

A- 27 July 2013 The Secret Keeper – Kate Morton

The Secret Keeper is not a metaphor. There is a doozy of a secret and it's kept for 70 years.

At 16, Laurel Nicolson is a typical teenager in 1961 England. Everything changed one summer day when she witnessed a brutal murder. In a shocking display of violence, Laurel's mother, Dorothy, stabbed a stranger with no provocation or hesitation. The police deduced, based on Laurel's account of the attack, that Dorothy Nicolson defended herself when attacked by a stranger. Case closed.

The novel jumps around in time, with most of the story alternating between 1941 and 2011. Laurel's mother Dorothy (Dolly) is the perfect English housewife in 1961. Dorothy seldom spoke of the war since her family was all killed during the Coventry raid and Dolly endured the daily bombings of the Blitz.

By 2011, 90 year old Dorothy's health and mind are failing and Laurel begins to wonder what happened to Dorothy that provoked such a violent attack on Henry Jenkins. Laurel lied to the police when she gave them her statement. Dorothy knew Henry. How? Why after 20 years did he suddenly turn up in her life?

Using the internet, a few clues from her mother and a copy of the play Peter Pan, Laurel learns of Dolly's London Blitz life and the people and events that lead to that day in 1961. It's an engrossing read but not quite as original as other stories that takes place during the same era. Since this book is in part a mystery, Kate Morton does an excellent job of providing the audience with enough clues to figure out the secret but does not flood the reader with a lot of confusing or frustrating misinformation.

I did figure out the big secret about half way through the book but that did not spoil the story, as I wanted to know why preserving the secret was worth killing a man?

Kate Morton has a formula for her books and so far this formula has worked with all of her novels. Her novels are always part romance, part mystery, part horrible family secret. She is

talented enough to weave it all together using flashbacks without each book being a copy of the previous book.