



The Beach House

Mary Alice Monroe

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Known for her moving characters and emotional honesty, Mary Alice Monroe brings readers a beautifully rendered story that explores the fragile yet enduring bond between mothers and daughters.

Caretta Rutledge thought she'd left her Southern roots and troubled family far behind. But an unusual request from her mother—coming just as her own life is spinning out of control—has Cara heading back to the scenic Lowcountry of her childhood summers. Before long, the rhythms of the island open her heart in wonderful ways as she repairs the family beach house, becomes a bona fide "turtle lady" and renews old acquaintances long thought lost. But it is in reconnecting with her mother that she will learn life's most precious lessons—true love involves sacrifice, family is forever and the mistakes of the past can be forgiven.

The Beach House Details

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Author : Mary Alice Monroe
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From Reader Review The Beach House for online ebook

Antof9 says

I have to say, this book surprised me! Looking at it, I would have assumed it was a generic romance novel like many of the other books on the shelves at my club. But I wouldn't even call it a romance novel. There is some romance in it, but it's very clean, and that's definitely not the central focus of this book.

One thing I didn't like and it almost put me off at the beginning of the book is something I consider a lazy authoring technique -- having the characters say things to each other like "you know me -- I love to be outside" or "you know me -- I can't do anything without my morning coffee!" It seems such a lazy way to set up characters, and so obvious -- people who actually know each other (and know each other well) don't say that to each other. Because they already know it! I might say to a friend, "you know how I am about maple doughnuts", and she does. But I don't explain to her how I am about maple doughnuts -- she knows! Anyway, there was a lot of this in the beginning of the book, but I kept going. And I'm glad I did :)

It's a little nature-lover-y, because of the whole deal with the turtles, but they are so integral to the story that it wouldn't have been a story without them. I appreciated the author giving some information and education about them, but not using the story as a device to further a bleeding heart cause.

The development of the mother/daughter relationship in this book is really beautiful. Although I wondered often how the daughter was paying bills and what she was doing for money, her "transformation" from high-powered city career woman to turtle lady was for the most part very believable.

I also liked the unwed mother's character. It was fascinating to see how she viewed Cara and her mother, money, home, etc. Her boyfriend was annoying, but I guess that was his job.

I did like this book, and will definitely recommend it to others.

Irene says

This novel was so predictable that I anticipated every twist by the end of the first chapter. Not only was the story line predictable, but also the character roles, the description of setting, the use of weather in the story, the tenor of the dialogue, etc. This was an easy to read story of family reconciliation perfect for the Lifetime Channel.

Tammy says

The Beach House is a magical feel-good South Carolina Lowcountry novel, the first in a series.? I read book #4 last summer and was surprised to see this is a series, I loved it and knew I had to read them all! Daughter Caretta, Chicago IL is requested to come home to her mama Lovie's beach house on Isle of Palms SC. Once she arrives home she begins to experience all she's been missing in the last 20 years since leaving there - love of family, real friendships, true love, and becoming a 'turtle lady' protecting loggerhead beach nests.?

BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, she begins to reconnect with her mama which is this reason Lovey wanted her home. Lovey needed to become close to her daughter again as a mother and child should be, as she's made important changes to her will and needs to divulge a few important secrets she's kept for decades. Add to that a recent medical issue she hasn't revealed to anyone with exception to her dear friend. She feels it's time has come to reach out to her daughter and release them before it's too late. A beautiful story that will make you laugh but also bring a tear to your eye. I enjoyed this, it's such a heartfelt, fun and wonderful book! I rated all the stars! ❤?

KatLynne says

With the flair of a true wordsmith, Mary Alice Monroe has penned a beautiful, poignant tale centered on the mending of a broken mother/daughter relationship. It gives the story of three women and the memorable summer they share together. The storyline and delivery are excellent and each character portrayed is richly developed.

Set in lovely Charleston, SC with the main story unfolding on the Isle of Palms, the author's descriptive details easily pulls the reader into this journey, making this barrier island and its inhabitants come alive. It's filled with dialogue and each scene flows effortlessly.

