



Living in Secret

Jackie Ashenden

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She always tried to be good, but now he needs her to be bad...

Lawyers Connor and Victoria Blake had a high-powered marriage to match their meteoric careers—until a secret from Victoria's past came back to haunt her. A year after it all fell apart, Victoria is ready for a new job, a new town.

Instead of signing the divorce papers, though, her husband has a tempting proposal—one week of no holds barred before moving on with their lives. She's never stopped wanting him, but he's always kept the deepest part of himself locked away.

Connor already endured one brutal betrayal in his life, and Victoria's cut him to the core. But during a naughty game of one-upmanship with a sexy stranger, he sees a different woman, whose warmth and passion he craves like a drug.

In one week they expose dark passions that set them both free. But amidst searing desire that should fuse them together, Connor is coming to the brink of a decision to choose what's more important. The last secret he's holding inside, or the woman he can't let go.

Warning: Contains a man coming to terms with his inner darkness, a woman ready to match him kink for kink, secrets, lies, and a marriage getting its sexy back. Could take readers on a one-way ticket to WTF city.

Living in Secret Details

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Author : Jackie Ashenden

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From Reader Review Living in Secret for online ebook

Jdursi says

I've enjoyed this series from the start and when I read the club scene (don't worry you'll KNOW the one), I knew LIVING IN SECRET would be my favorite. I thought Victoria and Connor's story was unique and not one that I've encountered before. They've been separated for over a year and Victoria is ready to move on and is pressing Connor to sign the divorce paper before she leaves the country. He only agrees to sign them under one condition- she spend one week in his bed living out his fantasies. Like I said, this was my favorite and I would've easily rated it 5 stars if the early stage of their relationship was explored. I was left with a lot of unanswered questions because I don't even know why they got married. They didn't seem to know each other let alone like one another. IMO it would've brought a bit more to their story. I'm very curious to see what else Ms. Ashenden has up her sleeve and can't wait to jump into another series of hers.

Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews says

Slick's review posted on Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews

From the first book I read by author Jackie Ashenden I was impressed with the way she spun her story, her multi faceted characters, and the fact that she wasn't afraid to dive into topics that a lot of people tend to shy away from. Her writing is bold, her stories sometimes uncomfortable, and usually have me asking WTF multiple times while reading but I love that because romance isn't always pretty; in fact often it is messy and difficult and Ms. Ashenden is the master of writing messy and difficult. Living In Secret is the third book in this series and it is the best to date; a second chance story of two people on the brink of divorce who find themselves in an unusual situation and feeling things they have never felt before.

This is one of those books where the couple was all kinds of FUBAR; they married because neither one of them wanted someone who was going to get too close, they didn't share big things from their lives before they met, and when they had sex it was less than stellar with both of them holding back. On the outside they were this perfect power couple but at home they were two strangers living in the same house. Like I said FUBAR! When Victoria sees Connor in court one day she sees something in him that moves her and she wants him with a passion; a passion she doesn't want to share with him or admit to so she decides divorce is the only answer only Connor refuses to sign the papers until he gets one week with her for them to explore every naughty thing they've never shared.

I'm not going to lie these two have some issues they haven't dealt with and for some reason the pending divorce and Connor's refusal to sign the papers has them both pushing each other's buttons up to and including acting very out of the normal for the public personas they've both so carefully crafted. Watching them discover and see the real person underneath, stripping themselves bare both physically and emotionally, and opening up to each other in a way they never did during the six year marriage was sometimes difficult to watch and at other times a thing of beauty. The fantasies they shared and acted upon were amazingly hot, often out of control, and wonderfully revealing not only to the two of them but to the reader as well.

As they bare their souls and more it becomes evident that their feelings run way deeper than they ever thought possible sending Victoria running and making Connor more determined than ever for them to work on being together. Like I said, this isn't an easy romance and their sexy times are often angry but I believe

that stems from the passion they have both held inside so long for each other and the need they both have for control.

Emotionally charged, undeniably sexy, a wee bit kinky, and two people finally finding someone who loves them just the way they are makes *Living in Secret* one of author Jackie Ashenden's best books to date.

Review copy provided for an honest review.

Lisa says

Marriage in trouble trope is one of my fave tropes so of course I just *had* to read this first when I saw this series recommended on my TL, despite it being the third book.

