and made Addie seem like a stronger character. But part 3 is what sort of ruined the rest of the story for me. It just made me angry.

(view spoiler)

What I did enjoy about this book was the London setting during WWII and the characters' involvement in the war. That's what kept me reading. The writing really brought this era to life.

Overall the story is okay. Other people may not feel the same sort of disappointment I felt at the way the story ended.

I received a review copy of this via NetGalley.

Lisa Wolf says

I really want to find the positive in this book, which I expected to like much more than I actually did.

The bare bones of the plot seemed promising: A young girl escaping wartime Europe on her own ends up being taken in by the rowdy boys of the family next door. Addie loves all of the Connally boys, but falls in love with Charlie. War gets in the way, as does a family tragedy, and Addie ends up running away again and again, always looking for meaning and a place of her own.

The problem I had with this book is that none of the relationships felt convincing. In particular, Addie has at different points in the book three different love interests, but they all seem rather circumstantial. I never really got the emotional intensity that should have been there, and Addie's decision-making appears illogical at times.

As I turned the final pages, I still didn't understand why Addie had made some of the choices she'd made, and certainly never connected with her feelings. Perhaps there was too much telling and not enough showing: We're told about Addie's thoughts and motivations, but it all seemed very surface-level.

The time period and settings are all very dramatic, as you'd expect for a novel set during WWII, but for a historical romance, the romances themselves were dry and not terribly interesting or compelling.

Deborah Blanchard says

This is an exquisitely written portrayal of life during World War II and yet encompasses so much more. It is a beautiful, heart wrenching story of love and forgiveness. It is about all the ways that fate and circumstances shape who we ultimately become, who we are meant to be. It gave me a true sense of what it was like to live during the upheaval of war. It's historical accuracy makes this book touch your very soul. These could very well be real people and not just characters in a book. That's how richly developed the characters were. I felt what they felt, they were real to me. To me, the sign of an extraordinary book is it makes you feel. This book pierced my heart. Only a great storyteller can get to me like that. Pam Jenoff is a storyteller of the highest caliber. This is a book that will stay with me for a very long time. This is the first book that I have read by this author, it will definitely not be the last. I highly recommend that you read this incredible book.

Laura says

I have a bit of a soft spot for Pam Jenoff's novels. They are just my cup of tea; romance and drama during wartime. This latest read succeeded in living up to my expectations having read The Kommandants Girl series some time ago.

When young Italian Addie is sent suddenly across the Atlantic to live with relatives in the US once war breaks out, she befriends the lively Connolly family and in particular, their eldest handsome son Charlie. The story is very much a coming-of-age one, set against the backdrop of a world at war. The author was careful, as ever, to respect the era in which the story was told. She delivers a compassionate story and vividly

describes each of the cities and countries Addie visits.

There are a few supporting characters who I felt deserved more reconciliation towards the end of the story; chiefly the charming Teddy and Addie's new found friend, Claire. However, the gripping storyline of the main characters is enough to keep the reader interested until the very last page.

Highly recommended for fans of romance and historical fiction. An easy read, yes, but still a brilliant one.

Brenda says

I absolutely loved THE LAST SUMMER AT CHELSEA BEACH.

It's the story of Adelia Montforte, who is forced by her mother to flee fascist Italy for America. Once there, she lives with her aunt and uncle, and meets the Connally family, who will have a lasting impact on her life.

Set against the backdrop of WWII, THE LAST SUMMER AT CHELSEA BEACH is a story of bravery and romance, family and friendship. If you like historical fiction or romance, you will absolutely love this book.

Margi says

This is a wonderful love story taking place during the Second World War.
