



## **A Sensible Life**

*Mary Wesley*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

# A Sensible Life

*Mary Wesley*

## A Sensible Life Mary Wesley

Flora Trevelyan is a ten-year-old misfit, despised by her selfish and indolent parents, and left to wander the streets of a small French town whilst her parents prepare to depart for life in colonial India. There she befriends the locals, acquires an extensive vocabulary of French foul language and encounters the privileged lifestyle of the elegant, middle-class British families holidaying in 1920s France.

Introduced for the first time to kindly, civilised and, above all, caring people Flora falls helplessly and hopelessly in love with not one but three young men.

Over the next forty years Flora will grow from an awkward schoolgirl into a stunning beauty and explore, consummate and finally resolve each of these affairs.

## A Sensible Life Details

Date : Published June 1st 2006 by Vintage (first published 1990)

ISBN : 9780099499138

Author : Mary Wesley

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, European Literature, British Literature, Literary Fiction

 [Download A Sensible Life ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online A Sensible Life ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online A Sensible Life Mary Wesley**

---

## From Reader Review A Sensible Life for online ebook

### Bev Taylor says

follow the life of flora, a 10 year old misfit from the beaches of dinard to the west country 40 years later

she is lonely with a love for animals and french foul language along with italian and russian

her father is a diplomat in india passionately in love with her mother and the pair of them totally disregard her and eventually settle in india permanently

flora is welcomed into a circle of english familes in Brittany whom she distrusts at first but is slowly drawn in, along with her relationship with a russian dressmaker

her path crosses with those of cosmo, hubert and felix and continue to do so over the next 40 years

this is the time it takes for her to discover her own sense of belonging and their love affairs to be explored, consummated and finally resolved

the author takes an old fashioned look at life and people in general and this is reflected in her writing

bev

---

### Virginia says

For the best part of this book, I was enthralled by the depiction of the time and place. I was a little disappointed by the ending which seemed unmotivated by the trajectories of the characters to prior to that point. Thats ok, though. I still loved this book, and look forward to reading more Mary Wesley.

---

### Andrew McClarnon says

An enjoyable flick through some pages of Flora's sensible life, though I am not sure why she should have her story told. There are some great sketches in here, I liked our periodic visits to the devoted, but utterly selfish Trevelyans in India. I greatly enjoyed our stay at Coppermalt for a slice of Downton Abbey meets Brideshead. However I am not sure whether our 'heroes' (Flora, Cosmo, Blanco, Felix) are ever quite up to the job of leading the story, and it is the second row of characters (Milly, Angus, Joyce, Vita etc) who really made this a good read.

---

### Laura says

**"Flora, sensing that nobody would be looking her way, risked looking up. All around fellow diners hushed. Across the table Hubert looked bland. Behind his master's chair the butler raised his eyes to the ceiling. General Leigh, face flushed red, said, ' What? ' glaring at Miss Green, who in an almost inaudible voice was heard to repeat her remark. 'D-don't you think the L-League of N-Nations**

wonderful, General Leigh? W-what do you think of it vis-a-vis B-Baldwin?'

'It is a club for Frogs and Wogs,' said Angus loudly. 'It bodes nothing but ill, it will bring disaster. That bugger Baldwin pretends to go along with it, but he secretly despises it, as I do openly. The League of so-called Nations is an international mafia of ill repute artfully concocted by political lounge lizards and communists at somebody else's expense. Who is going to pick up the bill for all their tommy rot and skulduggery, Miss Green? Tell me that.'

Meet Flora Trevelyan. She's a young girl of 10, on vacation in France with her extremely laissez-faire--to the point of negligent--parents. Left to her own devices, she meets hotel staff, a village seamstress, various dogs, and other vacationers. In particular, she meets the Leigh family, and becomes friends with their son Cosmo and his friend Hubert, both of them aged 15. They are at first protective of her, and then over the years begin to love her. There's an even older boy, Felix, who is aged 21 at the time of the French holiday. Wesley describes young love and infatuation well...but there is a creepy edge to it at the same time which put me off from the story somewhat.

At any rate, Flora's parents return to India where her father is a civil servant. Flora stays behind in boarding school. She continues to have intermittent contact with General Angus Leigh, his wife Milly, and their children. We see the over-indulgent, but genuine love of the Leighs contrasted with Flora's family. There are many variations of life shown, but I'm unsure whether any of them are truly sensible!

Bottom line: Very few of the characters were likable, and the story-arc spanned so much time (almost thirty years) that it was difficult to become invested emotionally. However, Wesley writes prose with enough skill to elevate the book slightly above average. Given 2.5/5 stars or a rating of "Above Average". Recommended as a library check-out for those who enjoy British/English literature.

