



The Grass is Greener

Loretta Hill

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From the author of The Girl in Steel-Capped Boots and The Maxwell Sisters comes a captivating novel about best friends, family and fighting for what you want, against all odds.

The grass always seems greener on the other side . . . until you get there.

For generations Bronwyn Eddings's family has thrived in the legal profession and a position at their prestigious firm is hers by right. Only problem is: she does not want it.

Her best friend Claudia has always dreamed of being a lawyer, but tragedy struck and she took up the reins of her father's vineyard instead. It was supposed to be temporary . . . now there's no end in sight.

Bronwyn wants Claudia's life so badly. Claudia can't imagine anything better than Bronwyn's job. So the friends hatch a crazy plan to swap places.

Both are determined to be the person they always thought they could never be. But achieving your dreams isn't easy – and falling in love with the men who oppose them is not a good idea . . .

The Grass is Greener Details

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From Reader Review The Grass is Greener for online ebook

Simone says

Almost everybody can relate to a "grass is greener" moment or two in their lives. It seems that it is part of being human to feel envy towards a friend, relative or even stranger who has or is doing something that we want to do. In this aptly titled book best friends Bronwyn and Claudia are facing that exact dilemma. Bronwyn has a position at a prestigious law firm and a great apartment in Perth but has no passion for her career. Instead she yearns to be at her best friend Claudia's family vineyard. Meanwhile Claudia is feeling major resentment that her legal career has been stifled to keep the family business afloat and would give anything to be where Bronwyn is. Then one day they get the opportunity to make it happen.

It's not exactly a straightforward life swap. Bronwyn is treated as a guest at the vineyard rather than the manager she wants to be and Claudia has to resort to a white lie to get her foot in the door of the law firm of her dreams. There are several other conflicts along the way for Claudia and Bronwyn, with each coming across hurdles in their respective paths. But both women push through these barriers, determine to finally create the life they want.

The Grass Is Greener is written in Loretta Hill's usual warm and witty style, with a cast of well drawn characters against a backdrop of the wild and beautiful Western Australian landscape. Although a seemingly "neat" solution, the plot is plausible and the elements relating to the legal world and wine making come across as true to life. Romance also features strongly in the storyline, with seemingly unsuitable suitors for both women appearing to complicate things a little further. Themes of family estrangement, loyalty, guilt, parental expectation and ultimately love and togetherness round out this satisfying story.

All in all The Grass Is Greener is an easy and enjoyable read that will leave you eagerly awaiting Loretta Hill's next title.

Letitia says

Random House should be embarrassed. This book did not appear to be edited or proofread. There were so many errors and missing words, it was almost laughable. About halfway through the cheesiness got to me, and I had to set it aside. After running out of other things to read, I finally came back to it. Not that I needed to read any more to know what was going to happen. You can pretty well work out the whole story in the first two chapters. Boring, cheesy, predictable, and appalling editing.

marlin1 says

Bronwyn and Claudia have been best friends since law school but both hate their respective current lifestyles. Claudia is stuck on her family's run down winery after a family tragedy and itches to get back into practising law. Meanwhile Bronwyn, who comes from a long family line of lawyers, hates practising law and trying to live up to the family reputation. She desperately loves Claudia's family and lifestyle after spending many holidays with them.

When Bronwyn loses her job due to a dog called Elsa that she somehow 'inherited', she talks Claudia into

changing positions with her. As it was, Bronwyn's high powered, interfering mother was pushing her to work for her Uncle Cyril's law firm, so Bronwyn contacted him and recommended Claudia instead. As it turns out there is a lot for these two to navigate in their respective changes.

I have loved all of Loretta Hill's previous books and this one is no exception, I thought it was a really fun read. I love books where there is feisty bantering between two characters and denial of attraction and this one certainly hit the mark with me.

The chapters alternate between Claudia and Bronwyn and each time I didn't want to 'leave' the character but within the next page or so of the change, I was hooked and totally immersed in the next stage.

My only gripe if you can call it that, is what I would call lack of communication between Claudia and Bronwyn after certain incidents later in the book. I don't want to tell any spoilers and they are explained but it just didn't sit right with me. Still, I chose to overlook this and it certainly didn't take anything away from my immense enjoyment of this story.

