



Love by the Morning Star

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Upstairs, downstairs, and in *which* lady's chamber?

On the brink of World War II, two girls are sent to the grand English country estate of Starkers. Hannah, the half-Jewish daughter of a disgraced distant relative, has been living an artistic bohemian life in a cabaret in pre-war Germany and now is supposed to be welcomed into the family. Anna, the social-climbing daughter of working-class British fascists, is supposed to be hired as a maid so that she can spy for the Nazis. But there's a mix-up, and nice Hannah is sent to the kitchen as a maid while arrogant Anna is welcomed as a relative.

And then both girls fall for the same man, the handsome heir of the estate . . . *or do they?*

In this sparkling, saucy romance, nearly everything goes wrong for two girls who are sent to a grand English estate on the brink of World War II—until it goes so very, very right!

Love by the Morning Star Details


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From Reader Review Love by the Morning Star for online ebook

Laura says

I really wanted to like this book because it sounded right up my alley. The pieces were there, but they just didn't fit.

It just wasn't funny. For a comedy of errors, it was greatly lacking in the comedy aspect. Maybe part of it was that Anna was essentially an unknowing Nazi spy tasked with killing first Lord Liripip (although she doesn't realize it until she's given instructions NOT to kill him) and then to kill King George (which she doesn't want to actually do, but she has no problem trying to trick Hannah into doing it in order to save her own skin). I just don't see anything funny about Nazi assassins, even with some thrown in cases of mistaken identity.

I liked Hannah, but she was pretty much the only character I liked in the whole book, and that wasn't enough. She was clever, but she had no other equally clever character to play off of.

I'm also not sure how or why this is considered YA. I don't know any middle or high schoolers that this book would appeal to. From the blurb it totally sounded like it would appeal to me, but it really didn't. At all.

QNPoohBear says

2.5 stars - I liked parts of it.

Anna Morgan's father has risen from being a lowly grocer to the mouthpiece of the National Fascist Front working for the preservation of "true British way of life." Anna is thrilled that her father's rise in social status allows her the opportunity to better herself. She's determined to be a heroine and marry a titled gentleman. When a German higher up in the NAFF asks Anna to be a part of a secret mission, she's willing to help. At least until she discovers that her role is to play kitchen maid to an noble British family. As if! Sadly for Anna, she isn't allowed to say no and is bundled off to Starkers Castle outside of London. Hannah Morgenstern has grown up in her father's cabaret singing opera and cabaret songs alongside a host of bohemian entertainers who care nothing for politics. Hannah's parents have friends in high places and Hitler's rise to power hasn't meant anything to them - until now. A frequent patron warns the Morgensterns it's time to get out. Jews are unwelcome in Berlin and the situation is about to go from bad to worse. Aaron makes plans for his cabaret and Cora, Hannah's mother, makes plans to send Hannah to her distant English relatives at Starkers Castle. Lady Liripip is said to be kind enough but his third wife is reported to be a harridan. Hannah believes she can endure the unkindness until her parents arrive and everything goes back to normal. When she arrives at the castle, penniless and ragged, she's mistaken for the new kitchen maid and Anna is whisked away upstairs as a member of the family. Neither girl realizes her destiny has been changed by fate and Hannah bravely puts up with the indignity. Anna is determined to play her role and marry Teddy, Lord Winkfield, Lord Liripip's air, but it's a hunky gardener who haunts her dreams. Meanwhile, Hannah falls in love under the morning star. Their fates are about to intertwine and two teenage girls will become a part of history.

The plot got off to a slow start. If you don't know anything about the politics of the time or the cabaret scene of the Wiemar Republic, I recommend doing a little background research before reading this book. The cabaret is populated by eccentric bohemians I couldn't keep straight and most never reappear in the story. I hated the deception that was forced on the girls by fate and was tempted to skip ahead to see how it was

discovered and when. All was discovered way too late for my tastes. I hate love stories based on deception and this one was so incredibly improbable, not to mention predictable. I was more interested in Hannah than Anna but felt that both the love stories were told rather than shown. Anna's doesn't make a lot of sense and Hannah's loses out by being told. I don't really get what she sees in her love interest. He isn't very bright or worthy of her at all. Anna's love interest is not very appealing either. I did root for Hannah to get her wish because she deserved it. I was most interested in finding out what happened to Hannah's parents. There's enough information given but too late in the story so we can read between the lines but it's all handled with a light touch. Though there are references to Kirstallnacht and Buchenwald, it's all kept in the background while the story takes place at Starkers Castle in an insulated world not unlike a Wodehouse novel.

