



In the Company of Secrets

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The truth could cost her everything....

Olivia Mott didn't intend to lie. Somehow, it just happened. And wasn't it all Lady Charlotte's fault anyway?

Now Olivia's position as assistant chef at Pullman's elegant Hotel Florence is dependant upon her keeping her secrets. And sometimes lies have a way of leading to other lies. Should Olivia admit her real past and accept the consequences or keep quiet in order to preserve her comfortable new circumstances?

Deception seems to be part of everyday life in the company town of Pullman, Illinois, where the grand Pullman Palace Car is manufactured. Samuel Howard, Olivia's friend and the town manager, seems to think everything is fine, but Olivia observes something quite different. Could it be that Olivia is not the only one harboring secrets?

In the Company of Secrets Details

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From Reader Review In the Company of Secrets for online ebook

writer... says

Intrigue and suspense got me.. off to the library for next 2 in series!

Nat says

Yet another book where the author's source material appears to be contemporary romance novels set in the past, rather than, you know, reading books from the past. I have no idea how this book ended up on my device, and I went into it with a spirit of adventure, but I could not finish it. When 'oh my gosh, all these lies that we're saying, whatever will we do!' is said five times in three pages, it's time to bail.

Pegg says

Historically interesting look into the town of Pullman. George Pullman not only invented things like the Pullman railroad car, he also invented the "perfect" town. Smacking of socialism, it was seated just outside of Chicago.

As with so many social experiments meant to improve things for all mankind, with no saloons, no independent newspapers, strict codes to adhere to for the public good, etc., Pullman was far from perfect under the surface.

Into this town comes Olivia Mott. Newly escaped from a bad situation in England, Olivia helps her former mistress, Lady Charlotte, settle into Pullman. Their life - built on lies - gets off to a shaky start. When Olivia meets handsome Fred DeVault, the lies hiding her past and the tempers simmering under the surface of the town of Pullman collide.

Rachel says

(There are some spoilers in this review)

What happens when you build an entire life on a foundation of lies? Consequences!

Olivia travels to Pullman, Illinois from England with the Lady Charlotte. Charlotte is unmarried and pregnant. In order to be hired for a position as the assistant chef at the Hotel and to protect Charlotte's honor, they fabricate a pack of lies and stories about who they are. As time progresses, Olivia's closest friends Fred and his mother, Mrs. DeVault, as well as her cousin Albert and his girlfriend Martha are all deceived by who they are. In the end Olivia realizes the importance of honesty and seeks the Lord's forgiveness for what she has done. She tries to begin a fresh in her walk with the Lord. However, she keeps the truth about the lies hidden. She is eventually found out and has to face the consequences.

I am very baffled by this book. It drove me crazy at parts and I wanted to stop reading it, but I was also intrigued to see how it would all play out. I was disappointed in the end that the loose ends were not tied up. I understand that it is a series, however it felt very confusing at the close of the book. The two main characters were the reasons why I wanted to put the book down. Charlotte has her baby and neglects him and eventually abandons him. I know that this happens in the real world, but Charlotte's snobbery is the main reason behind her poor attitude towards the baby. Being a mother of 2 small children, this made me quite upset. Olivia is extremely naive when it comes to men and seems to be quite spineless when it comes to standing up for herself. She constantly lets herself get walked over and lives in complete fear that someone will find her out. I read for enjoyment and I prefer to read about women who are strong, truthful and stand up for what is right. I did enjoy the historical side of this book. Although, I am not quite sure where the "Postcards" come into play, learning a little about Pullman and the railworks in 1892 was quite interesting.

Even though I have conflicting feelings regarding this book, I am curious to see how Olivia's character progresses. Seeing as how the library does not yet have this series in electronic form though, I will not be continuing. I was able to purchase this book for free at Barnes & Noble.

Bethany House Publishers

Loraine says

What a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive! - Walter Scott

Olivia Mott and Lady Charlotte Charlotte Spencer both find themselves in predicaments that necessitate leaving England in a hurry and traveling to the US. They are headed to Pullman Illinois where Lady Charlotte intends to find the man who had romanced her while visiting England and left her pregnant. But their flight begins with lies and one builds upon another as they find their feet in Pullman.

Miller brings a delightful touch of humor to the highjinks that cause Olivia and Lady Charlotte to get into deeper and deeper trouble amidst trying to keep all their stories straight. Her focus on Olivia's despair as the lies pile upon one another and her faith keeps telling her this is all wrong is a pervasive theme throughout the story. Lady Charlotte drove me crazy from beginning to end with her self-centered attitude while Olivia is trying so hard to be truthful. It's only when Olivia finally "spills the beans" that she finally finds peace and can set her life straight.

