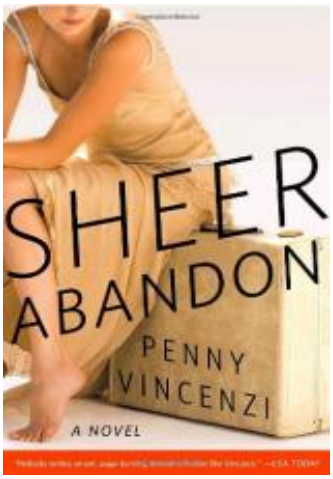
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Sheer Abandon

by Penny Vincenzi



About the Book

A number-one bestseller from one of Britain?s most popular novelists, **Sheer Abandon** is an all-consuming story revolving around the consequences of a desperate act . . .

Martha, Clio, and Jocasta meet by chance at Heathrow airport in 1985 as they are starting off on separate backpacking adventures, and they decide to spend the first few days of their trips together in Thailand. When they go their separate ways, they vow to get together in London the following year. But many years pass before the three cross paths again, and the once-capricious, carefree girls now all have thriving careers. One of them, however, harbors a terrible secret: On her return from her pre-college excursion, she abandoned her just-born daughter at Heathrow.

Clio has fulfilled her ambition of becoming a doctor, only to find herself trapped in a marriage to an arrogant surgeon who belittles her and her professional achievements. Martha is a highly paid corporate lawyer, just embarking on a political career. Dedicated to her job, she has had little time for personal relationships and lives a busy, but lonely life. Jocasta, a tabloid newspaper reporter with an infallible instinct for the big story, is in love with a charming colleague who can?t make the permanent commitment she longs for. The infant abandoned at Heathrow has grown up under the loving care of her adoptive family. Now a beautiful teenager named Kate, she sets out to find her birth mother --- a quest that unexpectedly brings the women together and exposes the secret buried so many years before.

Impossible to put down, **Sheer Abandon** is top-notch women?s fiction.

Discussion Guide

1. We join Martha, Jocasta, and Clio at Heathrow Airport a year before a baby is born to, and abandoned by, one of them. And then get to know them a little better in the early chapters. Purely on the basis of their personalities, which of them seemed the most likely to have done something so shocking and wretched: and why?

2. Did you guess correctly? Did you spot the qualities that made such a course of action possible? And if you were wrong, what specific things misled you?

3. English politics, an essential ingredient of the book in the struggle for power are very idiosyncratic; the personal politics of several of the characters could well be described as equally so. Yet the less ambitious characters, eg. Helen, Kate?s adoptive mother, and Nat, her boyfriend, have been declared some of the more multi dimensional characters in the book. Would you agree with this and if so why?

4. It could be argued either that Jocasta acted completely against her own character, in marrying Gideon Keeble; or that it was in absolute accord with her desire for love and security. Which do you think?

5. Kate is deeply distressed by the loss of Martha, when she had spent her whole life railing against her, why do you think this is?

6. Female friendships can be very complex. What do you suppose drove Martha, Clio and Jocast apart? Have you lost touch with a friend and re-connected with that person later in life?

Author Bio

Penny Vincenzi was one of the UK's best-loved and most popular authors. She wrote 17 novels, including the #1 bestsellers THE BEST OF TIMES and AN ABSOLUTE SCANDAL, and two short story collections

Her first "proper" job was at the Harrods Library, aged 16, after which she went to secretarial college. She joined the *Mirror* and later became a journalist, writing for *The Times*, the *Daily Mail* and *Cosmopolitan* amongst many others, before turning to fiction. Several years later, over seven million copies of Penny's books have been sold worldwide and she is universally held to be the 'doyenne of the modern blockbuster' (*Glamour*).

Penny passed away on February 25, 2018 at the age of 78.

Critical Praise

?Vincenzi pulls out all the stops in this orchestral saga. . . . The mystery of who [Baby Bianca?s] mother is serves as the spine of this fat, satisfying novel . . . The various narrative themes crescendo through several all-hands-on-deck scenes . . . the women are, without exception, multifaceted, smart and brave, and their happiness is hard won. A U.K. bestseller, the book offers major escape and abandon for summer.?

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