Anna is introduced first and she comes across as stupid, silly and vain. She is the only one in the book who experiences any character growth. All her life she's done what she's been told and parrots the beliefs of her father and his cronies. She isn't smart enough to learn to think on her own and form her own opinions until she learns about hate first hand. I felt her growth was OK. I was glad she changed but she is not the heroine of the story and her character growth is secondary to Hannah's story. Hannah is not as innocent as Anna but naive enough and foreign enough not to understand British culture. All she knows about life in Britain is from P.G. Wodehouse novels and Gilbert and Sullivan operas. She doesn't really grow and change in this story but she does become stronger in her beliefs. How her story ends is completely silly and unrealistic.

If you're not familiar with cabaret life, which I was not, some of the goings-on may make some readers uncomfortable. Characters are fluid in their gender and sexuality; there's frank mentions of sex/sexuality and gender bending. None of that bothered me but some readers may be uncomfortable with it. Adultery, premarital sex and crude language also appear in this story. There's also hints of two love scenes which I found incredibly stupid and unrealistic.

If you love a good Cinderella story set in a more modern and familiar world, this is for you. It wasn't precisely my cup of tea.

Ms. Yingling says

This looked soooo good, but ended being too YA. I think middle grade readers wouldn't quite understand how Anna wasn't evil, necessarily. Quite an interesting premise, just think it wouldn't work for my crowd. We aren't getting the readers interested in Downtown Abbey type books that I thought we might get.

Emily says

Absolutely darling. I fell head-over-heels for the characters and laughed right along with them the entire time. Minus one star simply because there were a bit too many sexual innuendos for my taste (albeit in all the right places and admittedly funny--this book is definitely a light-hearted, humorous read) and as a heads-up to any cautious readers, might not be for everyone.

I would read it again, for sure the next time I'm in a reading slump! From the first chapter, I was dying to see how every piece of the puzzle would fall into place. :)

Becky says

I was disappointed by Laura Sullivan's *Love by the Morning Star*. I wanted to love it. I did. It is a novel set in English countryside in 1938-1939. It offers an upstairs/downstairs view of life. Or supposedly so. Two young women come to Starkers. One is a gold digger spy. Her father is a Nazi-sympathizer to say the least and his gang (for lack of a better word) wants her in position at this estate. She's told she'll be a maid. The other young woman is a Jewish refugee. She is actually a relation of the family who owns the estate. She's coming to Starkers to stay with her aunt and uncle. One girl is Hannah. The other girl is Anna. One will be treated well. The other won't.

In case you haven't guessed it, mistaken identity is the name of the game. These two women also happen to fall in love with the same man.

Why was I disappointed? Well. I'm not sure if it's because of the setting or the tone. I think I might have tolerated the tone--the silliness, the lightness, the double entendres, etc. if it wasn't set during such a dark time. It's hard to make light of the Nazis gaining power and destroying the lives of the Jewish people. The subject is serious and it deserves better. If it had been set twenty-five or thirty years earlier, then, perhaps it would have worked for me.

The romance. I liked the secret meetings between the hero and the heroine. There were only a handful of these scenes, but, they kept me reading.

I just have to add that I HATED one of the characters. I disliked a few more as well. But there was one that stood out above the rest as being AWFUL.

Mercurialgem says

Changed this rating because at the time when I first rated it I thought the idea for the plot they had was worth at least to bump it to 2 stars but when I see this book I just remember how the whole thing was so f*cken stupid. Maybe the plot would have worked but it didn't here. This book was just so irritating and being one that hates to leave unfinished books, and it was a library book, I forced myself to read through the stupidity of it. Here is an example: There are two main female characters who when they arrived at this home they mix up their identities because of how similar their names sound Anna and Hanna. The girls don't even bother to correct it but I can forgive that since that was the way the story would have to play out BUT towards the end (spoiler) one of them gets pregnant with the gardener who she met in the yard in a small cabin THINKING it was the son of the family where she was staying. And then the other girl is going to meet the ACTUAL son in the backyard too by a tree and they talk but he NEVER sees her but hears her voice and ALL THIS TIME HE thinks its the OTHER girl not the servant girl (the one hiding in the tree) and when there is this dance were the rich dance with the help the son is going to make an announcement he is going to marry Hanna (who really is Anna) but when he holds her hand he doesn't see that scar in her hand, the one his seen all this time when his been holding her hand talking to her (he really has been talking to the real Hanna who people have confused with Anna).....Ughhhh. How do you get pregnant by one man and think its another? I mean sure it was dark but still! And how do you get TWO different voices confused? Maybe they had similar voices BUT still there MUST be a difference and he talked to BOTH daily that he SHOULD have noticed and known they were TWO different women. I would give it a zero if I could. I liked the idea of the story but it just wasn't well played out in this book without just being irritating and plain stupid.

