

TIGER HILLS



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FOR THIS GROUP

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On the Edge of Your Seat:
NO ONE WILL HEAR YOU
by Max Allan Collins and Matthew Clemens



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Reading Group Guide

About This Book
Discussion Questions
Author Biography
Excerpt

The Forgotten Garden by Kate Morton

List Price: \$26.00
Pages: 560
Format: Hardcover
ISBN: 9781416550549
Publisher: Atria

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REVEALED
LIES
Can
Become
DEADLY

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About This Book

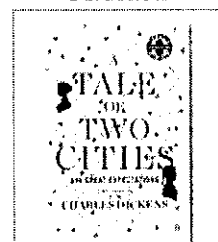
From the internationally bestselling author of *The House at Riverton*, an unforgettable new novel that transports the reader from the back alleys of poverty of pre-World War I London to the shores of colonial Australia where so many made a fresh start, and back to the windswept coast of Cornwall, England, past and present.

A tiny girl is abandoned on a ship headed for Australia in 1913. She arrives completely alone with nothing but a small suitcase containing a few clothes and a single book --- a beautiful volume of fairy tales. She is taken in by the dockmaster and his wife and raised as their own. On her twenty-first birthday they tell her the truth, and with her sense of self shattered and with very little to go on, "Nell" sets out on a journey to England to try to trace her story, to find her real identity. Her quest leads her to Blackhurst Manor on the Cornish coast and the secrets of the doomed Mountrachet family. But it is not until her granddaughter, Cassandra, takes up the search after Nell's death that all the pieces of the puzzle are assembled. At Cliff Cottage, on the grounds of Blackhurst Manor, Cassandra discovers the forgotten garden of the book's title and is able to unlock the secrets of the beautiful book of fairy tales.

This is a novel of outer and inner journeys and an homage to the power of storytelling. **The Forgotten Garden** is filled with unforgettable characters who weave their way through its spellbinding plot to astounding effect.

NEW IN
PAPERBACK
The epic novel
that captivated
readers coast
to coast

Oprah's Book Club
Selection



A Tale of Two Cities
and Great
Expectations
by Charles Dickens

Morton's novels are #1 bestsellers in England and Australia and are published in more than twenty languages. Her first novel, **The House at Riverton**, was a *New York Times* bestseller.

[top of the page](#)

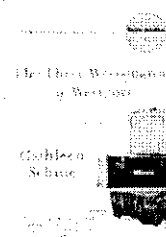
Discussion Questions

1. On the night of her twenty-first birthday, Nell's father, Hugh, tells her a secret that shatters her sense of self. How important is a strong sense of identity to a person's life? Was Hugh right to tell her about her past? How might Nell's life have turned out differently had she not discovered the truth?
2. Did Hugh and Lil make the right decision when they kept Nell?
3. How might Nell's choice of occupation have been related to her fractured identity?
4. Is it possible to escape the past, or does one's history always find a way to revisit the present?
5. Eliza, Nell and Cassandra all lose their birth mothers when they are still children. How are their lives affected differently by this loss? How might their lives have evolved had they not had this experience?
6. Nell believes that she comes from a tradition of 'bad mothers'. Does this belief become a self-fulfilling prophesy? How does Nell's relationship with her granddaughter, Cassandra, allow her to revisit this perception of herself as a 'bad mother'?
7. Is **The Forgotten Garden** a love story? If so, in what way/s?
8. Tragedy has been described as "the conflict between desire and possibility." Following this definition, is **The Forgotten Garden** a tragedy? If so, in what way/s?
9. A 'plait' motif threads through **The Forgotten Garden**. What significance might plaits have for the story?
10. In what ways do Eliza's fairy tales underline and develop other themes within the novel?
11. In what ways do the settings in **The Forgotten Garden** represent or reflect the characters' experiences?

[top of the page](#)

Contest

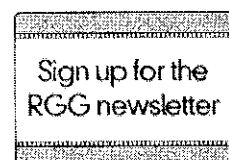
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The Forgotten Garden

Kate Morton, 2008

Simon & Schuster

560 pp.

In Brief

A tiny girl is abandoned on a ship headed for Australia in 1913. She arrives completely alone with nothing but a small suitcase containing a few clothes and a single book — a beautiful volume of fairy tales. She is taken in by the dockmaster and his wife and raised as their own. On her twenty-first birthday they tell her the truth, and with her sense of self shattered and with very little to go on, "Nell" sets out on a journey to England to try to trace her story, to find her real identity. Her quest leads her to Blackhurst Manor on the Cornish coast and the secrets of the doomed Mountrachet family. But it is not until her granddaughter, Cassandra, takes up the search after Nell's death that all the pieces of the puzzle are assembled. At Cliff Cottage, on the grounds of Blackhurst Manor, Cassandra discovers the forgotten garden of the book's title and is able to unlock the secrets of the beautiful book of fairy tales.