Definitely an enjoyable book and I look forward to reading the others in this series.

Reianna says

This book was awful. It was intolerably slow, the plot almost non existent till the end. There was zero character development, and I felt no connection to any of the characters whatsoever. Everything is exaggerated from a small offense to something life ending-ly horrible. The writing style is stiff, and in no way enjoyable. 0 stars.

Jeffrey says

First, Let me clarify my rating as "did not finish" rather than "could not finish." The author is a fine writer and the plot was intriguing however, read on for my explanation for why I "did not finish."

Based on my perusals of reviews on www.amazon.com, I steadfastly refuse to get drawn into another trilogy or series of books that require the reading of all the volumes for some sort of resolution! I put down Daughter's Inheritance by Tracie Peterson for that same reason. It is apparent that this first in the trilogy is NOT a stand-alone novel. I've now seen this ploy many times where the first in a trilogy or series is offered enticingly for \$0.00 and the subsequent volumes for an additional cost of "\$\$\$." While this practice may be satisfactory for most readers, it is not my style.

For an excellent example of a series of related stories that are definitely stand-alone, might I recommend Shanna Hatfield's excellent Pendleton Petticoats series. I've read the first four in the series, each with a definite resolution/ending. However, each story is cleverly interlinked by relationships between men, women, family and community so I found myself wanting to read "number next" because of the fine entertainment merits of the preceding stories. I hope this last paragraph makes some sense for those desiring a series of related stories, yet wanting stand-alone finishes to each.

Ashley says

In the Company of Secrets (Postcards from Pullman Book #1) by Judith Miller has the potential to be a stellar book. There could be complex characters with an intricately woven plotline however, in the end, it collapses under the weight of the excessive moral lessons and faith-based guilt. The characters are one-dimensional, the story is predictable and overall it is just a very lackluster book. It was an average book until after Olivia Mott (the protagonist) takes a day trip with Mr. Samuel Howard to Chicago. After this trip was over it became a challenging book to finish. I knew what was coming, the story is that predictable, and I was ready for it to end.

A brief synopsis of the book is this: Olivia Mott is a scullery maid in the kitchen of a Lord and his Lady in London, England in the 1890's. She confides in another maid that the head chef has insisted she become his mistress or lose his job. This maid, in turn, confides in the daughter of the Lord and Lady (Charlotte) who happens to be pregnant by an American businessman who visited London. Charlotte decides that she is going to run away to the city of Pullman, Illinois to find, and marry, her American businessman and she is taking Olivia with her. Once they arrive in Pullman Olivia takes a job as an assistant chef at Hotel Florence and the two women begin telling a string of lies to cover up their past.

That entire summary takes place in perhaps 20 pages. From that point on it becomes tedious and preachy. Please forgive the spoilers here but I'm attempting to save you from wasting time and money – the American businessman rejects Charlotte, Charlotte abandons Olivia and the baby in Illinois, all of the lies are exposed and the book ends hoping you will buy book #2. The moral of the story is that one should not lie as lies have a way of always catching up to you. It is a moral that is constantly driven into the reader's mind as it is repeated over, and over, and over again. Every single time that Olivia tells a little white lie, hides from the truth, or embellishes a story that moment is followed by her guilt and her remembering that she was taught not to lie because with each lie she tells she will have to tell two more to cover it up. I repeatedly felt the urge to reach into the pages and knock someone (the author? the protagonist?) off their high horse.

This book also became overwhelmingly preachy. After Olivia returns from her day trip to Chicago she encounters Mrs. DeVault and asks her, through the guilt she is feeling from yet another lie, what it means to be a believer. The most passionate writing of the entire novel comes at this moment when Mrs. DeVault tells Olivia how to be saved by the blood of Christ and gave her scripture to review. The reader is then treated to scripture verses as Olivia struggles with trying to believe that God will still love her despite her lies. The whole thing feels orchestrated to make a reader feel sinful and dirty for the mistakes they may have made in their lives as though the author wanted the reader to close the book, fall to their knees and repent. I wasn't offended by the scripture, as a Christian myself I enjoy stories that discuss the love of our Lord but this felt more like condemnation and judgment than love and forgiveness.

In the Company of Secrets could have been a great novel. There was so much room for the plot or the characters to develop but it never happens. The characters remain flat, the writing is stiff and the tone is critical and judgmental. There are a lot of great clean historical romance novels to read but unfortunately I cannot recommend this as one of them.

