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# The Forgotten Garden



## Synopsis

Thirty-eight year old Cassandra is lost, alone and grieving. Her much loved grandmother, Nell, has just died and Cassandra, her life already shaken by a tragic accident ten years ago, feels like she has lost everything known and dear to her. But an unexpected and mysterious bequest from Nell turns Cassandra's life upside down and ends up challenging everything she thought she knew about herself and her family. Inheriting a book of dark and intriguing fairytales written by Eliza Makepeace Rutherford—the Victorian authoress who disappeared mysteriously in the early twentieth century—as well as a cliff-top cottage on the other side of the world, Cassandra takes her courage in both hands to follow in the footsteps of Nell, on a quest to find out the truth about their history, their family and their past; little knowing that in the process, she will also discover a new life for herself. Reviews for *The House at Riverton* (also known as *The Shifting Fog*): "A stunning must-read story that's set for stardom" —*Woman's Day* magazine "This debut page-turner | recounts the crumbling of a prominent British family as seen through the eyes of one of its servants | Morton triumphs with a riveting plot, a touching but tense love story and a haunting ending." —*Publishers Weekly* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A four-year-old girl waits alone on a dock in Australia for parents who never come. Her only possession? A tiny white suitcase containing no information about who she is or how she came to be abandoned. Nell is a foundling, and what a rare foundling she is. A stow-away on an ocean liner,

she refuses to tell even so much as her name. Until in her 60s, over-protected by a loving foster father, she has no clue how she came to be alone on that dock. Hers is the mystery that unfolds in this long novel spanning more than a century, five generations, and two distant continents. Enthusiastic fans of Kate Morton's first novel, "The House at Riverton," will thrill to her second, "The Forgotten Garden." Like her first, this is a novel whose female characters are finely and fully drawn, and whose males are wispy and insubstantial. How its women interact, how they love and hate one another, how their interplay moves through tragedy and redemption will provide hours of pleasure for her fans. Morton's excellent pacing creates a page-turner that is hard to put down, although its length might give pause to those who suffer from carpal tunnel syndrome. Morton tells her story not only through the actions of her characters but also through fairy tales that work on several levels and provide clues to the mystery's final solution. Many readers will have guessed the solution long before the end of the book. Nevertheless, Morton maintains reader interest throughout. Overall, this is a highly satisfying read. It's fun to watch the author weave the lives of women into a rich tapestry of life and love, anger and betrayal. However, the novel is not without its weaknesses. First, as mentioned above, Morton's male characters are weak and insipid and never come to life.

I was a bit hesitant in picking up "The Forgotten Garden" by Kate Morton. After my disappointment with "The House at Riverton," I wasn't sure if I was willing to invest more time. Pleased to say that the story hooked me from the get-go, and though the book is longer than I thought necessary, it was altogether an entertaining read. At the heart of this big, fat tale (645 pages) is a mystery. In 1913, a dock master, Hugh, discovers a four-year-old girl who's been left alone on a wharf in Queensland, Australia after all passengers had disembarked from a boat that sailed from England. Taking pity on her, Hugh takes her home to his wife, Lil. In spite of Hugh's and Lil's efforts to find the girl's family, time passes and no one claims the tyke. Having hit her head while onboard the boat, the little girl couldn't even remember her own name and all she could recall was a woman she calls the Authoress who was supposed to sail with her. Hugh and Lil decide to keep her as their own and name her Nell. In the present day, Nell's granddaughter, Cassandra, is grieving Nell's passing. As she goes through Nell's notebooks, she realizes that her grandmother had never stopped searching for her true parents. Cassie takes over the search, which leads her to England and to a small Cornish village, and finally, to a decrepit cottage and its walled garden...a garden that swallowed the secrets of the 1900s and buried within its grounds the fascinating and tragic story of the Mountrachets and the woman a child had called the Authoress. A challenge to the reader will be the

constant switching of perspective from past to present and in between, primarily the years of 1913, 1975 and 2005. It's a bit off-putting in the first few chapters but after awhile, it's no longer an encumbrance.

The Forgotten Garden, the follow-up to *The House at Riverton: A Novel* (but by no means a sequel), is a multi-layered novel with complicated characters and a highly intriguing storyline. The story jumps back and forth in time, but rarely is the reader confused as to what's going on. I loved *The House at Riverton*, so as soon as I finished it, I went right over and bought *The Forgotten Garden* from UK. Let me just say that I wasn't disappointed. The book opens in 1913, when a young girl with no name is found on a quayside in Australia. She doesn't remember anything about herself, and all she carries with her is a white suitcase containing, among other personal items, a book of fairytales penned by a woman the girl calls the Authoress. In 1975, the girl, now a woman called Nell, goes back to England, where she attempts to find answers to questions about her identity. Her travels lead her to Blackhurst Manor, delving deep into the Mountrachet family's secrets and purchasing a cottage on the Blackhurst property. But before she can solve the mystery of her past, Nell's flaky daughter Lesley shows up, dumping her granddaughter Cassandra on her doorstep--permanently. In 2005, after Nell's death, Cassandra inherits the cottage and tries to answer the questions her grandmother raised. The stories of these two women are complemented by that of Eliza Makepeace, who grew up in the slums of London around the turn of the nineteenth century, and her cousin, the genteel Rose Mountrachet.

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