

## POWERPOINT PRESENTATION SLIDE NARRATION (TO ACCOMPANY SLIDE SHOW)

### *The Last Garden in England*

By Julia Kelly

#### Longwood Gardens Community Read, March-May 2024

**Slide 1:** [Title Slide]

**Slide 2:** We are so happy to have you join us for the Longwood Gardens Community Read. *The Last Garden in England* by Julia Kelly is Longwood's first historical fiction Community Read pick. The lovely gardens of Highbury House and the characters that are brought to life so vividly by Julia Kelly on the pages of the book were inspired by some real-life places and people.

**Slide 3:** In the author's note in *The Last Garden in England*, Julia Kelly cites three specific influences: Upton House and Gardens in Warwickshire designed by Kitty Lloyd Jones, famous British garden designer Gertrude Jekyll and other women garden designers, and Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire, designed by Lawrence Johnston.

**Slide 4:** Upton House and Gardens in central England was purchased by Lord and Lady Bearsted in 1927. They wanted to redesign the gardens for leisure and pleasure and hired Kitty Lloyd Jones.

**Slide 5:** According to the National Trust's website, Kitty Lloyd Jones earned a diploma in Practical Gardening from the Royal Botanical Society, later becoming one of the first women to earn a degree in horticulture from Reading University in 1924. At first, she found it difficult to obtain work, but gradually acquired wealthy clients. The Bearsteds entrusted her to convert their home's working gardens into a place of beauty.

**Slide 6:** Gertrude Jekyll designed over 400 British, American and European gardens in her lifetime, and her influence is still felt today. She was also a prolific writer of both books and articles about gardening. According to her estate's website, she believed that gardens should reveal "unexpected views and pictorial surprises" and she favored "freedom in planting and a wider choice of plants, to give a picturesque and natural appearance."

**Slide 7:** Gertrude Jekyll often worked with architect Edwin Lutyens. She contributed this scenic walled garden to his redesign of Lindisfarne Castle on Holy Island off the northeast coast of England.

**Slide 8:** Completed in 1910, this garden was designed by Gertrude Jekyll for her cousin. A large rose garden in the shape of two halves of a diamond is edged with Munstead lavender and there is a long herbaceous border in the cottage garden style with Jekyll's signature color blends.



**Slide 9:** Author Julia Kelly cites a visit to Hidcote Manor Garden as the inspiration for the garden rooms at Highbury House. She even wrote the real-life owner and designer of the gardens, Lawrence Johnston, as a character in the story.

**Slide 10:** On page 125 of *The Last Garden in England*, we find this passage about Venetia and Matthew's visit to Mr. Johnston's garden:

"What you're building here is beautiful,' I said.  
'It is quite the change from before. Hidcote had a small garden, but what you see was mostly field,' said Mr. Johnston as we began to walk back in the direction of the house. 'One day, I hope this area will be a wilderness of sorts. All carefully planned, of course,' he added with a smile.  
'Creating a fantasy of nature is part of the gardener's role,' I said."

**Slide 11:** The lovely red borders at Hidcote sparked Julia Kelly's imagination and enabled her to picture what Highbury's gardens could be.

**Slide 12:** There is a plethora of wonderfully creative and talented women garden designers, many of whom are also writers. Check out the list of recommended resources provided by Longwood for some suggestions.

**Slide 13:** Longwood Gardens commissioned renowned landscape architect and California native Isabelle Greene to create the Silver Garden, a modernist display of plants native to Mediterranean and desert climates.

**Slide 14:** Longwood Gardens today could not operate without their many talented women growers, gardeners, designers, students, scientists, educators, and leaders.

