



Love's Shadow

Ada Leverson

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Love's Shadow

Ada Levenson

Love's Shadow Ada Levenson

The heroine of *Love's Shadow* is the delightful Edith Ottley. She lives with her husband Brace and her two children in a very new, very small, very white flat in Knightsbridge. As we follow Edith's fortunes we enter the enchanting world of Edwardian London, bewitched by the courtships, jealousies and love affairs of Edith's coterie - Hyacinth, Eugenia, Charles and Cecil, Vincy, Madame Frabelle and many more.

Love's Shadow Details

Date : Published March 2nd 2010 by Bloomsbury USA

ISBN : 9781608190508

Author : Ada Levenson

Format : Paperback 240 pages

Genre : Fiction, Classics, Historical, Edwardian, European Literature, British Literature

 [Download Love's Shadow ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Love's Shadow ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Love's Shadow Ada Levenson

From Reader Review Love's Shadow for online ebook

jennifer says

Hyacinth is young, beautiful and popular with her London social set. So why does she fall in love with Cecil, who is in love with Eugenia, an older, plain widow? And why does Eugenia want to marry Cecil's uncle, since she admits she doesn't love him any more than she loves Cecil? And how does Hyacinth's friend Edith stand her arrogant prig of a husband, Bruce? Actually, it seems that no one can stand Bruce.

I had never heard of Levenson but the blurb on the back cover of Oscar Wilde calling her the wittiest woman in the world convinced me that I had to try this and I wasn't disappointed. This book moves quickly with short chapters and characters all bumping into each other and gossiping about what each has seen and heard and showing the ridiculous lengths people will go to attract their 'ideal' and the unhappiness that success can bring. Here's a brief dialogue between husband and wife:

Bruce: "Odd. Very odd you should get it into your head that I should have any idea of leaving you. Is that why you're looking so cheerful-laughing so much?"

Edith: "Am I laughing? I thought I was only smiling."

Rachel says

An odd but enjoyable little book. It pokes fun at marriage, pointing out the absurdities of convention and the egomaniacs it attracts.

Even though it is quite funny, I did find the book to be overall a little bland. Most of the characters were either too idiotic or too saintly to be believable, making it hard to feel much concern for their love lives. I imagine a more forgiving reader would find this book delightful, but I was a little bit bored.

Nicola Mansfield says

Reason for Reading: I'm reading all the Bloomsbury Group books.

Summary: This is Edith Ottley's story, though I wouldn't call her the main character. Though it is through Edith that all the characters can be traced back (as in the six degrees of Kevin Bacon). Edith and Bruce Ottley are a young married couple with a two year old son. Bruce is hard to describe without making him sound like a chauvinistic brute. He is also a hypochondriac and would rather not work and be served upon day and night. This is Bruce's character, but it is a pastiche of the weak yet dominating husband, though not mean-spirited, just self-centred. Edith takes advice from friends, especially her mother-in-law, and always complying cheerfully she never loses the upperhand and laughs off Bruce without him even knowing it. There is also Edith's friend Hyacinth, the real main character, who is a young twenties girl living on her own, with a companion, who is in love with a man who is love with someone else. Every other man is in love (or infatuation) with her including her friends' husbands, her former guardian and her ladies companion.

Comments: Hyacinth's story becomes the main focus of the plot while Edith and Bruce's stays in the foreground being the centre from which all other story arcs are in one way or another related. These other

story arcs are filled with secondary characters having relationship problems themselves. Hyacinth's love, Cecil, is in love with an older woman Eugenia, who has vowed never to marry again and thinks of him as a boy anyway. Anne, Hyacinth's ladies companion gives very intelligent advice but is jealous of anyone who will take Hyacinth away from her. Then there's Bruce, who like everyman, is attracted to Hyacinth as well, but from afar and by drilling his wife on her visits with her.

Many other characters are intertwined as well and the dialogue is full of wit and repartie. Every character is simply adorable and lovable, even the mysterious Mr. Raggett who we never really fully understand but who, unlike the other men in this story, has fallen for Edith and woos her. Bruce, himself, does take some getting used to, being the only non-likable character but he always comes up short against Edith, without even knowing it and this quiet battle of the sexes is quite humorous.

It took me several chapters (short as they are) to get into the book but once I'd met everyone and the story got going I was completely smitten with everything, everyone and all the goings on in Knightsbridge, England. This is an intelligent, bright, witty romantic comedy. A truly delightful story that can be summed up in that ubiquitous term "the British cozy".