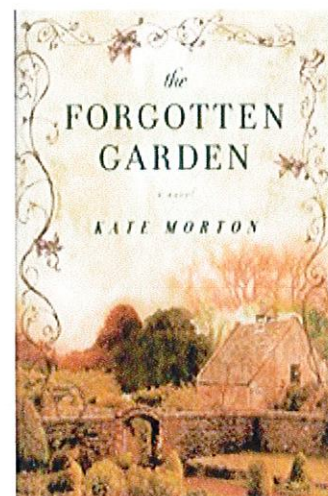
This is a novel of outer and inner journeys and an homage to the power of storytelling. *The Forgotten Garden* is filled with unforgettable characters who weave their way through its spellbinding plot to astounding effect. (From the publisher.)

[top of page](#)

About the Author

- Birth—1976
- Where—Berri, South Australia
- Education—B.A., and M.A., University of Queensland
- Currently—lives in Australia

Kate Morton, a native Australian, holds degrees in dramatic art and English literature and is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Queensland. She lives with her family in Brisbane, Australia. *Riverton* is her first novel; *The Forgotten*


[Buy the book](#)

Garden, her second, was published in 2008. (*From the publisher.*)

More

Morton, an acclaimed Australian author, is one of three sisters born in Queensland, Australia. The family later settled on Tamborine Mountain where Morton attended a small country school. She then completed a Licentiate in Speech and Drama from Trinity College London.

Later she earned a first class honours for her English Literature degree at Queensland University. Following this she obtained a scholarship and completed a Master's degree focussing on tragedy in Victorian literature. She is currently enrolled in a Ph. D program researching contemporary novels that marry elements of gothic and mystery fiction.

Kate is married to Davin, a composer, and they have two young sons. All four live together in a nineteenth-century home replete with its own ghosts and secrets (*From Wikipedia and the [author's website](#).*)

[top of page](#)

Critics Say. . .

Both books reveal Morton as an author in supreme control of her material, and she delivers again, right on target, with another atmospheric historical saga shot through with mystery and secrets, grand passions and tragic woes...like the maze in the forgotten garden of the title, it's a delicious book to become lost in.

Sunday Mail

'This is a novel of a writer who is really getting into her stride. The magical opening of *The Forgotten Garden* launches us into a complex and richly textured world. Morton skillfully interweaves the different periods in which the novel is set, maintaining pace throughout. She gradually strips away layers of mystery, leaving a nice twist to the end...A beautifully written and satisfying novel

Daily Express

A four-year-old girl abandoned aboard a ship touches off a century-long inquiry into her ancestry, in Morton's weighty, at times unwieldy, second novel (*The House at Riverton*, 2008). In 1913, Hugh, portmaster of Maryborough, Australia, discovers a child alone on a vessel newly arrived from England. The little girl cannot recall her name and has no identification, only a white suitcase containing some clothes and a book of fairy tales by Eliza Makepeace. Hugh and his wife, childless after several miscarriages, name the girl Nell and raise her as their own. At 21, she is engaged to be married and has no idea she is not their biological daughter. When Hugh confesses the truth, Nell's equilibrium is destroyed, but life and World

War II intervene, and she doesn't explore her true origins until 1975, when she journeys to London. There she learns of Eliza's sickly cousin Rose, daughter of Lord Linus Mountrachet and his lowborn, tightly wound wife, Lady Adeline. Mountrachet's beloved sister Georgiana disgraced the family by running off to London to live in squalor with a sailor, who then abruptly disappeared. Eliza was their daughter, reclaimed by Linus after Georgiana's death and brought back to Blackhurst, the gloomy Mountrachet manor in Cornwall. Interviewing secretive locals at Blackhurst, now under renovation as a hotel, Nell traces her parentage to Rose and her husband, society portraitist Nathaniel Walker-except that their only daughter died at age four. Nell's quest is interrupted at this point, but after her death in 2005, her granddaughter Cassandra takes it up. Intricate, intersecting narratives, heavy-handed fairy-tale symbolism and a giant red herring suggesting possible incest create a thicket of clues as impenetrable and treacherous as Eliza's overgrown garden and the twisty maze on the Mountrachet estate. Murky, but the puzzle is pleasing and the long-delayed "reveal" is a genuine surprise.