Connor and Victoria were a power couple on paper, but off it they were basically strangers who were somehow bonded legally. I wonder how and why they even got married in the first place, since flashbacks into their marriage showed that they were merely cohabiting??? I would say theirs was a marriage of convenience but I didn't see what they were getting out of it.

Maybe it's explained in book 2, since I've read book 1 and it wasn't mentioned, but

ANYWAY,

turns out both of them had strong feelings and undeniable attraction for each other, and before parting ways with each other permanently they decided to have a week of goodbye romp fest (what actually happened is Connor won't sign the divorce papers unless Vic gave him a week of dirty sex, and Vic was huffing and puffing but agreed because she lowkey wanted him too).

The whole arrangement was kinda intense because there were a lot of unresolved issues between them, and both Connor and Vic were stubborn af (me reading: JUST TALK TO EACH OTHER U IDIOTSSSSS!!), but I super enjoyed the angsty rollercoaster ride.

Maria Rose says

In this scorching erotic romance, we are treated to the story of Connor and Victoria. They've been separated for a year and are on the verge of divorce but Connor can't make himself sign the papers, even though their marriage more of convenience than anything and harboring secrets that shattered their illusion of happiness isn't capable of being revived. But one night in the presence of his soon-to-be ex wife shatters his reserve when she shows up at a party as a sexy, sultry woman he doesn't recognize. And when she taunts him with another man, Connor's plans change. He wants one week of this woman, the one he's never seen before, and then he'll agree to the divorce. But once they've had a taste of the passion hidden from each other for so long, will they be able to go their separate ways?

If there is one thing I've come to expect from this author, it's that she has a no holds barred approach to pulling the reader in from the start and presenting them with a tense, emotional, erotic journey from the first page onward. Connor and Victoria are so not perfect for each other in the guises they presented in their

marriage, but now that it's almost over, their true selves are coming to the forefront and the sexual attraction they feel for each other as this happens threatens to overwhelm them both. Their first time together post separation happens with a third party, sexy handsome Raphael, who understands his role is to be an extra serving to buffer Connor and Victoria as they realize what they've been missing all this time. The sex scenes are explosive, sensual and harsh as they fall into roles they never would have when married. Connor gives as good as Victoria takes, though she ultimately has the power in the decision of staying or going at the end of the night, in their week long quest to get each other out of their systems and move on. They both have secrets that prevented them from fully engaging in their marriage but somehow, in this new and fragile peace they've established they have the trust finally needed to open their souls to each other thus establishing a new and so much better relationship than before. When their week of satiation is completed, the decision to move forward with the divorce or back into each other's arms is not taken lightly by either party, but suffice it to say the happy ending is worth the wait. This is one of those stories that will keep you engaged into the wee hours of the night and leave you fully satisfied and eagerly awaiting the next release from this author. 5 steamy and emotional stars!

Note: a copy of this novel was provided by the author for review.

Cocktails and Books says

LIVING IN SECRET is a provocative story about a married couple on the verge of divorce. Connor and Victoria have been married for five years and they separated a year ago. Now, Victoria is ready to move on and doesn't understand why Connor won't sign the divorce papers. Their marriage didn't work because they each have secrets and they weren't willing to share them with each other. They married for convenience not love because neither one of them wanted to get involved in an emotional relationship. They are successful attorneys driven with ambition and only passionate about their job. Once they separate, they start to question their marriage and themselves. They care about each other, but neither one of them willing to open up and share their feelings.

I feel sorry for Connor and Victoria. They each have painful pasts and they now must decide if they want to put an end to their marriage. Sadly, they are so afraid to show their emotions, they think it's easier to end their relationship, than share their pasts with each other.

Jackie Ashenden is a great storyteller and she writes a sexy, intense story. I wanted Connor and Victoria to have their happily ever after. They are too hard on themselves and have suffered enough. There are some hot, steamy scenes, filled with passion and some kink. They discover after five years of a passionless marriage, they like dirty talk and rough sex. Connor and Victoria must both open up and bare their souls if they want their marriage to work.

This is the third book in the Living In series and each one is a stand-alone.