Viktorija Faust says

So funny! And great surprise for me.

Alex Sarll says

"Tea? At three o'clock in the afternoon! I never heard of such a thing. You seem to have strangely Bohemian ideas in this house, Miss Yeo."

I was dimly aware of Ada Levenson as Wilde's 'Sphinx', one of the supporting characters in his great drama. But until I was in what turned out not to be HMV's closing down sale after all, and saw this going for pennies, it had never occurred to me that she'd left a trace beyond that. This was written almost a decade after Wilde's death, and at first I was wondering if gentle prodding at the conventions of Edwardian drawing rooms is what he'd have been reduced to were it not for his foolish, glorious fall. That response underestimated Levenson's skill; hers is not the wit of the single hammer-blow. It's the wit which works by slow accumulation, an eye-dropper filled with acid. Imagine if Jane Austen, instead of being compromised by forever mooning after matrimony she'd never known, had experienced first-hand how ghastly it could be. All the hypocrisies and horrors of relations between the sexes in those gilded olden days we can so easily idolise for the outfits, Levenson had lived through - and replicates here, with perfectly controlled savagery. Anyone who talks about the breakdown of traditional morality and gender roles as a bad thing should be obliged to read this book as many times as it takes to shut them up.

Lady Clementina Finch-Farrowmore says

What a delightful read even if it did a chapter or two for me to start getting into the humour in the book. This is the story of a set of young and not-so-young things in Edwardian London, who seem each to fall in love with someone who is invariably in love with someone else. Edith Ottley (who isn't quite the central character of this one, though I noticed the series this book is a part of is centred around her?so she might perhaps be

like Fanny of *Love in a Cold Climate*) is married to the pompous and buffoonish Bruce who is definitely the funniest character in the book. A far worse hypochondriac than even Emma Woodhouse's father or 'J' of *Three Men in a Boat*, his conversations (with Edith, mostly) and perceptions of people and situations can't but make one laugh. (I never remember to mark these when reading but one here's one example)

After dinner Bruce followed Edith into the drawing-room, looked angrily at the flowers and said—
'Now what's the meaning of all this? Mind, I'm not jealous. It isn't my nature to be. What I dislike is being made a fool of. If I thought that Raggett, after all I've done for him—'
'Oh, Bruce! How can you be so absurd? A poor harmless creature—'
'Harmless creature, indeed! I think it extremely marked, calling on you when I was out.'
'He didn't know you were out. It's the usual time to pay a visit, and he really came just to ask me to belong to the Society.'
'I don't call Raggett a society man.'
'He's a secret-society man,' said Edith. 'He wants me to be a Legitimist.'
'Now I won't have any nonsense of that sort here,' said Bruce, striking the table with his fist. 'Goodness knows where it will end. That sort of thing takes women away from the natural home duties, and I disapprove of it strongly. Why, he'll soon be asking you to be a Suffragette! I think I shall write to Raggett.'
'Oh, would you, really?'
'I shall write to him,' repeated Bruce, 'and tell him that I won't have these constant visits and marked attentions. I shall say you complained to me. Yes, that's the dignified way, and I shall request him to keep his secret societies to himself, and not to try to interfere with the peace and harmony of a happy English home.'
He drew some writing-paper towards him.
'I'm sure he didn't mean the slightest harm. He thought it was the proper thing, after dining with us.'
'But it isn't like the man, Edith! It isn't Raggett! He's no slave to convention; don't think it. I can't help fancying that there must have been some ulterior motive. It seems to me sinister—that's the word—sinister.'
'Would you think it sinister if he never came, again?'
'Well, perhaps not, but in allowing this to pass—isn't it the thin end of the wedge?'
'Give him a chance and see,' she said. 'Don't be in a hurry. After all, he's your great friend. You're always talking to me about him; and what's he done?—sent a few flowers and called here once. I'm sure he thought you would like it.'
'But don't you see, Edith, the attention should have been paid to me, not to you.'
'He could hardly send you flowers, Bruce. I'm sure he thought it was the proper thing.'
Bruce walked up and down the room greatly agitated.
'I admit that this is a matter that requires consideration. I shouldn't like to make a mountain out of a mole-hill. We'll see; we'll give him a chance. But if he comes here again, or takes any step to persuade you to have anything to do with his Society or whatever it is, I shall know how to act.'
'Of course you will, dear.'
Edith hoped she wouldn't receive a large envelope full of papers about the Legitimists by the first post.
'I hope you know, Bruce, I shouldn't care if I never saw him again.'
'Why not? Because he's my friend, I suppose? You look down on him just because he's a hard worker, and of some use in the world—not a dandified, conventional, wasp-waisted idiot like Cecil Reeve! Perhaps you prefer Cecil Reeve?'
'Much,' replied Edith firmly.
'Why? Let's hear your reasons.'
'Why, he's a real person. I know where I am when I'm talking to him—we're on the same platform.'
'Platform?'
'Yes. When I talk to Mr Raggett I feel as if he had arrived at Victoria, and I had gone to meet him at Charing Cross. Do you see? We don't get near enough to understand each other.'

