



The Secret Keeper by Kate Morton

About the author:

Kate Morton, a native Australian, holds degrees in dramatic art and English literature. She lives with her family in Brisbane, Australia.

Source: Simon & Schuster (<http://www.simonandschuster.ca/>)

About this book:

During a picnic at her family's farm in the English countryside, sixteen-year-old Laurel Nicolson witnesses a shocking crime, a crime that challenges everything she knows about her adored mother, Dorothy. Now, fifty years later, Laurel and her sisters are meeting at the farm to celebrate Dorothy's ninetieth birthday. Realizing that this is her last chance to discover the truth about that long-ago day, Laurel searches for answers that can only be found in Dorothy's past. Clue by clue, she traces a secret history of three strangers from vastly different worlds thrown together in war-torn London—Dorothy, Vivien, and Jimmy—whose lives are forever after entwined. A gripping story of deception and passion, *The Secret Keeper* will keep you enthralled to the last page.

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Discussion Questions:

1. Each of Kate Morton's four novels are securely anchored in their strong sense of time and place. In *The Secret Keeper*, World War II is a rich and realistic environment—close enough for memory but a long way from our twenty-first century lives—which allows the author to show both the frailty and courage of human nature. Discuss.

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2. The rusted-on loyalties of family members to each other are key in this novel. Do you think Dolly's feelings of unease about her own family contribute to her love of playing make-believe?

3. Laurel had never thought to ask her mother about her life before Dorothy met Stephen Nicolson. And it's impossible for Dolly to imagine Lady Caldicott being young and beautiful wearing those glorious dresses now going musty in the dressing room. And Jimmy's dad loves to tell his stories of the past. How is ageing portrayed in *The Secret Keeper*?

4. Many readers have commented on how extremely likeable Jimmy is—how has Kate Morton developed his character to make him so?

5. Do you think that *The Secret Keeper's* characters live the lives they deserve? Were you satisfied and surprised at their various outcomes and their influences on each other?

6. Once you understood Dorothy's reasons for committing that violent action at the end of chapter one, did you find any moral ambiguity in her behaviour? Did she really have a choice?

7. Everyone has their secrets. *The Secret Keeper*, some more than others! Do you think Laurel is justified in upturning her mother's carefully laid secrets? When is keeping a secret within a family justified?

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- Audiobook (on CD)
- eBook

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