A perfect read to unwind with in the holiday season that left me with a smile on my face.

Thank you to Netgalley and the Publisher for a copy to read and review.

Samantha Hamer says

I'm glad I borrowed it from the library! Having read another Loretta Hill book based in a mining community that I enjoyed I thought I would love this book partly set in a family vineyard. Unfortunately by focusing on two main characters rather than one, the story was just stretched too thin. Some things were described in graphic detail ie a dog giving birth whereas the relationships the two main characters found themselves in needed to be explored more. A little ridiculous towards the end.

Bianca says

This has been my first Loretta Hill novel, and I can confidently say it won't be the last.

The Grass is Greener was a total page-turner, I finished it in two seatings.

The main characters, Bronwyn and Claudia, are best friends who find themselves stuck in unwanted situations: Bronwyn is an unhappy lawyer, who's following in her parents' footsteps, despite not being that keen on practicing law. Claudia, on the other hand, would love to be doing exactly what her best friend was, instead she had spent the last two years helping her family's failing Yallingup winery.

But the situation will change, as Bronwyn decides she'll take Claudia's place at her family's winery while she arranges for Claudia to be interviewed for a position at her uncle's Perth law firm.

Of course, things are never that easy. There are obstacles to overcome. And plenty of misunderstandings to straighten. Of course, in the end, it all works out, but the journey to the end was charming, sassy and unpredictable. I quite liked that while there was drama, it wasn't over the top unrealistic.

I enjoyed the fact that both friends get similar "air time" and that their stories are so different but eventually they intertwine.

Loretta Hill's writing is quite simple, without any flourishes. I believe many readers will like that. It sure worked for this novel.

The novel gets extra bonus points because the settings were very familiar to me.

"The Grass is Greener" will make for a great holiday/beach companion.

4.5 stars

Cover: 4 stars

I've received this novel via NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review. Many thanks to Random House Australia for the opportunity to read and review.

Helen says

As Hill herself states, this is a book about starting again and that the adage of, 'the grass is always greener on the other side' has some flaws in it. She states in her conclusion that true happiness comes from being our best selves and not from somewhere or someone else.

"The truth is, it was never about swapping our lives exactly. It was always about making the most of our own."

So you can see, if you dig a little deeper into this book you will find that The Grass is Greener has it all. Easy to read, perfect weekend escapism.

Full review at:

<http://greatreadsandtealeaves.blogspot.com/2014/07/the-grass-is-greener-by-loretta-hill.html>

Brenda says

Best friends Bronwyn and Claudia were finally catching up in Perth after not seeing each other for over six months. Both had been exceptionally busy; Bronwyn as a lawyer and Claudia running her father Horace's winery which was struggling after a mixture of family problems. Claudia wanted to be a lawyer and dreamed of having a job like Bronwyn's – Bronwyn hated her job and wanted to go to the winery, the place she had loved for the last ten years. So the two friends jokingly decided to swap places with each other...

When Claudia turned up for the interview at Hanks and Eddings in place of Bronwyn, she was thrilled to be successful. There was a slight hiccup which she didn't correct – she was sure no one would find out anyway; would they? And Bronwyn's arrival at Oak Hills Winery in Yallingup felt like coming home to her – Claudia's parents and brother were happy about her visit, until they understood she was taking Claudia's

position and would be there much longer than just a few days...

Claudia's new boss was the enigmatic Sebastian Rowlands – a harsh critic, he was cynical and a task master. But Claudia revelled in the work. Bronwyn's teenage love for Jack Franklin, Claudia's other brother had been quashed five years previously when disaster struck and Jack left Australia for France. Still estranged, the family was struggling; could Bronwyn bring the winery back to the way it was many years previously?

I loved *The Grass is Greener* by Aussie author Loretta Hill. A nice mixture of suspense (I loved Elsa!), intrigue and romance, the loyalty of best friends and of finding your own way. There was also mention of the Maxwell family, both Phoebe and father John (of *The Maxwell Sisters*) as their winery was next door. It felt like catching up with old friends...

