



# Secrets of Cavendon

*Barbara Taylor Bradford*

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**Secrets of Cavendon** Barbara Taylor Bradford

**From #1 New York Times bestselling author Barbara Taylor Bradford, comes a striking, breathtaking saga featuring the aristocratic Inghams and the Swann family, who have loyally served them for generations.**

It's the summer of 1949, and things have run smoothly at Cavendon Hall for years, with very few quarrels, dramas, or upsets between the two families. But since the end of World War II, changes have arrived at Cavendon. A new generation is at the helm, and also at the forefront of new scandal and intrigue. With romance, betrayal, heartbreak, and possible murder threatening to tear them apart, the Inghams and Swanns will have to find a way to come together and protect each other in the face of threats they never could have predicted.

Told with Bradford's inimitable deftness of prose and a beloved cast of characters, *Secrets of Cavendon* is a captivating novel that will draw readers in and grip them until the very last page.

## Secrets of Cavendon Details

Date : Published November 21st 2017 by St. Martin's Press

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Author : Barbara Taylor Bradford

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## **From Reader Review Secrets of Cavendon for online ebook**

### **Angie says**

If you've read others in the series, definitely make time for this one. More family drama and secrets of the Swann's & Inghams

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### **Mary says**

This is the fourth edition in the Ingham-Swann saga. Cecily Swann Ingham is fighting to save both Cavendon and her couture business. The family has been funneling money into the Hall for years, but it looks like a losing battle. So Cecily uses her business acumen to devise clever ways to increase their income to keep the family home, such as public tours, much to the dismay of her sister-in-law. This alone would be an interesting plot, but then the book veers off to the story of her niece, movie actress Alicia Stanton, who becomes involved with an opportunist movie producer who brings tragedy to the family while plotting to insert himself into the nobility. I have read all of the books in this series, and this one was the hardest to get through. It was interesting enough for me to keep going, but it seemed to take forever. I think this series may have "jumped the shark."

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### **Aimee says**

I was really looking forward to reading this book, but was very disappointed in it. There was not much of a plot or much tension in the story at all. Other than one obvious bad guy everyone was wealthy, loving, and kind to one another. The character that bothered me the most was Eric Swann, the head butler. All he was allowed to do was smile and be right there ready to serve everyone. I understand he was a butler, but he seemed important to the family and I felt that the author could have developed his character a little bit more at the least.

I had not read the previous books in the series so I don't know if that would have helped me to enjoy this one more, but I doubt it. I would not bother with this one.

I did receive this book through Goodreads giveaways.

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### **Marlene says**

Finally finished. Took a while to get into it. Slow pace. Lots of characters, many I had forgotten about from the preceding installment. last half of book better. I enjoyed the finish. Several loose threads at the end, e.g Security of the Swann records. A new "secret" at the end that will likely be a big part of the next book.

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## **Linda Zagon says**

My Review of "Secrets of Cavendon" by Barbara Taylor Bradford, St. Martins Press, November 2017

"Secrets of Cavendon" by Barbara Taylor Bradford is an engaging and entertaining novel. The genres for this book are Fiction, and Women's Fiction. This is a book that is part of The Cavendon Chronicles( part of a series), but I was able to keep up with the story and characters. This series involves the Inghams and the Swanns, their friendship, and marriages. The blurb says,""The Secrets of Cavendon picks up in the summer of 1949, with a new generation of the estate at the forefront of the scandal and intrigue."

The author describes the characters as complex, and complicated. Some are strong, and courageous, and loyal, and there are secrets, betrayals and danger . My favorite character is Cecily, who is motivated to keep Cavendon running smoothly. Cavendon is an opulent and gorgeous estate with gardens and beautiful exquisite architecture. Cavendon provides the perfect landscape for creative endeavors. Cecily realizes that between the taxes and the cost of keeping Cavendon, something must be done. Another character that I admire is Aunt Charlotte who seems to provide wonderful advice and has the means to implement them. The women are hardworking and capable. I love seeing how the women in the family bond together.

There are secrets of both the Inghams and Swanns recorded in diaries and books throughout the history of the Cavendon. Is this enough of a reason for betrayal or even murder?

I love that the author shows the importance of family, loyalty, love, faith, hope and determination. I also find that the "sisterhood " of women helping support one another through various crisis is admirable. I would highly recommend this book for readers of Women's fiction. I would also suggest reading the other books in the proper order. I would like to thank Barbara Taylor Bradford, and St. Martins Press and for an Advanced Reading Copy for my honest review.

