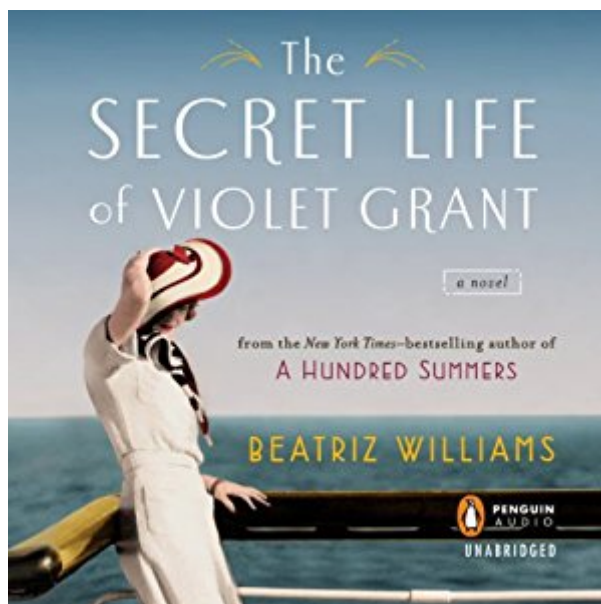


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The Secret Life Of Violet Grant



Synopsis

Passion, redemption, and a battered old suitcase full of secrets: the New York Times best-selling author of *A Hundred Summers* returns with another engrossing tale of lost love and female ambition that crosses generations. Manhattan, 1964. Vivian Schuyler, newly graduated from Bryn Mawr College, has recently defied the privilege of her storied old Fifth Avenue family to do the unthinkable for a budding Kennedy-era socialite: break into the *Mad Men* world of razor-stylish Metropolitan magazine. But when she receives a bulky overseas parcel in the mail, the unexpected contents draw her inexorably back into her family's past, and the hushed-over crime passionnel of an aunt she never knew, whose existence has been wiped from the record of history. Berlin, 1914. Violet Schuyler Grant endures her marriage to the philandering and decades-older scientist Dr. Walter Grant for one reason: for all his faults, he provides the necessary support to her liminal position as a young American female physicist in prewar Germany. The arrival of Dr. Grant's magnetic former student at the beginning of Europe's fateful summer interrupts this delicate dÃ©tente. Lionel Richardson, a captain in the British Army, challenges Violet to escape her husband's perverse hold, and as the world edges into war and Lionel's shocking true motives become evident, Violet is tempted to take the ultimate step to set herself free and seek a life of her own conviction with a man whose cause is as audacious as her own. As the iridescent and fractured Vivian digs deeper into her aunt's past and the mystery of her ultimate fate, Violet's story of determination and desire unfolds, shedding light on the darkness of her years abroad - and teaching Vivian to reach forward with grace for the ambitious future - and the love - she wants most.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

And, oh!, what a brilliant story teller is Ms. Beatriz!! I read novels; I review novels: And It takes a lot of my time. Why do I do it? Because, once in a great while, I run across a book like this, and it makes all my time and effort worth while. The two stories--one playing against the other, chapter after chapter--an aunt and a niece; one story before the First World War, the other story much later on in New York City--with their unexpected twists and turns: So sweet, so complicated, so honest and gullible and right. The main character, a journalist in pursuit of a story that involves her youngest aunt--and a murder--and a disappearance; a story which could make her career, pitted against a family that wants to keep the aunt's story mum; her perseverance, her chutzpah, and a man--there is always a man..... The main character has so much pizzazz, so many one-liners up her sleeve, so witty, such a beautiful face, hair, body; so much going for her, yet so alone and lonely. From the first page to the last page: It is a complete, wonderful, perfectly wrapped, elaborate package, tied with a beautiful, flamboyant bow, and presented to the reader. Best book I've read in quite a while.

First of all, I would not categorize this novel as a romance novel. When I hear the term "romance novel" I run screaming. This isn't one of those insipid pieces of blech that I usually assume a romance novel will be. This book is so much more than that. Vivian Schuyler was born wealthy but is living in a crap apartment, trying to make it on her own in the 1960's. A trip to the post office brings a mysterious suitcase and a handsome doctor. The suitcase, she learns, belonged to her great-aunt Violet, a woman even more daring and independent than Vivian, who left her family behind to study physics in England in 1911. The doctor ends up being more mysterious than she bargained for as well. The book switches between time periods and between the two protagonists, Vivian and Violet, and it does so in a perfectly smooth and coherent way. There are many similarities between the two women and neither of them know if they can trust the man each of them is in love with. There is nothing predictable about *The Secret Life of Violet Grant* and it held my interest the entire time. I highly recommend it.

Vivian Schuyler got two surprises that afternoon at the post office. First, an old suitcase had been sent to her by mistake. After some digging around, she discovers the valise actually belonged to an aunt Violet Schuyler Grant who had left her affluent New York family to pursue her study of science in England, but later murdered her husband and disappeared with her lover. The Schuylers have

neither heard from her or talked about her since. Vivian's second surprise was the handsome Doctor Paul who volunteered to carry the large package home from the post office. Charming and helpful, Vivian can't get the doctor or her newly discovered aunt off her mind. Vivian will discover the truth regarding what happened between her aunt Violet and her professor husband on the eve of the first World War, while learning just how much heartache and love her own heart can handle. *The Secret Life of Violet Grant* by Beatriz Williams is a definite page turner. It's another split narrative (so many of those lately) as the reader follows both Vivian's search for the truth and Violet's life with Professor Grant in alternating chapters. That formula works well in William's novel. I enjoyed both the intrigue of Violet's story and Vivian's melodramatic love life as well as the satisfying and bridging conclusion. Vivian's spunky character is unforgettable. Her absolute open candor and her 1964 short skirts are daring and delightful. While she's open and frank, Vivian is more vulnerable than she lets on and she works her way right into the reader's heart. She's definitely my favorite part of the novel. There are some disturbing sex scenes and vulgar language.

Beatriz Williams has managed to write another interesting historical fiction novel with characters I can't quite get out of my mind. Vivian is living in New York City in 1964 when a mysterious suitcase comes into her possession. The suitcase once belonged to Vivian's great aunt Violet, and perhaps holds the key to her disappearance. As the story alternates narrators, Vivian's great aunt Violet's story is revealed, although for decades her family has managed to keep it hush hush. Secrets that have long been locked away are revealed as Vivian tries to locate her great aunt Violet. Although Vivian has hopes of writing a story about her great aunt, she is also curious about her mysterious disappearance and accusation that Violet murdered her husband. As we read Violet's narration, we see that Violet's marriage was anything but happy, and her scientific work and the people she spent time with played a part in her disappearance. Williams is able to recreate the era Violet lives in and I could imagine Europe in the early 1900s as I read. The twists in this story kept me guessing, and I was caught up in both Violet and Vivian's stories. Williams work is quickly making her one of my must-read authors, and I can't wait to see what she writes next.

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