Two Wars and a Wedding



A NOVEL

Lauren Willig



WILLIAM MORROW

An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers

This book is a work of fiction. References to real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales are intended only to provide a sense of authenticity, and are used fictitiously. All other characters, and all incidents and dialogue, are drawn from the author's imagination and are not to be construed as real.

Two wars and a wedding. Copyright © 2023 by Lauren Willig. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, address HarperCollins Publishers, 195 Broadway, New York, NY 10007.

HarperCollins books may be purchased for educational, business, or sales promotional use. For information, please email the Special Markets Department at SPsales@harpercollins.com.

FIRST EDITION

Designed by Nancy Singer Map by Jeffrey L. Ward

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Willig, Lauren, author.

Title: Two wars and a wedding: a novel / Lauren Willig.

Description: First Edition. | New York: William Morrow, [2023]

Identifiers: LCCN 2022016132 | ISBN 9780062986184

(hardcover) | ISBN 9780062986207 (ebook)

Subjects: LCGFT: Novels.

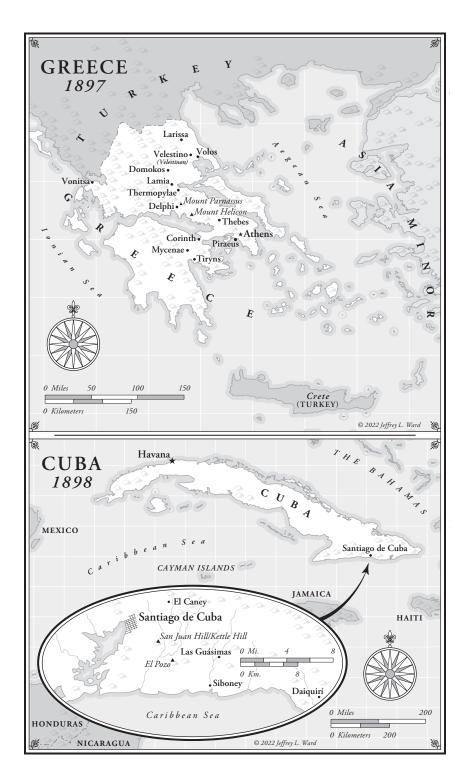
Classification: LCC PS3623.I575 T96

2023 | DDC 813/.6-dc23

LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022016132

ISBN 978-0-06-298618-4

ScoutAutomatedPrintCode



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book was meant to be with you a great deal sooner than it was. In March 2020, I planned to plunge straight from finishing *Band of Sisters* into this story about the formative years of the founder of the Smith College Relief Unit. And then a pandemic happened.

I am so grateful to my amazing editor, Rachel Kahan, for offering a year's extension before it even occurred to me to ask for it. I am also grateful to my agent, Alexandra Machinist, for refusing to be deceived by my argument that of course I could write the book in four months while Zooming the six-year-old into virtual school and playing Peppas and dinos with the two-year-old and still get it in on deadline—or, you know, somewhere in the vicinity of deadline. Thank you for making me take that extension. Huge thanks to Rachel Kahan, Liate Stehlik, Ariana Sinclair, Tavia Kowalchuk, Danielle Bartlett, and the rest of the team at William Morrow for all your support, encouragement, and ingenuity in these strange times.

When the world shut down, so did the archives. Thank goodness for my own personal Angel of the Bibliography, my dear friend and super-librarian, Vicki Parsons. The bulging folders of material I used to recreate life in 1890s Athens, on the front in the Greco-Turkish War, in the Rough Riders' camps in Tampa, and in the field

with Clara Barton are entirely due to Vicki's research genius. Thank you for the sources, the book recs, the plot musings, and the hand-holding!

Huge thanks go to my sister, Brooke Willig, who—despite having a job of her own and a wedding to plan—responded to my plea of "Help! I can't make the revisions work!" by line-editing the entire manuscript. Equally huge thanks go to my parents, who, when we wound up in quarantine with my preschooler and in virtual school with my second grader, swooped us off to their house to give me time to work—which was only one of many, many swoops, without which this book would still be waiting to be revised and I would have had to come home two days into my last Team W book tour. Thank you, Mom and Dad!