Another quote: "Eventually asleep, she had nightmares and screamed because Matron, of all people, had turned into a marble bust which yet incomprehensibly and terrifyingly had arms, hands which held her in a throttling grip, shaking her awake. 'You stupid girl, look what you've done to your bedclothes, all tangled up and all over the floor. No wonder you are shivering.'

'Sorry, Matron, I was--'

'I'll get you a hot drink. Doctor will be here in the morning.'

'Is he marble?'

'What d'you mean, marble? Been dreaming you dwelt in marble halls?' Matron straightened the sheets and blankets.

'Marble arms--'

'Not arms, halls. I dreamt I dwelt in marble *halls*, is how it goes. I'm not totally uneducated, my girl.'

'And I am not your girl!'

Stuff I learned: Here's a link to an article about boarding schools in England

<http://www.ourkids.net/school/brief-h...>

~~And here's a less flattering article about how boarding school may have contributed to some of Flora's neurosis. <https://www.ibblaw.co.uk/insights/blo...>

---

## Joanne says

Interesting, readable, but way too many chance encounters, and characters who needed a slap upside the head.

---

### **Sara Eames says**

The main problem I seem to have with Mary Wesley novels is that her characters are completely unlikeable - and "A Sensible Life" is, unfortunately, no exception. The only character worth an iota of sympathy is Flora who is neglected by her parents and used by almost everyone else who crosses her path. The story moves at a snail's pace and not a lot happens (apart from rather a lot of sex between various characters in the book). I found it particularly distasteful when 2 male characters agree that the only way to deal with their lust for Flora is to share her - as though she is an item and not a person. I did not really enjoy this book - and I am at a loss as to why I forced myself to finish it. Maybe I'm missing something...

---

### **Monica says**

Mostly unlikeable characters (Flora's parents should have been drowned at birth) and a plot in which very little happens except for the occasional perfunctory sexual encounter.

---

### **Mack says**

I have a few of Mary Wesley's novels that I want to read again. A Sensible Life is not one of her best though it is a tender and witty novel of how one finds their way to adulthood. There didn't seem a need for a climax but it was a gentle story of friendship, family and love.

---

### **Lene Hartvig says**

I love Mary Wesley's books. I read them all in Danish a long time ago.

---

### **Alien says**

Not the stuff that I normally read. But I liked it.

---

### **Tony Peck says**

Another great Wesley read. She is fearless, writes well and her stories never ever are predictable or dull.

---

### **Katharine Holden says**

Hated it. I would like to drown these characters.

---

### **Lisa says**

Mary Wesley has written a very enjoyable novel in *A Sensible Life*, which begins on the northwest coast of France in Brittany. Here we find an enclave of British holiday makers staying at a hotel in Dinard. Among them is Flora Trevelyan, a precocious ten year-old school girl whose parents are so wrapped up in each other that they ignore Flora, allowing her to roam the beaches and hang out with local people and holiday makers at will. The story introduces us to an array of characters, including three teenage boys who interact with Flora and with whom she falls in love and fantasizes about for years to come. The novel works on several levels as it paints a picture of life between the wars for British (and Dutch) families who suffered the aftermath of the Great War and are beginning to hear the rumblings of the next one. It also deals with the emerging middle class as it struggles to create a society for its children that strains to hold on to the old manners and mores of the rigid class system in Britain, and it illustrates the strength and loneliness of the English boarding school system in preparing young people for life, while their parents live and work abroad.

---

### **Little Red Readinghood says**

I enjoyed reading this book, however three stars because when I can to write this review I couldn't remember what it was about. A sweet love story starting when two children meet.

---

### **Laura says**

A cross between Anita Brookner and Ivy Compton-Burnett, I think. I've heard Barbara Pym thrown around as well but I didn't quite see it; Wesley isn't as cozy and smooth. Also Jane Austen, but nah. People have said Anita Brookner's like Jane Austen too but no. Just because you're a lady writing about domestic lady things with marriage at the end doesn't make you like Jane Austen.

I actually considered abandoning this book during the first chapter because I couldn't get into the writing style, but I stuck with it and am glad I did. The dialogue at times is so stilted but in a good (sometimes hilarious) way (hence the Compton-Burnett connection). The bawdiness was fun and not stilted. It was an engaging read, though not particularly amazing, so it's really 3.5 stars but it was the kind of book that made me feel nice, so it's 4 (like I've said a lot -- a scale of 5 is just not enough). I'll definitely read more Wesley in future, more for comfort's sake than anything else.

---