Forty year old Caretta has been estranged from her family for years. With her life spinning out of control, she leaves big city life behind and returns home for a visit at her mother's beach cottage. She's surprised to find a pregnant, seventeen year old stranger, Toy Sooner living there. Her mother Olivia, aka Lovie, is thankful and hopeful for the chance to spend this final summer with her daughter, Caretta.

Having spent many summers on this beach, I was drawn to the book mainly for the setting. Now, I'm more than anxious for more from this author.

Heart-felt emotion, excellent writing, strong characterization, the plight of the loggerhead turtles, a little romance, and a lovely South Carolina Lowcountry village all add to the ingredients that made this a most pleasurable read.

C-shaw says

Loaned to me by a friend, who is anxious for me to read Mary Alice Monroe's books.

This was a very good novel about a prestigious Lowcountry South Carolina family. It contains numerous references to loggerhead turtles and their nesting habits on Isle of Palms, where the author is a member of the Turtle Team, just as her main characters were. While I do not normally like these "family sagas," I quickly became engrossed in the lives of the family and their friends and was pleased that it ended exactly as it should have. Very enjoyable.

Margitte says

It's chic-lit written well. It's predictable, no-brainer, relaxing, light. No surprises. It's a lesson in southern

charm, and southern food and southern morals. And a moral quest to save sea turtles.

Then there's family dynamics, a cruel history with secrets waiting to burst forth, and a flourishing future. There's a romance and a few other elements to boot - like the few billion books, following the exact same blueprint, in the same genre.

Not a bad book for the right audience. I'm not. And that's it. It's a good read when you don't need to think too much. Oh, Hallmark movie material!

Mandy says

This was a great summer beach read. An endearing story about relationships and letting the past go. There were a few times I had to wipe away the tears. Great cast of characters and I loved the beachy flair of the book and turtle facts! Highly recommend!

Julie says

The Beach House by Mary Alice Monroe is a 2012 Mira publication. (Originally published in 2002)

I fell in love with Mary Alice Monroe's 'Lowcountry series', and couldn't wait to read more of her books.

I decided to start with the 'Beach House' series when I found out there will be a new chapter released this coming June. If I hurry, maybe I can catch up before the new book is published!

This story centers around Caretta Rutledge, a high powered, fiercely independent, career woman, who receives a phone call from her mother asking her to return home, just as her well-orchestrated life goes belly up.

Caretta had left home twenty years ago to escape a tense family life, but now that she is at loose ends, her mother's plea stirs her emotions enough to accept the invitation to visit.

Olivia, "Lovie" Rutledge is known as the 'turtle lady' because of her dedication to the loggerhead turtles. Lovie has moved out of her nice home and into her beloved beach house, which holds her most treasured memories.

The resentment Cara holds in her heart must finally be faced as her mother makes a shocking revelation, and Cara's brother, Palmer, connives, manipulates, and attempts to control every aspect of his mother's life.

I loved the interesting information each chapter opened with, concerning the loggerhead turtles. This was so fascinating. I could understand why Lovie was so attached and how it became so important to her.

It's also a little jarring how this book, published in 2002, seemed to capture a generation gap I found familiar.

It's hard to believe now, but I knew people like Lovie, women of a certain era, who endured years of quiet suffering due to an overbearing and controlling spouse. But, she also allowed it to continue, never finding the courage to call the bully's bluff.

Lovie, was of that time where men made the decisions, and everyone fell into line, or else. Lovie was 'taken care of', never learning how to fully stand on her own two feet, even after her husband passed away, because she then allowed her son to step into his father's shoes and boy, was he a chip off the old block.

Cara represents the strong, independent woman who saw her mother's life for what it was and knew she had to escape, thus breaking a chain, that may have continued for generations. Yet, at this turning point in her life, the resentments that threaten to boil over, must take a back seat, as she fights bigger battles. She also begins to wonder if maybe there is room in her life for more than her important career, something she's never seriously considered before.