Ok.....I'm done.....feels good to let that out. =] I'm not saying ALL YA books are this bad but yeah, this is why I stay away from YA/romantic books.

Ally says

Love by the Morning Star is another book I picked up from my local library. Just saw it and loved the synopsis. I thought this book was supposed to be very hilarious despite being set in a very terrible time (post-World War I, post-Great Depression, pre-World War II).

The dialect of Love by the Morning Star is totally weird. I don't know if they speak like that then, but hey... I got used to it. I got used to it. At about the halfway point of the book. So yes, I was considering to quit because it was weird to read. And also, the beginning was just... odd. I don't know how I got into it, but I did. Somehow.

Really, I was on the brink of abandoning this book in the beginning.

But it gets better. There aren't very many funny parts, but I do love the case of mistaken identity. It proves that there are much, much to snicker at. Oh, yes. Snicker. There is definitely some parts, and then I go... what the HECK is going on? Anna and Hannah fall in love with the "handsome heir of the estate." But do they? It is the big question of the entire book.

And remember. Mistaken identity.

Anna, who is not the heroine. But she is sort of complicated. (Like most people). She is a German spy (in the simplest terms), and she awaits orders from the Nazi Party. In the meantime, she accidentally gets to pretend to be a real girl named Hannah instead of being a kitchen maid. And yes, it gets really interesting.

Hannah, who is the heroine. From the beginning to the end. (Anna is a big "Maybe she is or isn't."). Think of her as Jewish and like Anne from Anne of Green Gables. And that is Anne with E, mind you. I think I like Anna more than her (yes, Anna, the German spy). Hannah is a bit... strange. She is indeed interesting, but she doesn't seem to have a particular strong motive like Anna (who is pretty much after a rich husband). Yes, Hannah has a motive, but she doesn't think about it constantly. Neither is wrong or right. It is just... a comparison.

So... think Anna as more aggressive. Hannah, passive.

I have to say that the ending is the best part. Can't say much without ruining it, but I do like how everyone gets a Happy Ending.

Overall, Love by the Morning Star is worth a second look. You can definitely go beyond the first page. It is perhaps the halfway point when things truly get interesting. So I recommend Love by the Morning Star when one has time to read. Otherwise, don't.

Rating: Four out of Five

-ofpaperandwords.blogspot.com

Annette Schlier says

FANTASTIC!!!!!! 5 STARS ALL THE WAY! I really enjoyed this book. It took me away every time I picked it up to read!! Laura L. Sullivan has taken the lives of 2 women and turned them upside down in an exchange type situation! It kept me glued til the end, I was up late reading this one!

katayoun Masoodi says

i started with liking this (and i thought i would like this) and so i suppose that's why it gets 2 instead of my 3 with so-so books that are sometimes ok. though must say that i really, really disliked the last chapter and so that helped with the 2 stars also and then there was the not so likeable characters and the aristocracy shinning through even when they are kitchen maids, and everyone being really, really stupid and noone being believable and well not going to talk about it cause then i would going and giving it a one star

Skyril says

What a book! The storyline! The plot! The characters! The writing! The humor! The creativity! The history! The awesomeness!!

The main thing I can say negatively about it, is that the ending was too fast! If only it had been drawn out a bit more. :D

This, *Love by the Morning Star*, was an excellent book.

Ok, now, for those who read the synopsis, I don't believe you can confuse this with being a serious book, but let me tell you right now that it isn't. It's a comedy, a love story perhaps, and it was really done quite marvelously.

Reading the first chapter, I immediately loved two things: the humor, and the writing style. Most of the chapters in this book had me laughing in one way or another, and I haven't had such smoothly humorous story since *Skulduggery Pleasant* by Derek Landy [my favorite book series ever- so comparing any book to that is saying something]. I wanted to compare the writing style to something, someone, but I don't think there is anyone in the world who writes the way Laura L. Sullivan pulls it off... I'd have to say a mix between... L. A. Meyer and Jane Austen, and amazing combination if you are familiar with both of these authors.

The characters! SUCH characters! They were like real people, and I loved them all! I especially loved, OF COURSE, Hanna, Anna, and Teddy, but everyone in this book [EVERYONE!] has a personality of his own. NO ONE is vanilla. At the end of this review I'll add a quote or two, just so you can see some brilliant examples of this.