This quote especially took my eye: '*So, what you're really saying is, the grass is greener on the other side, but only if you water it.*' Sums the saying up nicely I think. I have no hesitation in highly recommending *The Grass is Greener* – another classic by this author!

With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for my copy to read and review.

A Reader's Heaven says

(I received a free copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.)

The grass always seems greener on the other side . . . until you get there.

For generations Bronwyn Stevenson's family has thrived in the legal profession and a position at their prestigious firm is hers by right. Only problem is: she does not want it. Her best friend Claudia has always dreamed of being a lawyer, but tragedy struck and she took up the reins of her father's vineyard instead. It was supposed to be temporary . . . now there's no end in sight.

Bronwyn wants Claudia's life so badly. Claudia can't imagine anything better than Bronwyn's job. So the friends hatch a crazy plan to swap places. Both are determined to be the person they always thought they could never be. But achieving your dreams isn't easy - and falling in love with the men who oppose them is not a good idea...

Two best friends hate their lives - so decide to swap jobs and find happiness...

Obviously, things don't go completely to plan as family resistance, in particular, seem to be an obstruction that isn't easily removed. Other believable dramas befall the girls, but their determination to get to where they want to be is very strong indeed.

And just when they think they have it all, romance appears and throws their lives into further turmoil...

While the plot may sound simple and not all that original, there is a certain something in the way Hill writes her stories that made me forget about that and fall into the story of Bronwyn and Claudia, in particular. The dramas that befall them along the way are totally authentic (except maybe for the pregnant mastiff, but who knows...) and I was drawn further to them both because of that.

This is a story of best friends, job satisfaction, and family - and I think the author has pulled that off

perfectly.

With the addition of the romance element, I think it got a little more predictable and I don't think that was the strongest aspect of the book.

I think this is the perfect summer read, or a book to curl up with on the couch by the fire, or for sitting out in the garden in spring...I think you get what I mean!

Paul
ARH

Jess says

Not happy with their lot in life, Bronwyn Edding's* and Claudia Franklin make plans to swap jobs and lifestyles. After all Claudia is more suited to Bronwyn's high flying legal life but is stuck in what she perceives to be a dead end job at the families' failing vineyard; the vineyard that Bronwyn just happens to adore. When the two conspire to simple 'swap' jobs after a particularly bad day they come up with a plan that looks easy, and soon discover life is anything but and the grass is always greener on the other side.

"It was a great plan from both our perspectives and it would have been perfect -"

"Naturally."

I absolutely adored this book. Loretta Hill is a masterful story teller who never ceases to entertain, but also deals with some more serious underlying issues in a subtle but clear and coherent manner. Take this book for example, every single character is dealing with their own sense of identity and place in the world on some level. There's the obvious choices of Bronwyn and Claudia who both believe they are suited to another life only to find out it's not as simple as they might expect it to be. Claudia's father Horace has recently retired due to medical reasons, but he isn't willing to give up yet and their entire family is struggling how to find their place in the changing family business. Jack the prodigal son literally gets shipped off overseas and thinks it's his duty to find himself, or a better version of himself, while his younger brother Chris is disabled and still learning how to adapt some five years later. Sebastian, the cocky lawyer who proves to have a bigger heart, doesn't know how to let people in. Elsa keeps getting passed around by owners but never loses her playful soul. Bronwyn's parents never quite adapted to parenthood and have very strict ideals for what Bronwyn's life is and will be. And the list continues on.

While all of that above seems seriously heavy, the book is anything but. Hill has managed to blend the perfect balance between the heavier moments with her trademark wit and humour, and some truly fantastic writing and descriptions that place you right in the moment and with the characters. Despite the more dramatic moments of the narrative, nothing seemed contrite or forced, but rather the narrative flowed effortlessly. I for one couldn't read it quick enough.

