



## The Summer House

*Mary Nichols*

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## **The Summer House** Mary Nichols

England 1918. Lady Helen believes her parents when they say she will never find a better husband than Richard, but when he returns to the Front, she begins to wonder just who it is she has married. His letters home are cold and distant and Helen realizes that she has made a terrible mistake. Then Oliver Donovan enters her life and they begin an affair that leaves Helen pregnant and alone she is forced to surrender her precious baby. Over twenty years pass and a second war is ravaging Europe, but that is not the only echo of the past to haunt the present. Laura Drummond is caught in a tragic love affair of her own and when she is forced to leave London during the Blitz, she turns to the mother she never knew. REVIEWS "Mary Nichols is a prolific and popular novelist and from this latest offering it is easy to see why. She writes in a lively and engaging style and knows exactly how to spin a darn good tale. The Summer House is a lovely slice of life saga which uses its dual First and Second World War backdrops to the full. Her characters are rather appealing, and even the various bit parts are well fleshed out. All in all a very good read." Historical Novels Review"

## **The Summer House Details**

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Author : Mary Nichols

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## **From Reader Review The Summer House for online ebook**

### **Carley Cesare says**

Thoroughly enjoyed this book, found it hard to put down.

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### **Hannah Fielding says**

This book spans the two world wars, and tells a story of love and loss, of the ties of family, of the sheer desperation of ordinary people caught up in war and of the good old British stiff-upper-lip mentality.

This period of history is fascinating to me because of the way people held on tight to everything and everyone they loved, in spite of the awful things that were happening around them. Whilst mainly based in rural Norfolk and London, the book takes you through the London bombings, farmers working with Land Girls while their sons fought the war, RAF pilots fighting the Luftwaffe and bombing Germany, naval officers at sea, and wartime patients and nurses in military hospitals. It ties these all together with a powerful sense of the importance of family and what it meant to be a parent, especially a mother, during these wars – whilst dealing with the astonishing lies and secrets that often bind families together. It includes some heartbreakingly wonderful love stories of the time.

The book centres on the stories of three amazingly strong women – Helen, Anne and Laura. One forced to give up her baby – the result of a wartime love affair – to save the face of her parents; one bringing up her child alone after her husband died; the other who, caught up in a whirlwind of tragedy and mystery (secrets which unite the three women), suddenly finds herself pregnant and alone. But I also enjoyed reading about Steve, a lovable, kind and brave RAF pilot, who was probably my favourite character in the book. Steve is almost completely oblivious to the emotional rollercoaster each of these women was travelling until nearly the end of the book, but I love his description of his flights and admire his bravery on his journey through the war.

This story is written through the eyes of many different characters, each describing their own reality of the wars, their love and their family. It transports you to this time of uncertainty, and to generation of people with somewhat different values and beliefs from modern-day Britain. It is well researched, and is unashamedly emotional, passionate, and proud. A lovely, heart-warming read with a satisfyingly happy ending – but for those sensitive types among us, a box of tissues is a must!

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### **Amanda Milburn says**

A very enjoyable family saga set in the 1940s. My only pet hate is that all the "goodies" speak in RP yet all the "baddies" have regional accents. Having an accent doesn't make you a bad person!

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### **Anne says**

OK, this one wasn't a challenge - but read it as an absorbing family saga with good WW2 detail, and you'll love it as I did. I found it quite unputdownable... lovely book.

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### **Kimberley says**

Loved it. The book spans both World Wars and is a wonderful story of love and loss. The author keeps your attention throughout. A real easy, lovely read.

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### **Kate Allan says**

Really good page-turner of a story with plenty of surprises amid the family drama. Very much recommended if you like family stories where secrets impact the next generation.

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### **Lilias Bennie says**

I like a story that mixes the past with the present with a mystery unfolding which is why I bought this book. It does that and started off well with Helen falling pregnant and having to give her baby away in order to save herself from disgrace and her marriage (baby not being husband's). So there we have it, what would happen to her child and would they be reunited. So you follow the story of Helen and also her child growing up. All good so far. Their worlds collide again but the secret remains. At this point the story went a bit astray for me and apart from being drawn out a bit was also too Mills and Boon for my liking. The ending was also a bit weak. Overall though, its a good enough quick read if you don't want anything too taxing but others have managed to weave a more intriguing tale.

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### **Anne Harvey says**

Set in WWII, Nurse Laura Drummond thinks her world has come to an end when her fiance' Rob's plane is brought down on their wedding day but, with a child on the way, she is forced to face the future. Living with her widowed mother, Ann, in London under the Blitz is another hazard to be faced but when her mother has to have a serious operation, a mysterious 'friend' from Ann's past, Helen Barstairs, invites Laura to stay in her large mansion in a Norfolk village. Following her mother's untimely death, Helen suggests that Laura and her baby son stay on to help run a convalescent home for injured airmen, many of them disfigured by horrific burns. One of the people who has helped Laura to cope with life is Rob's best friend, Steve, and she is surprised to discover that his family is from the same Norfolk village. As the war progresses and Laura and Steve find a relationship developing, the arrival of a Canadian serviceman in the area proves to be a catalyst for change and forces Helen to face up to the past. Mary Nichols's characterisation, setting and research is always spot on. Her characters are always likeable and down-to-earth and, once again, this is a warm-hearted, life-affirming book.

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## **Lisa says**

Enjoyed reading this book but the story was nothing new or different for this genre. The blitz, fighter pilots, burns victims, village gossip and illegitimate children have all been done before. Despite the predictability of the story, the characters were good and it was a good detailed historical fiction story around the two world wars.

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## **Lizzie says**

Not a bad book, a teary ww2 drama/love story.

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## **Dawn Vanstone says**

Really enjoyed this book, a good story with lots of twists and turns, lots of different characters all relevant to the story in some way. Linked to both world wars and connects people and places to the main characters.

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## **Cleo Bannister says**

This is a cosy read telling the story of three women whose lives are connected despite coming from different backgrounds. Helen is married to an officer Richard but fears she has made a mistake meanwhile Anne is pregnant with her husband away fighting in the First World War, this is the start of the story but the main part of the book is set during the Blitz with Laura nursing soldiers with burn injuries.

The historical details were vividly written giving the reader a picture of what life was like during wartime Britain. Be warned there are more than a few tear-jerking moments as the women have to come to terms with the decisions they made. This is a family saga with the 'surprises' easy to spot but the story carries itself well and I found it an enjoyable read.

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## **Sue says**

Lady Helen, whose husband is away in the war in 1918, starts an affair which leaves her pregnant. She's whisked away to stay with an aunt, and has the baby forcibly removed for adoption. The baby's father does not stay in touch, and when her husband does not return from the war she remains single, hurting and longing for love.

Most of the book takes place over twenty years later, during World War II and features Laura, who has been brought up by loving parents, and works as a nurse. She is about to be married... then something happens which changes her life forever.

Gradually the connection becomes clear, the past unfolds, and the remainder of the book is about healing,

love, and acceptance. Set with the backdrop of the war, it's nonetheless a gentle, character-driven novel with some very moving sections at the end.

Recommended.

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### **Kim says**

This book was a wonderful find. I think I must have chosen this purely on it's title and the story was a complete surprise. It was set around the 2 World Wars and the entwined lives. I loved how the book revealed it's secrets and enjoyed all the characters.

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### **Karen says**

Absolutely brilliant, I really enjoyed this book, and I am now wanting more of this author.

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