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## **Coleen says**

Although I have not read anything previously by Barbara Taylor Bradford, I am aware that she has written many books and series. This particular book, Secrets of Cavendon, is the fourth in the Cavendon Hall series, and I have not read the first three. That having been admitted, I accepted that there were many names of characters in the book that I did not know -- which I might have known had I read the first three books in the series - or if I had read even ONE of the first three books.

Nevertheless, the main characters in Secrets of Cavendon were fairly easy to follow in the plot: Victoria and Alicia. Other main characters from previous books were presented in such ways as to be obvious they were important. So the reader does not have any difficulty reading and enjoying the book. At least, I found it to be an easy and fast read and not complicated in the least.

I won this book in a Goodreads giveaway.

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## **Donna says**

I love reading Barbara Taylor Bradford's books. She is just a tremendous author.

Cavendon Hall has its many secrets that's for sure. The Swanns and the Ingrams have very high family values and bonds that keeps the family together and tight-knit. When tragedy strikes, in the death of a beloved aunt due to a con artist trying to incorporate himself into the family, the family just becomes closer.

The Swanns and the Ingrams of Cavendon do all in their power to maintain their status quo in society.

I won this ARC copy through the Goodreads giveaway.

I know you will enjoy this book.

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### **Kathy says**

I have read and loved Barbara Taylor Bradford for years. So this book took me by surprise and not in a good way. I'm not sure if it was me, this book, or if we've just come to the end of a long friendship, but I just didn't care for this book at all.

There were too many characters to keep track of and most of them, try as they might otherwise, came across as bland and aloof. Their many stories didn't interest me. Everything just seemed forced or fake to me.

Again, this could be all on my shoulders, but I spent far more hours than I should have reading this book, hoping the old spark and grace of BTB's skill would enthrall me again. It never did.

Many thanks to NetGalley and St. Martin's Press for allowing me the privilege of reading one of their e-ARCs. I wish it had worked out better for both of us!!

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### **Kathy says**

Enjoyed the previous books in the series but this one seemed to be trying too hard to hold my attention. I gave up.

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### **R. says**

I received Secrets of Cavendon as a Goodreads giveaway. The book was the fourth one in a series. Since I had not read the other three books, it seemed like a lot of characters were being introduced-this may be a challenge for some readers to keep up with. In addition, I found the story did not get interesting until about halfway through the novel.

The author, Barbara Taylor Bradford, did a good job describing the financial woes for the English elite trying to maintain their large country estates, particularly after WWII. I also appreciated how well the two families who lived at Cavendon Hall supported one another emotionally and financially.

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## Adrienne says

Thank you to the lovely Lori at Get Red Pr for sending me *Secrets of Cavendon* for review! And also to St. Martin's Press for the gorgeous hardcover (you know the way to my heart). There's nothing better than giant hardcover!

I was quite excited to receive this novel since I absolutely obsess over historical fiction novels but was a little apprehensive that since it's from a series, I wouldn't know what was going on. Fortunately, Bradford revisits story lines and summarizes previous happenings so it wasn't a struggle to figure out what was going on. This book takes place right after WWII and revolves around the Ingham and Swann families and the Cavendon estate and honestly seems like a recipe made just for me.

The first 130 odd pages read like a tedious story being told to you by your posh great Aunt who wears mink stoles even in Summer. When I say 'story' I mean more of an overview of her ancestry spanning decades and decades. It took an entire day for me to get into the story and then to top it off, there are what feels like 100 different story lines going at one time (more like 25) and there's no real plot line to follow. A quick note on Cecily Swann Ingham our main storyline for this section of the book: she is literally the most boring character I've ever read. I could not get invested in her story at all.

In part three, it starts to get a bit more interesting with the arrival of Adam Fennell, a movie producer who is incredibly creepy and conniving, so we get a bit of action when he starts his process of securing Alicia Stanton as his wife so he can be a part of Cavendon. Finally something interesting! And then soon after, we meet Christopher Longdon, a wounded war hero who falls in love with the talented Victoria when she is assigned to photograph him for a spread in a magazine. If this was the entire novel, it would have been much more enjoyable, but so much of this 388 page tome is weighed down by the family secrets that have NO importance on any storyline.