The plot! Good heavens! you have never ever seen such a story get so confused! Poor Hannah and Teddy and everyone! Just about everyone thought that someone was somebody other than whoever he was. Expertly and hilariously done, I have never seen a mix up quite like this one.

Such a great story I thoroughly enjoy. Yes, there was some swearing, and Hannah grew up in a cabaret so there were some fairly vague references to things, but obviously, none of that was enough to give this book any less than five stars and promptly add it so my favorites. Thank you, Goodreads, for giving me an ARC I truly loved.

I recommend this book to all who love comedies, mix ups, love stories, historical fiction, anyone who likes a happy read, and anyone who enjoys excellent books in general. Basically, I recommend this book to everyone.

I'll shall leave you with a few choice quotes to give you an *idea* of the brilliance of *Love by the Morning Star*.

“When she walked by the two officers, they didn't recognize her.

"Have you seen the luscious bonbon with the golden braids?"

She grinned up at them with such impish mischief that they almost forgot their quest for the singer. "She is with her lover," Hannah said. "But she can always handle one or two more." She winked at them. "Go there, through that door."

She made her escape while the uniformed hobbledehoy's gawked and gaped and finally burst into the dressing room where Franz, the three-hundred-pound juggling strongman, was adjusting his loincloth.

"I ought not do it," Hannah said aloud to herself as chaos erupted behind her. "I just can't seem to help myself."

“Anyone watching her would have thought her cold, indifferent, but this was the only way she knew to tackle her deepest troubles, to shoo them aside as if they were a cloud of summer gnats, and deal with the task at hand brusquely and efficiently. Hannah always thought of it as her mother's Englishness, that ability to equalize problems so that a scuffed shoe and an impending disaster were almost equally distasteful, but both were born with aplomb.”

“Yes, *Fraulein*," he said to Hannah. 'How gauche of you to have been born in another county. It is almost a capital offense. Here in this house we believe that one must be severely punished for the happenstance of one's birth.' His face was a jester's mask of mockery, but there was a tightness about his eyes, a tense set to his smile. 'What a dilemma for the English, though- we agree with Germany on so many things, including the patent inferiority of anyone who is not *us*. Darling Mum, did it ever occur to you that to the rest of the world, *we* are foreigners?'

"The very idea! Lady Liripip said with a nervous titter.”

“Anna gave her that disjointed look with which so many people regarded Hannah, as if they has fallen too many words behind to ever catch up.”

I won this in a Goodreads giveaway.

Corinne Edwards says

Two girls - both of whom arrive at Starkers Estate hoping for a brighter future. Anna would like to make a place for herself in the aristocracy and Hannah is looking for a safe haven since her German home was is longer safe for a half-Jew like herself. Only, neither of them end up where they belong and with war in Europe looming, they both feel its best not to make any more waves than necessary. So, someone is a kitchen maid who shouldn't be and someone is upstairs with the family even though she doesn't belong. What happens next is a classic case of Shakespearian mistaken identity as both Anna and Hannah try to get what they want most.

I actually really liked most of this. A few sexual references were a little jarring and parts were a bit darker than I'd anticipated but Hannah, especially, is a delightful character! She is strong and witty and I always liked being in her head - her passion and almost Amelia Bedelia-like ineptness were nicely paired with a

vivacity, forgiveness and compassion that I really enjoyed. Although I had a hard time believing that people REALLY could be so dumb as to not know each other for so long, it was a cute story. I'd have liked a bit more from the ending and I still felt like the main romantic interest had some behavior he needed to account for but it was good enough.

However, then I saw on amazon that this book is recommended for 7th grade and up! Um, I don't agree! The subject matter is I'd say better suited to a high schooler's maturity and truthfully, the more I think about it, while I enjoyed reading it it really is a light and fluffy look at some very upsetting topics. I'm mulling it over in my mind and I wonder if it is sugar coating the plight of Jews escaping the machinery of Hitler's reich. I certainly wouldn't recommend it to teens before they at least read something like The Diary of Anne Frank or The Book Thief, to make sure they can somewhat understand the depth of terror and horror of that time period.