For a lot of the book I couldn't decide which best friend and life I liked better as Hill was able to insert me as a reader so effortlessly and realistically into each of these characters lives and footsteps that I was totally hooked and 100% there with the characters. Bronwyn is a kind hearted soul who can't help but help those around her, while Claudia is the go getter of the two, who lives for the adrenaline rush and challenge of the

courtroom and her fiery boss Sebastian Rowlands. When the book started I was instantly more fond of one character more than the other - Claudia. She was hilarious and instantly stole centre stage hands down with her wise cracks and fiery attitude. I loved her interactions at the law firm, especially those with one tall, dark and handsome stranger she had to call boss - one of my all time favourite scenes in this book is the grocery shopping scene! Read the book and you'll totally understand. But then there was Bronwyn with her put upon dog Elsa, who (Bronwyn) was more complex and bad arse than first thought and she really grew on me. So at times I was even wishing that the plot line I was reading was going to continue longer because I naturally loved Claudia and Sebastian so much. But then Hill would switch the scene and story back to Bronwyn and Jack and I'd fall hopelessly and helplessly in love with their story all over again and never want to leave them.

Personally I loved the dual setting of the busy city life of Perth vs the calm, but not always comfortable, idyllic country atmosphere of the wine region. Having read Hill's previous books, I loved returning to the wine country and all the references and cameos from Hill's previous book, *The Maxwell Sisters*.

The Grass is Greener has it all. Great personalities and character development, chemistry that sky rocketed off the charts and subtle mix of romance, friendship, mystery and intrigue with a good dose of humour that makes you smile and want to track these people down for a drink!

I highly recommend *The Grass is Greener* to anyone looking for a great summer read. It's the perfect book to relax to at the beach or in your own backyard. Hill's characters are larger than life and their story transcends the page; as a whole it's:

Easy to fall in love with. A devil to forget.

I loved this book so much that after finishing the ebook, I made sure I picked up a physical copy on the day of its release.

*Please note, that the book has Bronwyn's last name listed as Eddings not Stevenson and Claudia as a Franklin.

Anna says

I received this book as a gift, and it's not my preferred genre which could partly explain why I enjoyed it less than many other readers seem to have done.

I really liked the premise of the plot, but was disappointed with how the book developed. I liked the central romances and found them fairly believable, and I enjoyed some scenes very much. But most of the plot relating to Elsa didn't seem plausible to me, and the eventual resolution seemed rushed and not in line with the rest of the book. I also found the two central characters a bit frustrating at times - they are both highly educated, intelligent women, but many of their actions and decisions didn't seem to reflect that.

Clearly I'm in a minority, and I'm glad others have enjoyed this book so much. It just wasn't my cup of tea.

Warren Gossett says

Delightful. This is the fifth novel by Loretta Hill I have read since being given one by chance. This novel is charming like the others, with even more crime, law, and humour. *The Grass is Greener* is set in Perth where I live. And I also worked at the University of Western Australia Civil Engineering Department as a computer programmer in the 1990's. Probably just before Loretta Hill graduated from there as an engineer. It is deeply enjoyable how she uses the setting of Perth (as well as WA and Queensland) in her novels.

By way of comparison I am currently reading books set in Perth 50 years ago and in outback Australia 150 years ago. But I can never visit those places. But I am living in Loretta Hill's Perth and WA of the here and now. And the future looks romantic and miraculous.

That's because of the people in bright novels like this.

PattyMacDotComma says

4★ for a cheerful rural romance

Western Australia is a good place to spend some satisfying time with Bronwyn and Claudia, best pals for years, who decide they'd each like different lives.

These bright, young women have both trained in law and are well-qualified to pursue legal careers. Bronwyn is forced into it. She's the product of highly successful, well-heeled, well-connected parents who treat her pretty much as a trophy child (if there is such a term). So off to a major legal firm she goes.

Claudia, meanwhile, has had to go back to the previously successful family winery in the Margaret River region of WA to help out. Her younger brother is in a wheelchair after an accident that seems to involve her older brother, and her father has various health problems. To top it off, her older brother, who was being groomed as a vintner to take over, has shot through to France, and nobody but her mother seems to hear from him at all. The business is sliding downhill.

The girls used to spend all their holidays and free time on the property, and Bronwyn, who was a bit nerdy and shy, was an interesting companion for beautiful Claudia and a novelty for the brothers to tease. "Numbat" was their nickname for her. Sister's friend plus brothers equals possible triangle, yes? Yes.