All in all, this book is all over the place (which is why my review is all over the place! I cannot collect my thoughts.). It is the equivalent of trying to stuff your sleeping bag back into the original case. There was no plot, no tension, no conflict to resolve. When there was a conflict with Adam Fennell, no one took care of it. Despite (SPOILER ALERT) knowing he was a murderer, his name wasn't really Adam Fennell, and he tried to rape Alicia after she broke off their engagement, and yet, no one did a thing. He was later shot by some random person in the mob weeks after they had any contact with him. (And Alicia's brother KNEW he tried to rape her and didn't go back in the house and beat the tar out of him. Instead they paid him \$4,000 so he wouldn't tell people Alicia was conceived out of wedlock and their father isn't her biological father.)

A few more disjointed thoughts:

The characters were all bland and one dimensional.

Too much of the story was told through tedious dialogue.

Most of the story seemed overly forced and rushed and any conflict was solved immediately with no downtime or repercussions.

Perhaps if you are accustomed to BTB and her Cavendon tales or you like slow every day life soap operas, you might enjoy this.

My rating 2/5.

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## Janet says

I received an Advance Reader Copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I had read the previous three books in the series but enough is enough. There are too many characters to keep track of, too many wildly different plot lines to keep track of - frankly, I gave up and don't care if Cavendon burns down to the ground with everyone and everything in it. Sorry!

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## Vicky says

A good historical romance always makes for a good read- and reading the blurb *The Secrets of Cavendon*, that was exactly what it promised. Packed with everything from romance and the history of the Ingham and Swann families on the Cavendon estate to the realities of being an aristocratic family in the lean times following World War Two, I picked it up with enthusiasm.

What I got back was a mixed bag. Confession: I have never read any of Barbara Taylor Bradford's other Cavendon books, but they cover the time between the early Edwardian period to World War Two, charting the lives of the Ingham and Swann families living at Cavendon, the Ingham's ancestral stately home. It's easy to tell that this book is part of a series, as it frequently mentions the history of the families, dropping lots of tantalising details about the lives of Cavendon's occupants and the effect that their past, and now-dead characters such as DeLacy Ingham- which piqued my interest no end and added to the *Downton Abbey*-esque feel of the book- it also goes even further back, exploring the intertwined histories of the two families who make up the main part of the book.

Though that was interesting enough, it did affect the plot slightly- and that was where this book, for me, started to lose interest. Though Barbara Taylor Bradford does a great job in exploring the complexities of life in the post-war period, charting Cecily Ingham's attempts to keep Cavendon afloat in an era of heavy taxation and a diminished aristocracy, nothing much happens in this story until a shocking murder- which is more than a third of the way into the book.

That would be fine if the characters in themselves were exciting enough to carry the story. Unfortunately, with the exception of Cecily, the protagonist of previous novels, they're not. Plot points that should be important, like Alicia, the young actress and niece of Cecily, brutally splitting from the man she's having an affair with, are brushed over in a few sentences, and I never felt the characters had distinct personalities of their own: to me, at least, they all appeared to look the same (gorgeous) and act the same (extremely polite and supportive of their other family members). It's a shame, because this story does have some very interesting bones, and if some more effort had been investing into building up the characters and giving them believable personalities then I would have been hooked.

Overall, then, this book was a bit disappointing. Though it's true that perhaps reading Barbara Taylor Bradford's other novels first would have set me up better, and invested me more in the storyline and people in it, I felt that the characters themselves let down what could have been a great book. Hopefully next time the story will be a bit more exciting!

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## Sahitya says

This is my first review for an ARC received through Netgalley and I was very excited to read the book. I

remember reading the author's books a couple of years back and I recollect them as feel good romance novels. I was expecting a similar kind of experience from this book as well.

Even though I haven't read the other books in this series, it was easy to get into the details and figure out most of the characters within the first couple of chapters. Though the story is set immediately after WWII, most of the characters are women from the English upper class who are working in various different professions and fairly independent for the time period; this was the best part of the book. However, the book doesn't offer much in terms of plot or conflict. Everyone is gorgeous and good looking, most of them are very good people, most of the romances are love at first sight, all problems get solved by applying the first idea that comes to the character's minds. Even the suspense and murder mystery was quite expected.

Everything just feels too easy.

On the whole, this book is good for a breezy read when you have no expectations or for anyone who likes the Cavendon Hall series. It just wasn't for me.

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## **Jane says**

Thanks to Goodreads and St. Martin's Press for this ARC.

I'm a big fan of her books and have read all but Cavendon Luck which is #3 in this series. I wished I would have read Cavendon Luck. A whole chunk was missing for me and why it's better to read them in order.

I enjoyed this family generational book but it wasn't as good as the first two in my opinion. Not much going on except for a murder.

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