



Lola's Secret

Monica McInerney

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Magic can happen in every family

At the Valley View Motel in South Australia's picturesque Clare Valley, eighty-four-year-old Lola Quinlan is up to her usual mischief. She's sent her family away for Christmas and invited a number of mystery guests to come and stay. But who are all these people, and why aren't they spending the festive season with their own loved ones?

As the big day draws closer and Lola's personal family dramas threaten to unravel her plans, she discovers that at a special time of year, magic can happen in every family – especially your own.

From the bestselling author of *At Home with the Templetons* comes a funny, sad and moving novel about memories and moments and the very meaning of life.

Lola's Secret Details

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Author : Monica McInerney

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From Reader Review Lola's Secret for online ebook

Vickie Richens says

I enjoyd this book, love the main character, would like to read more about her

Dale Harcombe says

Three and a half stars.

I am a huge fan of Monica McInerney's books. While I enjoyed this one it didn't appeal to as much as some of her others. Still it was an enjoyable read. It has that light McInerney touch while still managing to deal with topics like neglect, ageing, loneliness and even thoughts of suicide. Instead of spending Christmas with her family, Lola has plans to send them away while she is left to look after the motel they own and care for the guests she has coming. As you would expect, things don't always work out according to plan. Since it is largely about relationships, this book has moments of humour as well as of sadness.

Lola Quinlan is one of those characters who works well in a book but I'm not sure I'd like her in my own family, as she does have a tendency in the guise of looking after people and trying to help, to interfere. Yet she had a lot of really good qualities as well. Despite that I felt sorry for the daughter-in-law Geraldine and thought maybe Jim should have shown some gumption earlier in life. I liked how things were seen from Lola's point of view and it was not how it looked from Geraldine's. The reader gets to see a bit of both sides. I did like the setting in the Clare Valley of South Australia. This book was an entertaining read, but just not quite as much a favourite as some others.

Hannah says

I didn't enjoy this one as much as the first (The Alphabet Sisters. Monica McInerney). Something was lacking and I think that it was the sense of any real story. Not much actually happens...

Its all set up too, and then it doesn't. This is something that reoccurs throughout the book, as if the author has suddenly changed her mind and doesn't want to be predictable. I can't speak for you, but I know I don't read these novels for mystery and surprise. Part of the reason I enjoy them so much is their predictability.

I'm such a Monica McInerney fan, and I hate to write such a negative review (don't let this put you off the author generally!). But I just can't like this book. She had me hanging on the edge of my seat and then shot me down with disappointment. There were a lot of "Oh, well thats a shame" moments.

Its not as well written as other McInerney books, and isn't in the same style. McInerney is brilliant at telling a story from many perspectives, all at once and creating such long and beautiful winding tales. Lola's Secret, unfortunately, is not one of these.

Honestly, don't bother reading it.

Caitlin says

Having just finished 'The Alphabet Sisters' I almost immediately picked up 'Lola's Secret' - to find out more about the Quinlan family, especially more enlightenment about Lola's past.

I would highly recommend reading this after 'The Alphabet Sisters' as I am not sure whether some of the brief exposition to explain some of the previous issues (such as one sister winding up marrying the other's fiancé) is enough for it to make sense, or at least sound believable, to someone who hasn't read the first book.

Lola is the matriarch of the Quinlan family, somehow able to pull strings and make things work out (in that particularly serendipitous way things do in most chick-lit where jobs are easily picked up, people who fancy other people aren't disappointed and intense decades-long family rifts can be solved with a simple chat and some gesture.)

Being set around Christmas also might have got a few hackles up before even beginning - I can tolerate a certain amount of schmaltz, but sometimes this was a bit too much.

I was a little disappointed some storylines weren't followed - but I kind of also appreciated them not going ahead with "And then Lola solved it all". The book follows very much what happens next with the Quinlan family, where I'd hoped the book would actually retell what happened before (as a big secret was revealed at the end of 'The Alphabet Sisters' and the title of the book led me to conclusions) - but it was still good.

I also appreciate that the character of Geraldine, daughter-in-law to Lola and mother of the three Quinlan sisters, was redeemed in some ways - or at least given a second dimension. I didn't like her as a caricature in the first book.

I also liked Lola just telling people to go solve their own problems - the whole fairy godmother thing was a bit too perfect.