Review by Ashley LaMar
Closed the Cover

Anita says

I read this book in one day - snowing in Iowa in May.

I did not know about Pullman, Illinois. I hope to visit the town.

It is easier to tell the truth - one false statement leads to another. These girls have told so many lies they have to write a list to remember them all. Even though she had "fessed up" to her employer, when her boyfriend found the list there was damage to their relationship.

All sin is forgiven, but there are still consequences. you cannot put the egg back in the shell - no matter how small the crack or why it happened.

I wonder if future books in the series will tell how the baby's life turns out. Does he learn the circumstances of his birth? Does he return to America? to Pullman? ride the train? meet his mother? find romance? meet his real father? etc.

I liked it. I might read more of the series. . . . but not right away.

Noran Miss Pumkin says

the plot was not intriguing. I actually find myself not liking Olivia-the lead of the story. She has many chances to come clean from her lies, with all in her life-but she does not, and the usual ramifications at the end of the book. You could see the ending after the first few chapters. I did like seeing the town of Pullman, nicely described. I had the delight of dining at the restored Hotel Florence a decade ago, being a birthday dinner with my brother Anthony. Snowy Feb. evening, just added the to the atmosphere of the night. All I can remember-the herb rolls were amazing, and the soup divine. I guess I could give this book 3 stars, but I

am not just feeling it today. Yes, I will read the next in the series, for Marshall Fields store is in the plot line- another old friend -longed missed by me-due the the evil empire known as Macy's. Hiss! BOO!

Sharon says

Spoiler Alert!!!

I was so mad to 'finish' this book. I have had less strings left hanging in a shredded stocking! Why did she need to see the lawyer? What happened between Olivia and Fred? What happened to Charlotte? It seemed that Judith Miller just decided to cut off the manuscript and go to bed.

Up until this point it had kept me interested. Some of the characters were a bit unbelievable. Mr. Howard fell in love with someone he had barely talked with. He just decided she would be the right woman for him. I wish the author had wrapped up all the loose ends.

Stacia says

This book was what I was looking for. Something that is an easy read, with some history and a little romance thrown in. I enjoyed the story, but I often think that author's overplay guilt. I also think that Fred's responses and reaction to certain things were a little over the top as well... who wants to date a guy that is suspicious of your feelings from the outset, before ever having a reason to distrust you? Overall, I enjoyed it and would recommend it to others who enjoy historical Christian fiction.

Allie says

The problem with Kindle reading- not noticing the end of the book is near and anticipating non-resolution. This was a fine, free read, but slow. Olivia needs some backbone.

Shilo Quetchenbach says

I kept hoping this would get better. But it didn't. The hazards of reading something based on the cover, I suppose. I was hoping for something steampunk-y. Instead, I got a slow moving story about a servant who escapes London with the daughter of her employers (the Earl and his wife) and travels to a company town in Illinois. Her lady is looking for the father of her child. The story is promising. The execution was less than I had hoped. The writing was ponderous and stilted. The main character, Olivia, waffled far too much and was an odd mixture of competent and clueless. There were strong religious undertones that got stronger as the book progressed - but they just added more ponderous and self-loathing layers. I kept hoping it would get better - but no such luck. It didn't even properly end - just trailed off with her hoping that God would convince her love interest to care for her again.

Nicole says

URGH!! This book was SO incredible! It totally captured by attention from page 1 and continued to grab me til the end. And now I'm so frustrated that I don't have books 2 & 3, *Whispers Along the Rails* & *An Uncertain Dream*.

Aside from an adult-level threat given in chapter one, *In the Company of Secrets* was SO clean! As I've mentioned in previous reviews, I so very much appreciate a wholesome, clean love story that doesn't go into unnecessary details.

Olivia Mott seeks to run from a nasty situation in London when she suddenly finds herself whisked to America in a tangle of lies, along with her selfish mistress, Lady Charlotte. One lie leads to another until the two ladies are cocooned precariously in their new life in the town of Pullman, where the famous railroad cars are made and refurbished. When Olivia finds herself caught between the attentions of two different men, she longs to build a relationship with one, but can't seem to discourage the other. On top of that, her lies could very well get her fired and discharged from the town. Warning: Be prepared to run to your local bookstore or library for the rest of the series. Postcards from Pullman is a trilogy you won't want to miss!

For another clean read by Judith Miller check out *The Carousel Painter*!