The focus of the story is society beauty Hyacinth Verney, admired by everyone who knows her. She finds herself in love with Cecil Reeve, heir to Lord Selsey, who admires her alright but is in love with a not so very pretty but charming widow Mrs Raymond, who doesn't return his affections. But circumstances, Lord Selsey, and Mrs Raymond herself are in Hyacinth's favour and they help get her what she wants, marriage to Cecil. While Cecil does love Hyacinth, the shadow of his love for Mrs Raymond remains, preventing complete happiness, and at one point even threatening their relationship. How things are resolved, one has to read to find out. There isn't the only complicated relationship in the story which finds Edith having her own little struggles with Bruce who is perpetually "ill" except when he finds something more interesting to occupy his time, not very interested in work, and always adopting an ostrich-like attitude to their ever-mounting bills. But despite going into matters quite serious as far as love and relationships are concerned, Levenson keeps the tone light and her readers smiling all through.

Uncle says

Ada Levenson's name will likely already be known to readers. She is remembered now mostly as a constant and loyal friend to Oscar Wilde (who dubbed her "the Sphinx"). Yet Levenson was a well-known writer in her own right, contributing humorous and satirical pieces to *Punch* and *The Yellow Book*. In the early 1900s she wrote several comedic novels about Edwardian society, including *Love's Shadow* (published in 1908).

In *Love's Shadow*, everyone seems to be somewhat fascinated by Hyacinth Verney. Hyacinth, a beautiful young heiress, finds herself smitten with a handsome young man, Cecil Reeve, who seems infuriatingly indifferent to her charms. So unfolds a witty comedy of Edwardian marriage and manners.

This novel is not particularly profound, but Levenson is a very funny writer. Her dry wit can render a character completely ridiculous with just a subtle turn of phrase. She is particularly skilled at deflating the pompous and self-important, for example the insufferable Bruce Ottley, husband of Hyacinth's long-suffering friend Edith. The breakfast table conversations/confrontations of this husband and wife are delightfully hilarious. (Luckily for the reader, the couple appear in two more Levenson novels.)

Though lighthearted in tone, the title, *Love's Shadows*, hints at a comic ambivalence about love itself. The novel's wisest characters seem to be either unlucky in love, or to be generally unloved. But there is something a bit chilly about their wisdom, and the book's other characters mostly ignore their sensible advice. *Love's Shadow* is a very funny book, but its humor is never cartoonish. It is a book about people making mistakes in love, told with equal parts wry amusement and wise insight.

Sandy says

A frivolous bit of silliness, to be sure - but then one needs some comic relief occasionally. It may have appealed to readers when it was published but the humour is definitely dated - in fact, I think it belongs in the 19th century. This is the first of a trilogy but I won't be reading subsequent stories!

Austenfan says

This Edwardian author sits comfortably on the Sake, Wilde, Wodehouse continuum. Ada Levenson writes sparkling, fast paced stories with lots of clever dialogue. She has a funny and surprising way of turning clichés on their ears. You can also listen to all the 'Little Ottleys' trilogy on Libivox for free, excellently read by Helen Taylor.

Mark says

This was really funny. A cross between Oscar Wilde and the person at a party who gives you a running commentary with a bitchy turn of phrase on everyone else there. Every man in it seemed an idiot or arrogant or both and the characterizations were wonderful. The Ottley's, the young married couple who were the hero, I use that term very loosely, and the long suffering heroine steer their middle class course through relationship and partys and misunderstanding and love affairs. Easy to read, totally non-challenging, funny and a fascinating look at the ways in which women, exercising little external influence in their marriages could often be very much the power behind the throne.