The reason I was kind of looking forward to spending some time with Lola (and the conclusion of various things in the first book) was I found the characters of Bett and Carrie grating. Unfortunately, they're still there, still whining and still fighting. Urgh.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed the book and devoured it in a short period of time, wanting to know what happens next - and it makes for very good cosy holiday reading. However, I do need to balance it with something that has a bit more depth.

Suzanne says

This book was a sweet little read, feisty Lola was at it again, busy scheming for all good things and had her finger in every nook and cranny as always. A much lighter read than The Alphabet Sisters, but I really don't like comparing books as they all serve their own purpose, and are their own entity. Monica McInerney is a great writer, so easy to read and enjoy. Aussie themes that are very current appear here, the pressures on Australian mum's to have it all, work life balance etc etc. The idea of the 'Baby Squad' was a tad unrealistic - or was that because I'm jealous and want one of my own?! I did enjoy reading about the runnings of the hotel in a picturesque Aussie location, loved some characters, others not so much.. Geraldine I mean you.

A light hearted read that will appeal to readers who like things tidy, things wrapped up quite neatly on this one. An enjoyable read that I liked, not loved!

Charlie says

It's not often that I don't finish a book, but sadly Lola's Secret fell into this category for me. Here are a few reasons why I didn't push through to the end..

- * I am familiar with Monica McInerney's writing style - but based on synopsis, was willing to give her another try
- * Slow start due to multiple background depicts/set up of multiple characters mundane life details
- * Tedious, every day reality. A dull, daily life voyeurism.
- * Basically the same premise, different house
- * The boring side of the human condition

i read McInerney's At Home with the Templetons and had a similar experience. So why try another novel by the author? Well, I read the synopsis and thought perhaps I might like this book more than the previous one I read by the author. You never know, it could be and should be different, right? Why not give her a second try?

However, this was much of the same. A slow start that involves multiple mundane details about a variety of characters and their daily life, which leads them to gathering at the same place, a B&B. Yes, this could be an interesting premise, but McInerney rather focus on less than intriguing details that bond people, rather than weave an interesting complexity. Sure, I can appreciate the true to life approach - but, it doesn't necessarily make for interesting or entertaining reading.

I suppose this ultimately comes down to why the reader is reading a book in the first place. What do you wish to get out of it? For me, it's not simply to get a glimpse into another way of life (despite the details), but to find a connection and be entertained. Although, I could connect with the characters, their lives did not entertain in a way of escaping from my own ordinary life. Even though these people gather, not much happens beside introspective reflection and general analyzing of the human condition.

Now, if you enjoy pondering the more mundane aspects of the human condition, you'll probably like McInerney's writing style and novel premise. It just doesn't appeal to me. I can appreciate it, but rather not invest too much of my reading time taking this journey. Since I already gave full attention to a previous novel by this author, once I saw this was more of the same (with different gathering characters), I determined to put it aside.

Marg says

A long time ago, back in my pre-blogging days (yes, that long ago) I picked up a book called The Alphabet Sisters. One cold, rainy Sunday afternoon I thought I would just read for a while. I was curled up on the couch, near the heater with a cosy blanket and I just kept on turning the pages, one after another. I laughed

and I cried (oh boy, did I cry). It was my first Monica McInerney book, but since then I have read a few more, and bought even more that I haven't yet read.

When I heard that Lola, the indomitable grandmother from The Alphabet Sisters was going to be the main character in this book I knew that I would have to read it. I bought it when I was spending the day up at Bendigo but since then it has sat on my shelf unread, until I saw that there was a blog tour- finally the encouragement I needed to actually get the book off the shelf and read it!

Lola Quinlan is looking forward to her family going away and leaving her to own devices this Christmas. She is not, however, going to be by herself. Instead she has placed an ad looking for guests to come to stay at the family motel for Christmas and Lola will use any means at her disposal to have people around her at this time of the year. You have to wonder why she doesn't want her family around, and also who are these people who will come to a small town in country Australia instead of being with their families.

