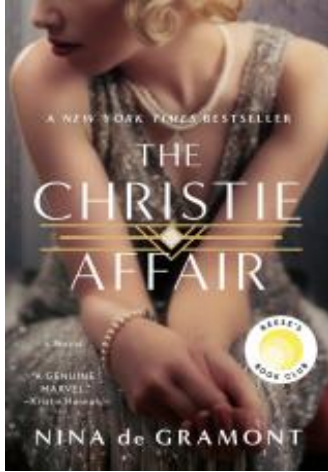


The Christie Affair

by Nina de Gramont



About the Book

Nina de Gramont's **THE CHRISTIE AFFAIR** is a beguiling novel of star-crossed lovers, heartbreak, revenge and murder --- and a brilliant reimagination of one of the most talked-about unsolved mysteries of the 20th century.

Every story has its secrets.

Every mystery has its motives.

"A long time ago, in another country, I nearly killed a woman. It's a particular feeling, the urge to murder. It takes over your body so completely, it's like a divine force, grabbing hold of your will, your limbs, your psyche. There's a joy to it. In retrospect, it's frightening, but I daresay in the moment it feels sweet. The way justice feels sweet."

The greatest mystery wasn't Agatha Christie's disappearance in those 11 infamous days, it's what she discovered.

London, 1925: In a world of townhomes and tennis matches, socialites and shooting parties, Miss Nan O'Dea became Archie Christie's mistress, luring him away from his devoted and well-known wife, Agatha Christie.

The question is, why? Why destroy another woman's marriage, why hatch a plot years in the making, and why murder? How was Nan O'Dea so intricately tied to those 11 mysterious days that Agatha Christie went missing?

Discussion Guide

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 all 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?

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?

Author Bio

Nina de Gramont is a professor of Creative Writing at University of North Carolina, Wilmington. She is the author of *THE CHRISTIE AFFAIR* and *THE LAST SEPTEMBER*, as well as several young adult novels.

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