

THE BODECIA BOOK CLUB REVIEW

The Forgotten Garden by Kate Morton

A lost child: On the eve of the First World War, a little girl is found abandoned on a ship to Australia. A mysterious woman called the Authoress had promised to look after her – but has disappeared without a trace. A terrible secret: On the night of her twenty-first birthday, Nell Andrews learns a secret that will change her life forever. Decades later, she embarks upon a search for the truth that leads her to the windswept Cornish coast and the strange and beautiful Blackhurst Manor, once owned by the aristocratic Mountrachet family. A mysterious inheritance: On Nell's death, her granddaughter, Cassandra, comes into an unexpected inheritance. Cliff Cottage and its forgotten garden are notorious amongst the Cornish locals for the secrets they hold – secrets about the doomed Mountrachet family and their ward Eliza Makepeace, a writer of dark Victorian fairytales. It is here that Cassandra will finally uncover the truth about the family, and solve the century-old mystery of a little girl lost.

We found this book gripping and a great read - once we got past the size of the book! This is a large book – over 600 pages, and to be honest, the group grumbled and groaned about yet another large book!! However, we shouldn't have. The story flew off the page and the book read very quickly. There was adventure, life changing events, fear and destruction. There was also friendship, love and great fairytales.

There is not one main character in the book. The book spans a century and we get to know Nell, Cassandra and the Mountrachet family members well. The book does jump between time eras and events but it follows a stream of consciousness – by that we mean that when Nell or Cassandra discovers something about the past we then jump back in time and read what actually occurred. It is through this that we learn so much about the individuals featured in the book. We didn't struggle with the time changes at all. As long as you note the year at the beginning of the chapter you are fine and it is easy to follow and keep up.

Intertwined with the main story were additional ones, which we wondered if they were relevant to the story. They were written by Eliza about her life set to fairy tales, which did connect the story together well.

We loved the storyline. We loved how it was written so you kept discovering new things, and we enjoyed reading about London at the beginning of the 20th century, and how the upper classes lived. This is a historical novel, and I don't think it was badly or inaccurately written. Nothing notably wrong jumped out at us; and reading the acknowledgements at the end suggests that Morton did research this well.

We gave The Forgotten Garden **8 / 10**

The book we are now reading is **Finger Lickin' Fifteen by Janet Evanovich**

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Don't forget the first rule of Book Club!