To read more of my thoughts about this book head to

<http://www.theintrepidreader.com/2012...>

Sue says

This was a very enjoyable book to read. The storyline poked along full of subplots and was written in a light manner but managed to deal with serious issues without getting bogged down in nitty gritty details. The characters are well developed and I recognised people I know amongst them. I really liked the main character Lola, she was very witty and held her whole family together while at the same time dealing with her own personal issues. I loved the ending and how everything came together. In this story you will find love, loss, grief, ageing, friendship and personal and family relationships, everyday things that many of us experience. I absolutely loved reading this book, it was the first by this author I have read and I found it to be thought provoking, sometimes funny, and moving at times as well.

Perihan says

This is my second Monica McInerney book . I notice that , I like reading her stories and her people. I feel like I' m meeting real people when I read her books.

Stacey says

While anticipating and then enjoying 'Lola's Secret' I couldn't say I place it amongst my favorite of Monica's books. I adore this author beyond descriptive words (*there's just so much about her too love!*) but I found the book lacking that spark, that something that usually pulls me in. It may just be the fact that this book's main plot wasn't strictly based on romance etc. rather, it was from the interesting perspective of the

elderly Lola and her take on her life and those of the others around her.

There were romantic elements to the book, but I found that just as I was getting interested, they disappeared as quickly as they had appeared and that left me at a loose end as to how I felt at the ending of the book.

That being said, I found the fact that the narrator of the book was, indeed, in her twilight years; both refreshing and interesting and I enjoyed discovering things from her perspective and whilst I DID connect with her, maybe, I did not relate to her very well and that was a disappointing realisation for me.

Overall, I recommend this novel for a light read and especially if you're a fan of 'The Alphabet Sisters' and if you're as dedicated to this author as I, for much like her lead character Lola, Monica is truly one of a kind and unforgettable.

Tia Bach says

What I love about the world of books is the diversity of enjoyment. I can be on the edge of my seat, crying into my tissue, sleeping with a light on, laughing out loud, or even falling in love. *Lola's Secret* left me with a warm feeling and an overwhelming desire to hug everyone I love.

Lola is an 84-year-old grandmother and the glue that holds her family together. When her family struggled with a devastating loss, she reminded them of the importance of staying close and looking past differences. Now she's determined to affect other people's lives in a similar way.

She concocts a plan and decides to bring together a few strangers to her family-owned hotel. Each guest is struggling. There's a man considering a drastic solution to his problems, a woman who is a workaholic and ignores her family's attempts at reconciliation, a couple who've lost their way, and a family torn apart. Lola offers each of them a free stay at her hotel during Christmas. The offer ends up being just the good luck charm each of them needs.

In the midst of her Christmas planning, Lola is also focusing on getting her own family back on track. Sisters Carrie and Bett are fighting and refuse to see how the other is hurting, and one of her great-granddaughters is struggling with her dad's decision to move on. Lola is in the thick of it all. She even has time to bring together a young couple and search for her own past love.

I found the characters memorable and relatable. Lola is feisty and loving. Sometimes she shocks those around her with her honest and direct advice about the importance of family. Her granddaughters, Bett and Carrie, are moms struggling to find personal worth in the face of children's and husbands' needs. Each character illustrates the ties that bind in a very sweet and affecting way. When I realized many of these characters were at the forefront of *The Alphabet Sisters*, I was eager to pick up a copy and discover more about them.

The only downside was that there were so many characters to care about that I found myself wishing each story had been its own book. But that's only because I wanted a more in depth look into what made them tick.

If you love a book about relationships and enjoy rooting for characters, pick up a copy of *Lola's Secret*. It's chicken soup for the soul and the equivalent of a warm robe on a cold day.

Note: I received a complimentary copy for review purposes. A positive review was not requested or guaranteed; the opinions expressed are my own.

Laurena says

A good summer read - 3.5 stars - I enjoyed the continuing story of Lola and the ups-and-downs of her life.

Rebecca Rutland says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book, and loved that it was a sequel to The Alphabet Sisters. I would have loved a different ending, but I still enjoyed it none the less.

Alicia Hope says

I found LOLA'S SECRET to be a gentle, heartwarming read, similar to Rosamunde Pilcher's chicken-soup-for-the-soul type stories. A beautifully written, most enjoyable book.

16KiteM says

I liked this book, it was a bit weird at the beginning, but i liked how they had all the people who came to the hotels stories, why they were there. The story was sad at some points but funny aswell. I would recommend this book to girls and boys who are around 10-14.