Reviewed by Karen for Cocktails and Books

Britt Marczak says

So. Damn. GOOD. This whole series is fantastic. I didn't think it could get better, and THEN IT DID. I highly recommend this series, but especially this book. I wasn't sure how this couple was going to work together, but oh, did they. It also includes one of the hottest menage scenes I've read.

Jackie Ashenden is an auto-buy author for me, and you should find out why!

Shan ~ A ~ says

Veronica and Conner's story proves the adage about not knowing what goes on behind closed doors is true.

Not one of their friends had a clue what their marriage was really like, and these two never took the time to really get to know one another. The marriage was based on assumptions that they made about each other. The assumptions based on lies that they told themselves they wanted and needed in a partner.

After years of marriage and then a year long separation, the truth that they have each tried to hide comes barreling to the surface.

Those things that they have tried to hide come through with a BANG!.

This was a hot and sexy, second chance story. A story of a husband and wife falling in lust and love with one another of years of indifference.

Daisy says

IF you read nothing else, please read this series!!!!

Monica Cardoza says

*** 4.5 Stars ***

They both thought they married safe partners but in reality they both had secrets and they both wanted the passion that was in them.

This is the third installment in the Living In series and we finally get to know the two lawyer friends to Kahu and Eleanor. We know from the prior book that they two have been having problems in their marriage but in their story the author goes in depth to those issues. They both believed that they married a safe partner a partner that they would not actually love only that's not true at all.

Conner and Victoria Blake are both lawyers and they both have big secrets that will test their will. They have been married for about 5 years but what was interesting about their marriage was that it seemed that they were not really married. They had not been sleeping in the same room then when Conner made it known that he hadn't ever woken up to his wife naked beside him I felt sorry for both of them. When Conner told his story I felt so sorry for him and the worst part was that he actually thought his father loved him and that was why he was abusive to him. Victoria's secret about having a daughter is what separated them and now she

wanted a divorce but I didn't know if she actually wanted one. I believed she wanted for Conner not to let her go but he didn't stop her from leaving him and I think that hurt her. Now she is done she wants the divorce papers signed because she is ready to move on with her life but Conner will not sign those papers. But something that Kahu and Eleanor say to each of them makes Conner think about something he has a proposition for Victoria just one week for him to be the person he is and not hold back. Only they never would have thought that they would end up falling in love with each other. Conner believed he was tainted and when his secret came out he expected a different reaction. Now he knows that he can't let her go but now it's Victoria that ends up leaving him but will he let her walk away this time without a fight.

Living in Secret was a very passionate, intense story that I enjoyed immensely. This was a story that was filled with passion and erotic scenes that were well written. I love the idea that this story was about a mad couple going through a rough patch in their marriage and all they had to do was be open about what they wanted. They are going to have to talk about their feelings and especially talk about their past in order for them to be happy. They are going to have a journey in which they will experience pain, they are going to open up old wounds but in the end they will end up healing each other. What was a loveless marriage can end up being a loving, passionate marriage in which they both get what they want but most of all they will love each other whole heartily.

I totally recommend this read!!

Received ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an Honest Review

Sara says

Really enjoyed the rekindling of a marriage.

Callie says

This book is the third in a set that she has. In it, we have Connor Blake. He's a lawyer and pretty much at the top of the playing field. Rich, gorgeous, broody. What more could you want? Well. His soon-to-be Ex-Wife (if he'd just sign the damn papers) Victoria Blake could probably make you a list a mile long.

I loved Victoria. She wasn't perfect and was pretty hard on herself for things that had happened in her past...but she was pretty strong and knew she didn't need to be taken care of. She could take care of herself.

Connor. Oh, Connor. Some of the time I wanted to strangle him. Some of the time I wanted to hug him. Then there were the other times that I just wanted him. Like Vic, he has his own demons from his past that are affecting his present day life, and if he's not careful...his future.

Their relationship was crazy amazing. It started off very cold. Their marriage was basically a business transaction, and Vic decided she'd had enough. Well. That and her secret finally came to light. Connor, the ass, decides that he's not going to sign the divorce papers until Victoria spends one more week with him, so he can get his fill.

Why do men always think that they can work a woman out of their systems? Silly men. That's not how it works.

Once the week starts, that's when things really get heated. You might want to have some ice water when reading this. Seriously. I wish that I'd had some ice water when I read the book. Anyway. Things get seriously hot and seriously interesting.