Now adults (and both very pretty), the girls get together and bemoan their individual fates. Claudia feels stifled on the property and hankers for the Big Smoke (Perth) and some good legal work to sink her teeth into. Bronwyn doesn't like the cut-and-thrust of the courtroom but is nostalgic for life on the land (and the aforementioned brother/s).

They decide that Claudia's family would benefit from Bronwyn's skills and input, and Claudia could pick up a job being offered to Bronwyn, and voilà! Bob's your mother's brother! Bronwyn heads for the hills while Claudia tackles the city.

*"Bronwyn stepped out of Claudia's old ute, closed her eyes and lifted her nose to the wind. Who knew that freedom smelled both fresh **and** fruity?*

*After a moment she allowed herself to take in the ramshackle home she was parked in front of. It was two storeys tall and leaning against the side of a hill, much like a tired old man catching his breath. **

There's plenty of good-natured banter, with well-differentiated characters and a storyline that's interesting (although happily predictable) enough to follow without tripping over complications trying to be clever. Plenty of wine-growing and –making info for buffs, too. Watch out "wine wankers" – this is not for you.

In the city, Claudia finds criminals, courtroom scenes, and some downright scary people—it is the world of lawyers, right? Oh yes, and eligible fellas.

Thanks to NetGalley and Random House Australia for allowing me a review copy. A satisfying rural romance.

**Quotation is from my review copy and may have changed in final product.*

Sharon says

Bronwyn and Claudia are best friends who are both wanting their lives to be different. They then come up with the idea to swap lives. It sounds straightforward enough, but just how hard can it be to swap jobs and where you live?

Will Bronwyn and Claudia lives turn out to be what they hoped for or could it big the biggest mistake of their lifetimes?

What a delightful book this was to read. Aussie author Loretta Hill has written another entertaining and fun book. This was going to be a four star rating that was of course until I read the final quote in the book which I just loved and it was the perfect ending to the book. I loved this book and I have no hesitation in HIGHLY recommending it to anyone who loves a great read.

Janine says

Another great read by Loretta Hill. I have enjoyed all of her books and it is nice to feature rural WA and intelligent young women.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

The Grass is Greener is Loretta Hill's fifth contemporary novel and like the last, The Maxwell Sisters, this novel is also set largely among the vineyards in the fertile southern region of Western Australia.

"The long and short of it is....Bronwyn needed a sabbatical from the law, so she left town to work on my family's vineyard. I wanted to get back into law so I marched in and took her job....It was a great plan from both of our perspectives and it would have been perfect-..."

Succumbing to family obligation has left best friends, Bronwyn Eddings and Claudia Franklin, miserable. Despite her pedigree, Bronwyn detests practicing law in Perth and dreams of another life, while Claudia resents having been compelled to abandon her own fledgling law career to work at her family's failing winery. The solution seems simple, they'll swap places and both get exactly what they want.

Of course it's not nearly that easy and Hill introduces plenty of conflict for both of her protagonists to work through, developing circumstances that engender mild tension and drama.

Bronwyn's high profile mother is furious when her daughter abandons her career without a backward glance and is insistent that Bronwyn return to the fold. The Franklin family, still struggling with the aftermath of family tragedy, are hurt by Claudia's leaving and resistant to the idea of Bronwyn taking her place.

Additionally Claudia and Bronwyn both find themselves caught up in a strange situation involving a pregnant Mastiff, a possible dog fighting ring and a local crime heavyweight.

Romance also features heavily in *The Grass is Greener*. The return of Jack Franklin, Claudia's eldest brother, to the vineyard after a five year absence reignites Bronwyn's long held desire for him.

Meanwhile Claudia finds the dark good looks and intelligence of her immediate boss, Sebastian Rowlands irresistible, despite his breathtaking arrogance.

"The truth is. it was never about swapping our lives exactly. It was always about making the most of our own.... So....what you're really saying is, the grass is greener on the other side, but only if you water it."

The Grass Is Greener is a warm and engaging story about friendship, autonomy, family and love from Loretta Hill. Enjoy it on a summer's afternoon with a glass of Western Australian wine.
