



## The Sisters Montclair

*Cathy Holton*

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## **The Sisters Montclair** Cathy Holton

The last thing twenty-one-year-old Stella Nightingale wants is a job as a caregiver for wealthy Alice Montclair Whittington. Alice, a ninety-four-year-old Southern grande dame with a dry sense of humor and a wicked tongue, has already run off a long line of caregivers. But Stella, a former runaway from a broken home who's only recently begun to put her life back together, is desperate for work. And she figures she can handle Alice. But strange things are happening at Alice's rambling mountaintop estate. As an unlikely friendship develops between the two women, Alice, whose memory comes and goes, begins to reveal long-ago tales of her illustrious past, tales that pose more questions than they answer. Who is her mysterious sister, Laura? Why won't Alice and her sister, Adeline, ever speak of her? And why are the other caregivers afraid to go down in the basement?

As Stella tries to separate fact from fiction in Alice's life, she struggles to overcome her own devastating family secret, compelled by a deepening friendship that will change the lives of both women forever.

## **The Sisters Montclair Details**

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## From Reader Review The Sisters Montclair for online ebook

### Lynn says

I was really loving this book until the very end. It's not that I didn't like the ending; it was just rushed. The author took her time telling the story until the last two chapters. It felt as though she was taking SAT tests and time was running out. I would still recommend the book, it's just not as great as it started out to be.

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### Holly says

Just ok. I thought the secrets were easy to figure out, so really not any surprises. I really liked Alice and her story the best. She was someone I would love to take care of. I thought there were some things introduced but never got the answers for. This was my second Cathy Holton book and like her other novel, I felt like there was something missing.

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### Shelly N says

#### Poignant

It was like reading about my grandmother. Funny, devilish but she could get the snob on if she had to. I liked it and it had a great ending.

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### Shannon says

This sounds like a fantastic book! I love books with different generations. I work in a nursing home so I love to hear elders stories! You look at them and can't think of the stuff they did but they tell stories and they had incredible lives! Can't wait to read this book!

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### Katie says

What an amazing, and well-told story!

We all have secrets. It is how you look at those secrets and protect them in your heart which can make them a heavy load to carry. Once the secrets were out, they were able to be viewed in a different light & from a different angle, allowing the freedom of release. Alice & Stella were fascinating characters and I truly enjoyed their adventure together. Learning from one another & growing together. I loved this book - fantastic job Cathy Holton!!

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## Mayda says

This novel is a fascinating contrast between the past and the present, the old and the young. Now in her nineties, wealthy Alice Montclair needs caregivers so she can remain at home and retain what independence she has. Stella Nightingale, working her way through college, is desperate for a job, desperate enough to tackle a cantankerous grande dame who has run off numerous caregivers. But though they don't yet know it, these seemingly vastly different women have much in common: both have an independent streak and both are concealing a secret about their past. With a deft hand for prose, author Cathy Holton draws her readers into the story rich with delightful and well developed characters and featuring an intriguing plot that will capture your interest from the very first chapter. Both Alice's and Stella's stories are equally captivating, filled with mystery and longing for the unattainable. As Stella attempts to understand Alice, separating fact from irrational memories, the reader will come to know and empathize with both women. An extraordinary read.

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## Ashley says

3.5, but I'm rounding up. I knew this was a local author, but didn't know the story was set in my hometown. It was cool and also distracting ... I mean, I go to the same eye doctor as Alice. I could probably have dropped deeper into the story had I not been so busy trying to figure out who the story was about, if that makes sense. Anyway, I enjoyed it and can't wait to loan to my mom, who will have everything figured out within the first three chapters.

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## Mich says

Quick read. Interesting. Good story about a wealthy old lady and her young caretaker. I would read more by this author

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## Jenny says

Two women from opposing economic backgrounds find common ground, comfort and security in each other's presence. Stella is a bright, promising college student struggling with mounting debt and secrets from her bleak childhood. Alice Montclair Whittington is a wealthy elderly lady who is struggling with health issues and declining memory. Alice also has deep, dark secrets from her past. Despite Stella's Goth-like appearance, Alice immediately "takes" to Stella and consents to hiring her as one of her caregivers. Over several months' time, the two women's pasts are revealed. What made this novel even more interesting to me is that it takes place in and around my home in Chattanooga. The names of some places are changed, but those who live here will immediately recognize what Cathy Holton is referring to.

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## Brooke says

First, i did receive a copy of this book through a Goodreads giveaway. Second, I think I am pretty stingy with giving 5 stars to books. I am giving The Sisters Montclair 5 stars because it took me to an emotional

place and the story hooked me from the beginning. I loved the relationship between the older Alice and the younger Stella. It made me think of my 91 year old grandmother and how I love to spend time with her and hear her stories. The story also is a strong reminder of something I think is very important and always try and remember; never be too quick to judge someone because you may not know their full story.

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### **Elizabeth Castricone says**

#### **Tender, funny, poignant.**

As a "southern" girl, displaced by many years in New England, it was fitting and comforting to read such a well-written story. One which held me from beginning to end. I associated characters to my life and the author actually was able to allow me to "walk in their skin" for a while.

