



Forget Me Not

Sarah M. Eden

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In Sarah M. Eden's graceful historical romance *Forget Me Not*, a marriage is arranged between once-friends who grew apart.

Julia always looked up to her neighbor, Lucas, as a beloved older brother. But Lucas left for an adventurous European tour, only returning years later. Julia, feeling slighted, thinks that Lucas's silence was too cavalier; she regards herself as less worldly than him, certain to disappoint. But then their parents announce their betrothal, and Julia and Lucas are married within a week. They cope with a decision they were never consulted about.

This bold beginning fuels a sweet, amusing tale in which Lucas's five friends—who dub themselves the Gents—help the couple via subtle interventions. They work to draw Julia out of her isolation, which began in her grief over family deaths, and back to her fun-loving, spirited self. Though Julia's fears about Lucas's thoughts lead to misunderstandings, they clear with minimal pain. As neither Lucas nor Julia is truly averse to their match, it's a matter of time before their joint outings grow into love.

The characters express their individuality within the constraints of English society, but in lingering ways: Julia eschews powdered hair and dabbles in mathematics, and the Gents engage in rapid banter, embracing Julia as one of their own. They encourage her to believe in Lucas, and their ensemble behavior promises future capers.

Lucas's estate—where emotional lines are drawn and redrawn—is an inviting refuge. As the newlyweds learn to live together, tender discoveries, and light humor surrounding the use of a coveted room, reveal the challenge of melding hope with personal differences.

Forget Me Not is an optimistic, witty romance in which wedded bliss arrives on the coattails of memorable “gents.”

KAREN RIGBY (September / October 2020)

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