Secrets from both of them become unburied and both Vic and Connor must deal with the discovery that neither of them are perfect. And they both have to realize that even though they'd been married for several years... they didn't know each other. Not really.

This was such an amazing book. I loved it so much, I went out and bought the book that came out before this one! I definitely give this one a 10/10. I'd rate it higher if I could.

I was given a free copy of this book in return for an honest review. All thoughts are my own. I was not paid by the publisher or the author for my review.

Emily (Mrs B's Books) says

****Copy Provided by Netgalley and Samhain Publishing for an honest review****

This is the best book of the series by quite a long run.

I think it helps that this couple are currently still married but were in a loveless, marriage of convenience that worked for what they thought they wanted out of life.

After a year separation initialed by Victoria, she has now asked for a divorce however Connor is not yet ready to give up on their marriage.

Both are holding secrets close to their hearts, and after a clash of wills and in noticing that there is a lot more of the other hidden between the surface, Conner suggests a week of no holds barred sex before he will sign the divorce papers.

Neither expect to share their secrets, let alone for the feelings that pop up to get in the way and for things to get more complicated. There are many layers to their story that come out and as these are stripped away you just know that they are perfect for each other.

We get to see a little bit of Eleanor and Kahu with Lily in this book, but it mostly just focuses on our main characters, however a new character is also introduced, Kahu's friend that wishes to buy the club.

Really glad that I got a chance to read this book.

Michelle says

Living in Secret is the third installment of the Living In Series by Jackie Ashenden and it brings us Conner &

Veronica's story.

Both Connor and Veronica practice law, after a few years of marriage Veronica wanted out. After a yearlong separation, Connor still refuses to sign the divorce papers, but yet allowed her to walk away. A loveless and passionless marriage held them captive for years, but now that they are on the brink of freedom, a desire is burning deep. Things fell apart when Connor learned a secret that Veronica kept for eighteen years, but she isn't the only one hiding something.

In order to get the divorce that Veronica so desperately wants, she agrees to a one week arrangement with Connor. A chance for him to finally have in all the ways they both refused for so long. But giving in to their desires strips them of their masks and for the first time their secrets are exposed. Conservative, put together, restraint... these labels no longer exist as they give into their fantasies.

I have to say I was not too sure about this one. The prior two were okay reads, nothing that really blew me away – but this one ended up being the best of the series. I loved it. I loved the dynamic of these two – the concept of a separated couple finding their way back to one another. Not just a couple that drifted apart, but a couple that originally sought each other out for the safety of marriage without love, without the risk of being hurt – without the risk of making choices that would destroy the other person. A second chance romance with a twist.

I was trying to piece together just how these two ended up married in the first place, but as they reveal their secrets, it becomes obvious. The author did a great job showing you this rather than just laying all the cards on the table right away.

Once Connor gives into his desires, he becomes a dirty-talking alpha-male. The control and way he took Veronica was off the charts hot. I think the fact that these two shared years in a marriage that lacked any passion made this all feel a bit hotter.

The ending wrapped up a little quickly, but I was okay with that. It allowed the time they spent during their arrangement to last longer and be more detailed. I almost didn't pick this up when the opportunity for an ARC came up. I am very glad I didn't give up on this series and if Raphael is up in the next book, I won't even hesitate to start that one.

MaggieReadsRom says

Reading this book was a case of premature reading. Let me explain: after reading book 2 in this trilogy, I had planned to read a must-read-as-soon-as-it-releases book and an ARC of a series I love next and then I would continue my Australasia authors-binge reading with this Jackie Ashenden book. And then she said the magic words on Twitter: *dirty* and *threesome*. These words separately are very tempting for me as a reader but combined they are my kryptonite. I continued to read the must-read book as I had already started it but my inner dirty ménage hussy kept nagging me to stop and just read LIVING IN SECRET. I could not give into that but did decide that the ARC was going to have to wait because I just HAD to read LIVING IN SECRET asap!

I finished the must-read book as soon as I could and was all giddy when I started LIVING IN SECRET,

bring on the dirty...bring on the threesome Ms Ashenden!

