

Ashley Poston

New York Times Bestselling Author of
The Seven Year Slip

The
Someday
Garden

Praise for Ashley Poston

‘I LOVED this book. A beautiful, poignant story, full of beautiful, poignant characters . . . *The Dead Romantics* is like a beautifully crafted puzzle: at the end all the pieces fall perfectly into place, and the picture that they form is at once touching, funny, breathtaking, hopeful, and dreamy’

Ali Hazelwood

‘A book to make you laugh and cry’

New York Times

‘*The Seven Year Slip* is a gorgeous love story from one of the finest romance writers out there. I laughed, I cried, I didn’t want it to end. Consider me Ashley Poston’s greatest admirer!’

Carley Fortune

‘I didn’t think it was possible to love Ashley Poston’s books any more than I already did, but *Sounds Like Love* is my new favourite. Romantic, deeply thoughtful, and exquisitely written, this one absolutely wrecked me’

Annabel Monaghan

‘*Sounds Like Love* gives new meaning to what it means to make a “connection” . . . The whimsy and what-ifs of Ashley Poston’s novels have made her a must-buy for me!’

Jodi Picoult

‘Ashley Poston charms once again with *Sounds Like Love*. Deeply romantic and delightfully whimsical, every page had me humming along. This story will be on repeat in my head for a while’

B.K. Borison

‘Smart, quirky and funny. I loved this one’

Sarah Morgan

‘We could all use a good summer ghost story, and you can’t get much better than Ashley Poston’

Entertainment Weekly

‘*The Dead Romantics* takes so many things I love . . . and gives them all a fresh, fun, thoroughly modern spin. This is truly a rom-com to die for’

Rachel Hawkins

‘Poston[’s] sparkling dialogue makes the characters come alive – even the dead ones’

Publishers Weekly

‘*The Dead Romantics* was an absolute and unexpected delight. Voicy and quirky and fun; the pages will probably sparkle (but with black glitter)’

Christina Lauren

‘A tender, nuanced love story that fans of Emily Henry will adore’

Red

‘Smart, quick, and absolutely bubbling over with love for the genre of romance itself’

Emma Straub

‘A romance lover’s dream of a book . . . Ashley Poston is the queen of high
concept love stories’

Sophie Cousens

About the Author



ASHLEY POSTON is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Dead Romantics*, *The Seven Year Slip*, *A Novel Love Story*, and *Sounds Like Love*. A native of South Carolina, she lives in a small grey house with her chaotic cats and too many books. You can find her on the internet somewhere, watching cat videos and reading fan fiction.

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Also by Ashley Poston

The Dead Romantics

The Seven Year Slip

A Novel Love Story

Sounds Like Love

Ashley Poston

The Someday Garden



ONE PLACE. MANY STORIES

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Note to Readers

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Dedication

To Elvis, my first cactus, who died like he lived—dry as hell

Lilymoor

There was once a house on the cliffs that grew the most beautiful flowers.

It grew peonies, daisies, sunflowers, marigolds—wild and colorful and lush, while honeysuckles climbed their way over the high walls, and roses held court in secret alcoves. The house itself was drafty and charming, the way old and storied places were, a jumble of scalloped eaves and repurposed shipyard lumber, bone white and moss green and gray, often dressed in a cloak of midmorning fog.

The house had outlasted two of its owners, refusing to be tamed, though there was something special about its third—and current—owners that gave it pause. It was in the way the couple held hands as they strolled through the gardens in the evenings, and the way they tended to its overgrown flower beds with the patient sort of reverence reserved only for wild things. The house watched as its new owners celebrated occasions, and mourned losses that bit all the way to the bone, and decided that if they couldn't have their own, they'd make a family a different way.

So they paved the driveway up to the house and dug a parking lot against the cliffs, and gently placed paths through its sections, putting order to its seasons. Then they placed a beautifully carved piece of driftwood on its door with a word painted in lovely looping letters—a magical name for a magical house by the sea.

Lilymoor

And of all the gardens in the world, it was here where I fell in love.

fernweh

Lilymoor House and Gardens sat on the cliffs over Odette, Maine, like a haunting.

“Oh, she’s *beautiful*,” Harriett whispered as we rounded the twisting drive up to the historic property. She leaned out my Jeep window and took a photo with her disposable camera. “Look at her, Soph!”

“I’m *driving*!” I reminded her with a laugh. I’d look in a minute when I wasn’t trying to keep us on the road. My knuckles were white from gripping the steering wheel too tightly up the curving drive.

But then, at the roundabout in front of the house, I did take a glance.

After close to five hundred miles, a flat tire, and some dodgy gas station food, we’d finally made it.

The road trip had started as an idea our freshman year at Duke, when I lamented in a study group about a documentary I once saw about a beautiful garden on a cliff. Another girl—a brunette who always wore her hair in pigtails and her cat eyeliner sharp—perked up at the mention of it.

“Wait, the one that used to air on PBS?” she had asked. We hadn’t talked in class, so I didn’t even know her name. “The documentary with the cute old couple who have tended the garden for, like, *forty years*? They’re in Maine?”

I gasped. “You know Lilymoor?”

“Do I know it? I *love* that place! I want to write about it one day.”