Jen (Book Syrup) says

At first, I was hesitant to like this novel. Mixed reviews on Goodreads lowered my expectations, even if I did request this book from the publisher myself. After all, the premise seemed interesting and I had never read a romantic comedy before. The beginning of the novel certainly drags, and there are moments where you shake your head at the two main characters and just think they are so ignorant and dumb. This is especially of Hannah, who, if I were her, would have been smart enough to march straight upstairs and reveal my identity. But of course not. Soon, however, the reader is able to get past all this nonsense and finally get to the core of the book, where lovers are mixed up and only seen in the darkest of night...AKA they never see each other's faces. I found this to be quite funny, but also quite unrealistic. Wouldn't one recognize someone by their change of voice? Surely Teddy doesn't sound exactly like Hardy and Hannah exactly like Anna. But as a reader, I continued to put these things behind me for the sake of the story, which, in its entirety, was enjoyable. I had a few more issues here and there, such as the dialect some characters used like "ya'll" and "ain't" when they are clearly in a English setting. Other than that, and the previous grievances I mentioned, this book was good. It was funny, the characters were rich, and the way things were played out in the end made a perfect conclusion to the story. I'm glad I pushed through this book, because in the end, the positives outweighed the negatives for me.

Final rating: 4/5 stars

Nemo says

For a full and edited review go to: [Blame it on the Book](#)

I was a little wary before starting this book. I loved the cover and the title but the synopsis seemed a bit dry and confusing. It was definitely neither of those things. It was full of sassy quips and a whole lot of chaos. I don't think I had any idea how crazy things could get.

Anna (who is not the heroine) wants very much to be a lady, think of an obsessive Eliza Doolittle from My fair Lady. She has fixed her face, hair, speech and even used rubber bands to fix her teeth, to show that she has class. All she needs now is a good marriage to cement herself as a lady, which is exactly what she thinks when she gets sent to Lord Liprips Manor on a mission and gets mistaken for a new lady in the house.

Hanna (Who is our Heroine) has to flee Germany as the Nazi's keep getting worse and worse. Her parents send her to her estranged family in England, because she was a Jew and not a lady, she knew her aunt would disprove. She had no idea that they would completely ignore her and treat her as a kitchen maid. Now I should clarify that even though this was hard to read, it's only because it would randomly change point of views and you had to catch up. But the actual story line is pretty easy to follow. I had so much fun reading about how Cocky Anna was and how Feisty Hanna acted.

The only guy we really talk about is Teddy, both girls are in love with Teddy, or so they think. Meanwhile Teddy is positive he's in love with one of them. Teddy did get on my nerves for a while, after all how hard could it possibly be to just ask someone or talk to her. Anna was another one who was increasingly frustrating. She never doubted her looks

"She knew she was beautiful – if a little frightening, but that was a part of her beauty - and if she ever forgot it she had only to stroll down the street and learn it again from all the admiring stares she received."

She also wasn't the smartest

"Once Anna said that poor people should not be pitied because they evidently chose to be poor."

Now Hanna I adored, she was smart and sassy at the same time. Even though she had an awful past and was going through a hard time, not knowing her parents were alive or not and thinking that her family was ignoring her.

"There is always a light in the darkness, Hanna thought. However small, it is always there, and it makes the darkness disappear."

Teddy was her light and their relationship was adorable. How they met and how they got to know each other was my favorite thing about this book.

Overall this was such a fun read, it was adorable and funny and when all the walls come crashing down, you'll be entertained.

~ Thank You Netgalley ~

Amy says

If the novel attempted to be more humorous, such as the P.G. Wodehouse it frequently mentions, it might have been a great success. However, in reality the characters aren't very deep, the insinuations too mature for a young audience, and the love at first sight immature for an old audience. Some potential but not enough to make me do any more than shake my head.

Jaelyn says

This book reminded me of Eva Ibbotson's YA such as *The Morning Gift* crossed with *Downton Abbey*, if *Downton* was a mistaken identities romantic comedy instead of a soap opera.

The plot requires a certain suspension of disbelief that people can mistake a totally different man or woman for the person they love, just because it's dark. If believability is important to you, you probably want to pass. But look, it's a romantic comedy and all I really want from a book like that is to love the characters, be well entertained and delighted and turn the pages quickly. This book succeeded for me on that level very well.

Hannah is German, the daughter of a Jewish cabaret owner and an English woman, so when World War 2 breaks out, her family sends her to safety in England. It's really refreshing to see Germany portrayed in a light besides oppressor/oppressed war stories. Sure, Hannah worries over the safety of her family back in Germany but she is also a very fun character who believably charms everyone, very reminiscent of an Eva Ibbotson heroine.

This book has a whiff of scandalous matters in places, which seemed oh-so-faithful to the era, that breezy wink-wink treatment of sex typical of 1930s novels. I feel like Laura Sullivan must have read a lot of them to capture the feel this well and I think she did a great job of replicating the atmosphere of 1930s Europe.

Take this book on your next airplane or train trip and the time will fly.