This book took place on multiple continents in several languages. *Mille mercis* to Professor Jessica Sturm and @parisphrase for providing me with *le mot juste* when needed and ευχαριστώ to Aspasia Katerinis for answering my panicked questions about modern Greek idioms. Any mistakes are entirely the fault of the author—and possibly autocorrect.

A thousand thanks to my favorite medical consultant, Dr. Jonathan Romanyshyn, for the painstaking explanations of how gangrene actually works, the X-rays of a wide range of gunshot wounds, and the pictures of your toddler playing with a Teddy Roosevelt bobblehead.

Thank you to Nanci Young, Smith College Archivist; Mary Irwin, Smith College Libraries Development Officer; Lindsey Mc-Grath of Alumnae Relations; and everyone else at Smith College for opening your arms to this Smithie manqué (which sounds slightly better than "Smithie wannabe," but amounts to the same thing). Thanks go as well to the powerhouse founder of the Seven Sisters Alumnae Association, Smithie extraordinaire Jennifer Pollock Mc-

Nally: I so appreciate your support and the giant Seven Sisters coffee mug, which provided crucial caffeination for the writing of this book.

I am so grateful to my support network for always being just a text away. Thank you, Nancy Flynn, for long-distance snark, book recs, and best-friend telepathy; Claudia Brittenham, for epic walk 'n' whines; the Ladies' Caucus—Stella Choi-Roy, Christina Bost-Seaton, Debbie Bookstaber, and Lien Johnson—for being a lifeline of commiseration, All the Articles, and mutual cheerleading; and, of course, the Unibrain, Karen White and Beatriz Williams, without whom my phone would bing a great deal less often.

One of the hardest parts of being in perpetual quarantine with a small person was missing events with my writer friends. Thanks to Lynda Loigman for catch-up Zooms; Fiona Davis, Brenda Janowitz, and Alyson Richman for alfresco lunch; M.J. Rose for that lunch we keep trying to plan (and will eventually have!); and Deborah Goodrich Royce for twilight dinners and fascinating conversation. I owe special thanks to the author friends who generously joined me in hosting Pink Carnation Read Along Zooms. Sarah MacLean, Tasha Alexander, Eloisa James, Deanna Raybourn, Andrea Penrose, Donna Thorland, Francine Mathews/Stephanie Barron, Lynda Loigman, Beatriz, and Karen—you are the best. Ditto the wonderful Sarah Wendell, dowager duchess of the romance novel world, and Bea Koch, chatelaine of the Ripped Bodice.

I am so grateful to the booksellers and librarians who have worked so hard to pivot with the times and find new ways to bring authors and readers together. Whether online or in person, I can't thank you enough for all you do. If I tried to name names (FoxTale Book Shoppe, Poisoned Pen, Litchfield Books, Murder by the Book, Diane's Books . . .), this acknowledgments section would be longer than the book, but I want to send special hugs to my local, Shakespeare & Co. Lexington Avenue, for being my go-to for signed books

for virtual events *and* for keeping my preschooler supplied with Who Would Win books.

Thank you so much to the bloggers, bookfluencers, book gurus, and online book worlds that welcomed me both as a reader and a writer. Andrea Katz, Robin Kall, Kathie Bennett, Pamela Klinger-Horn, Ann-Marie Nieves, and Sharlene Moore, thank you for your wise counsel and boundless enthusiasm. I don't know what I would do without you! Huge hugs to the ladies of Bibliophile, esq. (special shout-out to Jackie Vavroch!) and Lawmas Who Make Shit Up. You are my home away from home.

This last thank-you is a big one: thank you to all of you reading this. Thank you to everyone who listened to or contributed questions for the weekly Wednesday Ask Me Anything; to everyone who joined in the epic year-long Pink Carnation Read Along; to everyone who emailed or commented on my website or posted on Facebook or liked a story on Instagram; and to everyone who ventured out in person when I made it out on the road this past summer. Thank you for joining me on all of these adventures. I can't tell you how much it means to me.