Bree (AnotherLookBook) says

A comedic novel about a group of genteel London folk and their various hopes and grievances when it comes to love. 1908.

Full review (and other reading recommendations!) at Another look book

Light and engaging, with nothing against it, only a great deal of wit in its favor. Yes, I'd say the Oscar Wilde comparison is well-founded. I liked it even more than I used to adore Wilde, in fact. I enjoyed the characters more; they felt like they went a little deeper. Much as I enjoy *The Importance of Being Earnest*, for instance, I doubt I could have stomached a sequel, let alone a series. *The Little Ottleys*, on the other hand, could prove useful and diverting for future rainy afternoons.

Rebekah Giese Witherspoon says

"Love's Shadow" is light and fluffy, like a meringue. The characters tend to be shallow caricatures and the plot has been done a million times before but even so, I found myself enjoying it immensely. For a while I couldn't figure out why I like this book so much and then suddenly I realized...it's the DIALOGUE!

The dialogue is brilliant. This book could be turned into a movie or a play without hiring a script writer...just let the actors read their lines directly from the book.

'Edith, Mitchell shall never set foot under my roof—never darken these doors again!'

'I wonder why, when people are angry, they talk about their roofs and doors? If you were pleased with Mitchell again, you wouldn't ask him to set foot under your roof—nor to darken the door. You'd ask him to come and see us. Anyhow, he won't feel it so very much—because he'll not notice it. He's never been here yet.'

The story centers around Edith, who is kind and self-sacrificing to a fault, her histrionic hypochondriac husband, Bruce, and their circle of friends.

One of my favorite conversations in the book occurs when Edith must run an errand and Bruce begrudgingly condescends to keep watch over their toddler son, Archie, for the very first time.

As soon as Edith had gone he held out a card to his father, and said—

'E for efalunt.'

Bruce frowned, nodded, waved his hand, and went on reading....

'X for swordfish,' said Archie, holding out another card.

'Don't talk, Archie....'

'This is my bear. It's the same bear.'

'The same bear as what?'

'Why, the same bear! This is a soldier.'

He put the wooden soldier in his mouth, then put it carefully back in the box.

'This is my bear,' said Archie again. 'Just the same bear. That's all.'

Bruce threw away the paper.

'You want to have a talk, eh?' he said.

'This is my best suit,' said Archie. 'Have you any sugar in your pockets?'

'Sugar in my pockets? Who put that into your head?'

'Nobody didn't put it in my head. Don't you put any in your pocket?'

'No. Sugar, indeed! I'm not a parrot.'

Archie roared with laughter.

'You're not a parrot!' he said, laughing loudly. 'Wouldn't it be fun if you was a parrot. I wish you was a parrot.'

'Don't be foolish, Archie.'

'Do parrots keep sugar in their pockets?'

'Don't be silly.'

'Have parrots got pockets?'

'Play with your soldiers, dear.'

'Do parrots have pockets?'

'Don't be a nuisance.'

'Why did you say parrots had sugar in their pockets, then?'

'I never said anything of the kind.'

I listened to the free LibriVox audio book, beautifully narrated by Helen Taylor:

<https://librivox.org/loves-shadow-by-....> The ebook is free on gutenberg.org and in the Kindle store.

Eva says

this was so depressing. im so depressed. i literally wanted to rescue every single main female character and murder all of the men. whoever said this was like oscar wilde's writing should also be murdered. how those women didn't murder every single man in their lives is a straight up miracle and beyond me.

Emmett says

Fluff so light it felt as if I was reading the papery equivalent of whipped cream. The introduction touts Levenson as a wit but that didn't completely come through, even though there were a few lines that made one

grin. *Love's Shadow* was a pale, less amusing and memorable sister of one of Wilde's comedies if they had been novels.

Georgiann Hennelly says

Hyacinth is young, beautiful and popular with her London social set. So why does she fall in love with Cecil, Cecil is in love with Eugenie an older, plain widow. Eugenie wants to marry Cecils uncle, whe she admitd she doesn,t anymore than she loves Cecil. Edith is Hyacinths friend who is married to Bruce an arrogant prig of a husband. Who nobody likes and everyone wonders how Edith can stand him.This book moves quickly with short chapters and characters all bumping into each other and gossiping about what each has seen and heard. It just shows the ridiculous lengths people will go to attract their ideal and the unhappiness that success can bring