As it turned out, she’d taped that same documentary on VHS and watched it so many times the tape wore out. She sighed about all its gardens, its regal

house, its owners—the Becks. Lilymoor felt fictional. It might as well have been, with the stories people whispered about it. That the gardens were magical, that sometimes you could hear the voice of your truest love. Obviously, it was just the sound of the wind coming up the cliffs—loads of people, from travel guides to paranormal hunters, had debunked it over the years. Still, Lilymoor sounded like a fairy tale, and maybe that was why Harrie loved it so much.

I told myself I just liked the flowers.

After study group, I admitted to her, “I’ve wanted to visit so badly ever since I first saw it on TV. Like, more than normal. It’s like homesickness but . . . away.” I frowned, thinking on it. “Far-sickness, I guess, for somewhere I’ve never been. I can’t explain it. It sounds silly, I know.”

“I don’t think so,” she replied with a thoughtful look. “There’s a word for far-sickness. It’s German—*fernweh*, I think.”

“*Fernweh*,” I repeated, chewing on the word. It tasted bittersweet in my mouth.

“We should go,” she said, though it sounded more like a challenge as she looked me dead in the eyes. “We should make a plan.”

“What, really?”

“Really really.”

And that was that.

Her name was Harriett Fisher, and she collected untranslatable words in a little journal, like other people collected bottle caps or baseball cards. She was an English major who wanted to write novels, though she wasn’t yet sure what kind. I was a biology major who, frankly, just wanted to play in the dirt.

We couldn’t be more different, but there is this feeling when you meet someone special. Like finding a lost puzzle piece and clicking it into place—there’s a certainty to it. A *Yes, you are my person*. The person you’re going to grow old beside. The person you want in your commune when the world goes to hell. The person who inherits the solemn duty of deleting your internet history when you die.

That person.

I knew it would be Harrie the moment I met her.

So, for our graduation present to ourselves, we planned a road trip up the East Coast, hitting a few national parks, museums, and a haunted bed-and-breakfast or two, and ending in the place that had brought us together: Lilymoor House and Gardens in Odette, Maine.

Lilymoor sat on the cliffs edge facing the sea, like it had been waiting all this time for us. It was a gentle house the color of bleached driftwood, with rounded architecture and a myriad of wide windows and sparrows clustered in the eaves. It looked otherworldly, some bygone ship captain's house right out of a storybook, from its sweeping front porch to its lovely moss-colored front door to the additions cobbled together with dredged bits of half-built ships—portholes and sea-crusted hulls, colorful buoys hanging from the doorway and from the rooftop like memories left out to warm in the sun. One side of the house was sheathed in brown shingles; the other was built up into an A-frame roof. The manor was mismatched, like two warring pairs of socks.

It was perfect.

The house and gardens attracted people from all around the world. Like the Jardins de Quatre-Vents in Quebec, it was privately owned and curated, and like the Butchart Gardens in British Columbia, it offered a kaleidoscope of flowers rarely grown so far north.

The road curled up to the front steps and then looped around a beautiful marbled fountain in a roundabout, where we'd eased to a stop so Harrie could snap another photo, before I parked us in the small parking lot, and we got out.

Admittedly, I was a little slow to unbuckle my seat belt, a little slower to open my Jeep door. This was the last stop on our road trip, but I didn't want it to end yet.

In a month, Harrie would go off to grad school at UCLA and I would take an internship at the New York Botanical Garden. We'd be on opposite sides of the country soon, and though I didn't say it aloud, I hated the idea of it. Not because I was afraid we wouldn't be friends anymore when we weren't in

the same place, but because what if something happened? I was so used to her buying the milk when we ran out, and me paying the rent on time whenever she was too deep in her studies to remember. I counted on the smell of freshly baked cookies every Thursday, and falling onto the couch with her and a box of wine to watch *The Bachelor* after a particularly awful date.

But I knew that couldn't last forever.

So I wanted to go slow. I wanted to stretch out this afternoon as long as possible, but Harrie could barely contain her excitement.

"Come on, come *on*! We're wasting time," she said, looping her arm through mine, and pulled me up the steps to the moss-colored front door, and inside. Lilymoor was open and free to the public—it always had been—but it was emptier than I expected.

For the next three hours we got ourselves lost in the beautiful manor and its wildflowers and mazelike hedges and native trees. The gardens were so serpentine that the world disappeared the moment you turned a corner. I couldn't tell you how the garden was laid out because it felt like between one step and another, you were always somewhere different. It constantly shifted from meadowy woodlands to pristine box-woods to lattice walls of wild roses beside a bubbling brook that seemed to dip in and out of almost every scene like a wellknown visitor.

"I can see why people think they can hear a voice," I remarked as we moved through the Hedges, a hedge maze on the eastern side of the manor. "The wind coming up from those cliffs is *loud*."

As I said it, another gust howled through the boxwood hedges, causing two birds to startle and take flight into the late evening sky. It must have been close to seven-thirty—Lilymoor closed at sunset, so we had another hour at most. I dreaded it more and more.

Harrie glanced over her shoulder at me. "You don't believe it could be real?"

I shrugged. "It's been debunked, like, at least a dozen times."

"You can at least *pretend* to not be a skeptic."