

Millie's Fling

Jill Mansell

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Shuffle romance, sex, and love. Deal. Play. Then shuffle again. International bestselling author Jill Mansell delivers several unique plots that explore the disguises that men and women assume while dating.

When novelist Orla Hart, whose own marriage is breaking up, finds that her plots and characters are unbelievable, she endeavors to write a “proper literary novel.” To give the “reality of love,” Orla employs Millie Brady to relate her adventures and those of friends and family. The stories are to be ongoing until all have a happy ending.

Millie complies with tales about her divorced mother, who moves in with her ex-husband and his new wife, then begins an affair. And there's Millie's roommate Hester, who's engaged, yet longs for her old flame, Lucas. Hester intends to keep her fiancé while canoodling with Lucas to prove she is still attractive. Millie keeps her own love life a secret from Orla by hiding her serious feelings from the widower, Hugh. Meanwhile, Hugh feels like he's cheating on his dead wife and cannot show his real feelings toward Millie.

The setting is near Cornwall, with its extensive coastline and mild climate. Mansell's delightful dialogue is filled with charming British phrases—they really say things like “Oh blimey,” and “crikey,” and “bugger.” The characters sip tea and eat Marmite on toast and “snog senseless” and have their “bloody nerve.”

Switches in points of view and abrupt changes of scene are carried off splendidly with Mansell's entertaining and comedic style. Imaginative scenes are enlivened with careful description and wry observation. Dialogue combined with the characters' secret thoughts create an intimate ground with the reader. *Millie's Fling* is altogether a delightful read about love, love gone wrong, sex, and romance, and the complications those combinations bring.

MARY POPHAM (September / October 2009)

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