Kirkus Reviews

[top of page](#)

Book Club Discussion Questions

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(Questions from the [author's website](#).)

[top of page](#)

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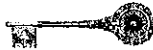
Garden The Forgotten

A lost child...

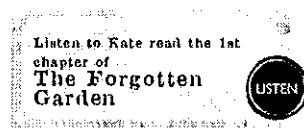
On the eve of the first world war, a little girl is found abandoned on a ship to Australia.

A mysterious woman called the Authoress had promised to look after her - but the Authoress has disappeared without a trace.

A terrible secret...



On the night of her twenty-first birthday, Nell O'Connor 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.

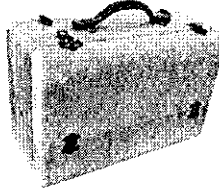


A mysterious inheritance...

On Nell's death, her grand-daughter, 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.

**HANGING AROUND FOR YEARS,
EVEN BEFORE I WROTE THE SHIFTING FOG.**

My husband's family migrated from Sweden to Australia in the early years of the twentieth century and my mother-in-law, who's a keen family historian, often told us stories of their journey. One that always struck a chord with me was of



the death of one of the children en route.

There were seven children in the family and they were left to their own devices for the most part because their mother was busy below deck with her infant son.

As the ship crossed the equator one of the four year old twins died from sunstroke.

I couldn't get this story out of my mind-the beautiful Swedish children on a sunny deck.

long white dresses and long blonde hair-and in my imagination the focus narrowed so that

I saw only the little girl twirling along the deck. Somehow the deck became a wharf, and the little girl obtained a small white suitcase, which she was sitting on, all alone as night began to fall.

- Who was she? I wondered.
- Why was she alone?
- And what would happen to her if no one came looking?

The second image that presented itself when I was in the dreaming stage of The Forgotten Garden, was of a woman hurrying along a narrow cobbled lane. I knew it was London in the early twentieth century. I could see only the hem of her long skirt, but I could hear it rustling and her heels clipping, as she hurried along the road.

- Who was she?
- Where was she going?
- Why was she in such a hurry?

**I ALWAYS KNEW THAT WHEN I FIGURED
OUT THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS
I'D BE ABLE TO WRITE THE STORIES TO
WHICH THE TWO IMAGES BELONGED.**

It was a great surprise though, when I finally worked out who they were and what they were doing, to also realize that they belonged together in the same book.

Along with such images, I drew on personal inspiration... **FOLLOW ME**

WHEN MY NANA TURNED TWENTY ONE, HER
BELOVED FATHER TOLD HER THAT SHE
WASN'T HIS BIOLOGICAL CHILD.



I don't know whether he could have imagined the impact this news would have, and I certainly never spoke directly with my Nana about it, but it was a life-changing event for her-discovering that she wasn't who she had thought she was.

Nana never told anyone else, keeping the truth about her parentage secret from her friends and sisters until she was a very old lady and decided, finally, to tell her three daughters.

In *The Forgotten Garden*, Nell experiences a similar event. In Nell's case, however, discovering that she was a foundling is completely identity-shattering. She withdraws from her family and friends, breaks off her engagement, and spends the rest of her life on a quest to discover her true identity.



IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO
FIND AN ENGLISH LOCATION FOR THE
FORGOTTEN GARDEN; I KNEW IT HAD TO BE
COASTAL AND I WANTED A HISTORY OF
SMUGGLING BECAUSE IT FED INTO THE
OVERARCHING FAIRYTALE FEEL I WAS
HOPING TO CREATE.



I auditioned a number of stretches of English coastline before coming, by chance, across a mention on the internet of a place called **THE LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN**. Well, that's just the sort of title to get my interest piqued so I set out searching for any information I could find on the lost gardens. It turned out that Heligan was a grand country estate in Cornwall, owned for many centuries by an aristocratic family called the Tremaynes.

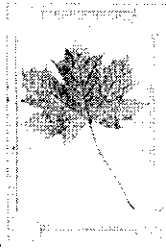
Along with the house and farms, Heligan was also home to the most glorious formal gardens. Generations of green thumbs had scoured the globe bringing back samples of the world's varied vegetation, and a team of thirteen gardeners were in charge of maintaining The Antipodean garden, the Italian garden, and the African garden, to name but a few.