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### **Susan Obryan says**

I have long been a fan of Cathy Holton - each novel has touched me in a different way.

"The Sisters Montclair" is among the best of the Holton best, in my opinion. From the first page, I connected with the main characters and couldn't wait to see if they lived up to my imagined expectations for them. They certainly did!

At age 94, Alice Whittington needs help getting dressed, getting around and such. She has caretakers around the clock, but mostly they are just there to attend to her physical needs - which aren't many considering how spry and mobile this lady is. It's obvious that there's no real connection for the caregivers - it's a job and that's all.

In comes Stella, a 21 year-old with enough emotional baggage for a family of six. With a lip ring and tattoo, surely she won't last long in the overly ordered life of the social prominence and privilege.

Alice and Stella are a match, but it takes time for them to realize the depth of their impact on each other. It takes patience to know each other, learning to accept when you don't have the facts and judging from the heart, not appearances, that makes a special bond.

What could they have in common with more than 60 years and a social moat between them? Through a series of flashbacks, Alice reveals her family's story and the life she settled for. Stella, struggling with situations in the present, begins to deal with a past that still haunts and wounds her.

"The Sisters Montclair" teaches us that kindred spirits can cross generational, social and economic lines. Inner strength knows no age boundary, and respect is an ageless connection. A sharp sense of humor and appreciation of a good joke are timeless.

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### **Erin says**

I really enjoyed this book more than I thought I would. I wasn't sure if the dynamic between Stella and Alice

would be too cheesy or too forced, but I think the Holton did a wonderful job creating a believable relationship between the two.

Stella is 21, a bit unconventional, and probably not what Alice, a 94 year old woman from the rich part of town, expected as her caregiver. When we meet Stella, she is a bit of a lost soul, living with a boyfriend who is not very nice to her. She doesn't seem to have great self esteem, and we learn that when she was 16, her mom gave her a hundred dollars and left her in Birmingham to fend for herself. Alice however grew up with advantages, money and loving parents. However, neither Stella nor Alice were happy.

Stella grows to care about Alice, and enjoys Alice's stories. Alice likes that Stella understands her. Both women carry secrets around in them like poison. Through Alice's dreams and stories, and Stella's therapy sessions, we learn the big secrets within, that they both need to set free before they themselves become free. I loved Alice and her stories. Her character was definitely a hoot, but more importantly, a strong woman. Stella learns to be strong from Alice, probably the best gift Alice could have given her.

There were so many passages I felt I could relate to in this book ~ I think readers always look for bits of themselves in books, and when you find that, characters you relate to for some reason or another, no matter how small, it is gratifying. I found bits of myself in very small passages in this book. I had read Cathy Holton's book Summer in the South, and while I liked it, I was so-so on it. I think however Holton put more heart and soul into this one.

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### **Wendy Hall says**

A simple book, without much twisting and turning of the plot. Had enough foreshadowing that I was easily able to predict any intended "surprises." Demonstrated a nice relationship between a young woman and an elderly lady. Definitely had some redeeming qualities about it, but wasn't one I would necessarily recommend, although it was recommended to me by someone whose choices are usually good ones for me. Just usually looking for something a little deeper or with more substance to it. I was ready for a lighter book at the moment, though, so this one fit the bill.

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### **Kaye says**

(LT win)

Every Cathy Holton book I have read, I have enjoyed tremendously. This one was no different. By page 13, I was already in love with the characters and couldn't wait to hear their stories. This always bodes well for me when the story draws me immediately and I can connect with the characters right away. I just knew a captivating story was in store.

At 94 years old, Alice, who came from a socially prominent and privileged background, was not happy that her family hired someone to watch over her. Stella, a 21 year old college student mired in debt and childhood baggage, takes the job as Alice's caretaker. This unlikely pairing surprised even the two of them. Both seemed to recognize a kindred soul in the other.

*Alice brightened, slanting her eyes up at Stella. "Ever do this kind of work before?"*

"Nope."

"But you think you can handle it?"

"It's not brain surgery. I can handle it."

"They say I'm difficult."

"I'm used to difficult people."

"I'm not difficult. I just like things done a certain way."

"I understand."

Alice folded her hands in her lap. She gave Stella a sly look. "You'd be a pretty girl if you'd do something with your hair."

"And you'd be a nice old lady if you'd stop saying things you shouldn't."

Behind Alice's shoulder, Janice's mouth fell open in shock. The clock on the mantle ticked steadily. Stella thought, I never even had a chance to ask what the hourly rate was.

Without warning, Alice Montclair Whittington put her head back and laughed.

A form of trust akin to real friendship developed and slowly each bared their innermost secrets to each other. Through a series of flashbacks, Alice reveals her family's story and the life she settled for. Stella, struggling with situations in the present, finally begins to deal with a past that still haunts and wounds her.

There was one small quibble I had with the book; a thread that hinted at something almost frightening and eerie that was never expanded upon. Still, I didn't care because I loved the rest of the book so much. It just resonated with me and really touched my heart. 5\*\*\*\*\*