

The Christie Affair

by Nina de Gramont

Martin County Library System Book Club Kit:

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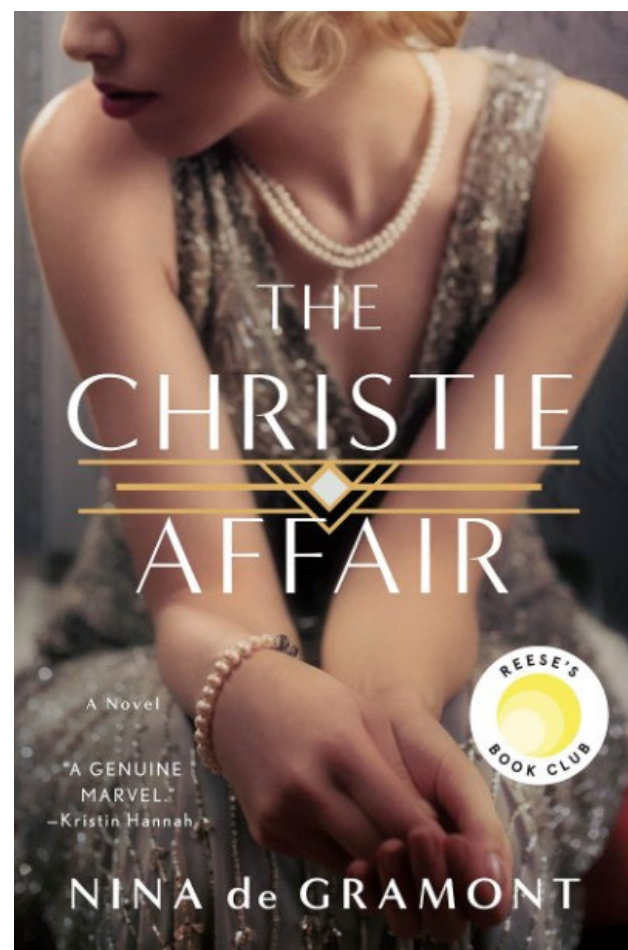
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Book summary

In 1925, Miss Nan O'Dea infiltrated the wealthy, rarefied world of author Agatha Christie and her husband, Archie. In every way, she became a part of their life - first, both Christies. Then, just Archie. Soon, Nan became Archie's mistress, luring him away from his devoted wife, desperate to marry him. Nan's plot didn't begin the day she met Archie and Agatha.

It began decades before, in Ireland, when Nan was a young girl. She and the man she loved were a star-crossed couple who were destined to be together - until the Great War, a pandemic, and shameful secrets tore them apart. Then acts of unspeakable cruelty kept them separated.



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What drives someone to murder? What will someone do in the name of love? What kind of crime can someone never forgive? Nina de Gramont's brilliant, unforgettable novel explores these questions and more.

Source: MacMillan publishers

Meet the author

Nina de Gramont (also known as Marina Gessner) lives in coastal North Carolina with her husband, the writer David Gessner. She teaches at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington and is almost always in the company of her two dogs, Missy and Isabelle. She's the author of the acclaimed *Meet Me at the River*, *Every Little Thing in the World*, *Gossip of the Starlings*, *The Last September*, as well as *The Distance From Me to You*, which has recently been optioned for a movie.



Source: Author's website (ninadegramont.com)



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Discussion questions

1. Consider the three lines attributed to Hercule Poirot that open up each of the three parts of the novel. What did you think of the author's choice of those particular lines? How do they connect to the narrative of THE CHRISTIE AFFAIR?
2. Discuss the narrative structure of the novel: the narration from Nan O'Dea's perspective, and the alternating timelines. How did it affect your reading experience, if at all?
3. On page 37, there is a line that reads, "Sometimes you fall in love with a place, dramatic and urgent as falling in love with any person." How is this proven to be true in the novel? What are the places that are most meaningful to the characters, and why?
4. Lucid dreaming and lucid living are mentioned several times in the novel by Nan. Why do you think she spends time thinking about these concepts? In what ways has she tried to incorporate them into her life?
5. Consider when Nan says, on page 219, "Among Agatha's enviable qualities, perhaps the most significant was her ability to thrive in this man's world. Following the rules but managing also to rise above them." Do you agree with this statement? Throughout the novel, in what ways is this proven to be true?
6. On page 243, Agatha says, "The point of a good detective story is to make it obvious. You throw in enough variables so the reader doubts his own solution, then at the end he can be pleased with himself for figuring it out." In what ways does THE CHRISTIE AFFAIR align with this? In what ways does the structure of the novel echo Agatha Christie's work?
7. Consider the lines on page 272, "For years I'd been swept in directions I never meant to go. I'd made mistakes, acting by accident or imperative. Finally in this moment I was the author of my story." From the beginning of the novel, what did you believe Nan O'Dea's motivations were? What did you think when they were ultimately revealed? Did it change your opinion about her character? Why or why not?





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8. Discuss marriage and relationships in the novel. What are some of the different depictions throughout it? Which relationships stood out to you as the most meaningful, and why?
9. Examine motherhood and its representation throughout the novel. What are some things that are revealed about the complexities of motherhood through the narrative?
10. On page 264, Agatha says, "What some call murder, others might call justice." Do you agree with this statement, particularly in the context of the novel?
11. Consider the last line of the novel, "Indulge yourself instead, and close this book on a happy ending." How did the ending make you feel? If you choose to consider what the future holds for the characters beyond the ending of *THE CHRISTIE AFFAIR*, what do you imagine?

Source: "Discussion Questions." Reading Group Guides.
(readinggroupguides.com/reviews/the-christie-affair/guide)



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Recipe suggestions

English Cucumber Sandwiches

- 1/2 Cucumber large
- 4 oz. Cream cheese softened
- Lemon zest
- 1 pinch Salt
- Dill chopped
- 6 slices Potato bread



Chop dill. Combine with softened cream cheese, lemon zest and a pinch of salt. Cut paper thin slices of cucumber. Spread cream cheese mixture onto white bread and add cucumber slices. Cut off crusts, then cut into rectangles.

Source: John Kanell, "English Tea Sandwiches." Preppy Kitchen. (preppykitchen.com/english-tea-sandwiches)

Sunrise Mocktail

- Orange juice, no pulp, preferably fresh squeezed (or use pineapple juice or any juice of your choice)
- Non-alcoholic sparkling wine, or citrus flavored sparkling water
- 1/2 teaspoon Grenadine.
- Sliced orange, strawberries, cherries, or other fruit as a garnish.



In a champagne glass or tall glass of your choice, pour equal amounts of juice and sparkling drink. Gently pour in the grenadine. Garnish with your choice of fruit and serve.

Source: "Sunrise Mocktail." Mindful Mocktail (mindfulmocktail.com/sunrise-mocktail-recipe)

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