**IN 1914, HOWEVER, WHEN WORLD WAR ONE
BROKE OUT, THE ENTIRE GARDEN STAFF
ENLISTED AND NONE RETURNED.
THE TREMAYNE FAMILY MOVED AWAY, THE
GARDEN GREW OVER, AND TIME AND
PEOPLE FORGOT WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN.**

It wasn't until late in the twentieth century that a garden archaeologist, who had grown up nearby, returned home and rediscovered the entrance to Heligan.

With a BBC film crew recording the project, the garden was restored and is now open to the public. The idea of a once-glorious, much loved garden that time had forgotten was too irresistible for me to leave alone. My story had not only found its Cornish location, it had also acquired a forgotten garden (and a new title!).

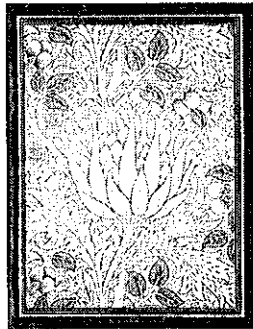
THE FORGOTTEN GARDEN. LITERALLY MY



HOME LOCATION.

Nell's little timber worker's cottage in the hills of Paddington is the house I lived in with my family while I was writing the book, and the **ANTIQUÉ CENTRE**, where Nell and Cassandra have their stall, is a real place. It was such a pleasure weaving a location I'm so familiar with, and for which I bear such great fondness, into my story.

The chapter in which Cassandra is first taken to her grandmother Nell's house is one of my favourites in the book. It really did feel like it wrote itself and required very little editing afterwards. I'm so used to having to stop and research fiddly little details along the way-which flower would be in bloom, do Cornish houses have thatched or tiled roofs, is it possible to pick an apple in Cornwall in April?-that it was incredible to have such minute details leap to mind from personal experience as I wrote.



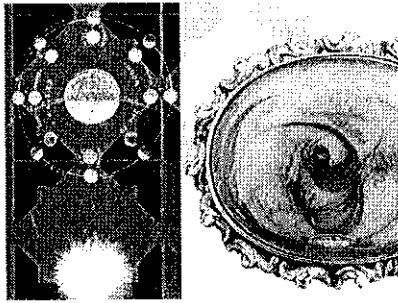
HAVING SAID THAT,

**I ADORE THE HISTORICAL RESEARCH
REQUIRED TO WRITE MY BOOKS.
SOMETIMES I THINK I'M IN DANGER OF
FALLING INSIDE THE RESEARCH AND
NEVER FINDING MY WAY OUT AGAIN.**

Initially, I favour a process of immersion, in which I read everything I can get my hands on-fiction, non-fiction, letters, diaries-no matter how loosely they relate to my topic; find pictures, fabrics, maps, photographs, portraits that evoke the setting in some way; watch films and documentaries on the subject; listen to music of the era; and anything else that helps me to lose myself, and discover my characters, in the milieu.

For The Forgotten Garden this process involved disappearing inside a world of classic fairytales, William Morris fabrics, Arthur Rackham illustrations, cliff-top manor houses, mazes, gothic aunts and uncles, and a thousand other small and wonderful inspirations.

Later on, when the writing was underway and I had a clearer idea of my characters and plot, I was able to home in on the specifics, like is it possible to find an apple on a tree in a sheltered Cornish garden in April? (Luckily for me, the answer is yes! Though it would have wizened skin and not be particularly juicy.)



I'm drawn to stories that explore the relationship between the present and the past, (I don't see them as discrete temporal locations, rather it's my experience that the past is always with us in the present: our memories, our dreams, and the very fabric, genetic and experiential, that makes us who we are) so I'm always looking for different ways to marry various narrative lines together in a coherent whole.

I knew that *The Forgotten Garden* would require a tripartite structure—three related but discrete strands woven together to form a single narrative plait—and in my first draft I approached this in a very strict way so that each chapter was divided into three parts, one belonging to each of the main characters and times. Ultimately, however, this structure proved too restrictive and I decided that if it wasn't going to serve the story it had to go, no matter how much it pleased my inner mathematician!

Instead, I used the looser tripartite structure that appears in the book, always imagining that I was plaiting the strands of Eliza, Nell and Cassandra's stories, so that each woman's journey could play its part in the solution of the book's mystery.

**I LIKE TO THINK OF THE FORGOTTEN
GARDEN THAT WAY: JUST AS A VICTORIAN
MOURNING BROOCH CONTAINS A PLAIT
MADE FROM THE HAIRS OF FAMILY
MEMBERS, MY BOOK'S NARRATIVE BINDS
THE LIVES OF THREE WOMEN IN THREE
DIFFERENT ERAS INTO A SINGLE STORY.**