Complicated! Beautifully complicated that is what Jackie Ashenden's characters are. When you read in the blurb that the book is about an estranged couple on the verge of a divorce you know it's not going to be an easy book but I just have to admire the way Ashenden wrote these characters. With layers and layers for me to peel so I could get to the core of them. I just loved that!

At the risk of sounding repetitive but I love how Ashenden reveals stuff gradually in her books (at least in the books of this trilogy). You know there's more than the characters are telling you as a reader and very slowly she reveals this "more". This accounts greatly for why I love her books I think. It keeps me engaged and it keeps me reading on because I want to know what it is that is not being told at that very moment.

Of course it also doesn't hurt that these books, and *LIVING IN SECRET* was no exception, are hot as hell and right up my dirty alley. That first sexy scene, at Kahu's farewell party...OMG! I think I forgot how to breathe at some point. I get shivery just thinking about it. It was so sexy, so powerful and so dirty. That scene made me fall for Connor...hard and cemented my fangirlship for Jackie Ashenden. I like my romances emotional and hot. Throw in dirty and threesome and make me cry and sob with emotions and I'm done for. *LIVING IN SECRET* is definitely a 2015 favorite as it had EVERYTHING I love to read and more!

Favorite Quote:

Anger morphed into fury. Because he could feel his hunger for her shaking the bars of the cage he'd put it in, desperate for release. It didn't want to ask her questions. It wanted her down on the floor beneath him, that dress ripped and her legs wrapped around his waist, those heels digging into his back.

Toula says

Love love this author

This is more than 5 stars. A married couple Connor and Victoria split after 5 yrs of Marriage. Connor comes home to a letter that is addressed to his wife Victoria. He sees it's a letter from the girl she has had out of wedlock. He asks questions, Victoria doesn't answer them. She says she's leaving and that is it with their marriage. He lets her leave. They also said after a yr separation they will get a divorce. A yr goes by and Connor gets the papers and doesn't sign them. He lets them sit for weeks on his desk. Connor is a high ranking attorney in Auckland. After a few weeks Victoria gets fed up and goes barging in on Connor but she uses an excuse. They have it out and Connor says he will never sign the papers. Victoria says he has to she got a job offer from London and she needs to clean up any loose ends. She storms out and tries to find a way to get back at Connor. Little does she know that Connor is hiding a secret also. That is why he seems cold. Since Connor is always cold in the marriage. (bed and everything actually he is very controlled and frigid) (they both are) no emotions. The next day Connor is at his best friend's club. His friend is going to sell it and move to Sydney. The friend tells Connor to get something from Victoria if she really wants the divorce. Use her!!! Victoria's friend tells her to use Connor also. Use him and get him mad so he can't wait to sign the papers. The night of the party Victoria shows up at the restaurant/club with a slinky red dress with a slit right up to her hip. Of course the dress needs to be Bare no panties. She goes in and Connor can't believe it's her. He's left flat on the floor with what he doesn't want. Victoria hits on a gentleman that might buy the club (Raphael). She uses Raphael to get back at Connor and get him mad. They go up to the floor where Connor is and they sit at a booth and they play with each other. Victoria loves how mad and out of control Connor is becoming. Connor can't take any more so he tells everyone to get the hell out of the room. After that he

goes over and questions Victoria asking her how far was she going to go with Raphael. After barbs back and forth Connor asks her was she going to go all the way with Raphael. She thinks he will back down so she says "Yes" she asks Raphael if he has a something to keep her safe with him. Connor vs starts directing Raphael and Connor let's Raphael go all the way with Victoria. Connor wants Victoria to use that word. He also starts to make Victoria feel small and after that he can't believe what he did. The next day when they talk Connor says he will sign the divorce papers when they have a week of hot passionate Love. Anyway anyhow anywhere Connor wants VVictoria. Little does victoria know that Connor also has a big secret . That is why he has the tattoo of the sword on his back. He tells her the story of his family and how he killed his father. And why he is soo cold and unfeeling. The next day he wants to work things out with Victoria but she leaves him and walks out the front door. Connor tells Victoria every time she's afraid that is what she does , she runs the next day . He shows up at her office and says if she goes to London he's going also. After a few days she's having lunch with her best friend and she looks like s***. But the book to find out do Connor and Victoria make up. Does Victoria sees her girl. Does she move to London. Does Connor follow her