A secondary thread running through the story involved a young, unwed pregnant girl, trying to break the chain of abuse, who Lovie took in and forged a bond with. This is a very strong storyline that is equally important to the novel's theme.

Sometimes a good southern contemporary novel is just what I need to soothe my troubled heart and mind. This book is just what the doctor ordered!

The book deals with some heavier subject matter, specifically that of abusive relationships, whether they be physical, mental, verbal or emotional, or between siblings, parent/ child, or husband/wife. Abuse comes in many forms, some being quite obvious, while others are very subtle.

But, the story is also about healing, forgiveness, and second chances, family and relationships, and redemption. It's about strong women who face adversity with grace and fortitude, and who love, support, and lift each other up.

I think this series is perfect for summer beach reading and I'm already looking forward to catching up with these characters again real

Sheila says

It was fluff, it was predictable, it was unrealistic, it was sappy. But it was also an easy read, an eye rolling read, yet an amusing read, and I have to admit I loved the bits at the beginning of each chapter about the loggerhead turtles. So it earns an extra star for the turtles! Two stars for the story, one bonus star for the turtles.

Kathryn Long says

The Beach House is a story that evoked a multitude of emotions in me. I laughed and cried, my heart broke, and yet filled with warmth and happiness. Monroe sent me on a roller coaster ride of moods and feelings, leaving me fullfilled at the end. It was truly an experience I wouldn't trade for anything.

I am a mother with two grown daughters. After finishing the book, I told them that even though I don't ask much from them, I am asking them to please read The Beach House. Those who have read it will understand when I say that the relationship between Cara and her mother, Lovie, is both endearing and heartbreakin, but shouldn't be ignored. Monroe manages to artfully interject those moments which can only be described or labeled as "morals to the story", but these never sound preachy.

I started this story thinking it would be a light, summer read, but surprisingly found it deep and meaningful, something to "sink your teeth into". And I am grateful to have shared in the experience Mary Alice Monroe has given me. Simply put, I loved this story.

Britany says

Loggerheads, Barrier Islands, and family secrets all collide in this novel.

This is my first by Mary Alice Monroe, and I wasn't disappointed. Had all the good makings of a great novel, however didn't quite come together perfectly for me. A little too much jargon got in the way, along with trying to throw way too many things into one book. Betrayal, family rivalry, abuse, a teenage pregnancy, saving seaturtles, romance, and to top it all off add in a hurricane!

Caretta Rutledge comes home to Isle of Palms in small town South Carolina to help clean out some items with her mother. She ends up learning far more than she meant to, and her whole life shifts as she figures out how to resolve all that has been thrown at her.

Lisa says

A perfect summer beach read exploring the tenuous bonds between a mother and daughter and the opportunity for renewal.

SUMMARY

Caretta Rutledge left Charleston and the Low Country behind when she was 18. Now 40, Cara has a high powered marketing job in Chicago, but things are spinning out of control there. She gets an unusual request from her mother to come spend the summer at her mother's beloved Primrose cottage on the Isle of Palms. When Caretta arrives there she finds that both the beach house and her family are in disarray. First, she must readjust to the beach life and get rid of her silk pants suit and rhinestone studded strappy sandals. She soon finds some old friends, and makes new ones as well. She fixes up the beach cottage and helps her mom with "turtle" duty. In reconnecting with her mother Caretta learns so much about love, sacrifice, family and forgiveness.

REVIEW

Having recently read Beach House for Rent (#4), I found I wanted to read more of Mary Alice Monroe. This is the first book in her Beach House series. It was originally published in 2006. The other two books in the series are Swimming Lessons (#2) and Beach House Memories (#3).

In THE BEACH HOUSE each chapter enjoyable alternates perspective between Cara and her mother, Olivia. Olivia is getting up in age, and has returned to live at the beach permanently. Some of her fondest memories are among the dunes in front of the yellow beach house. Olivia is known as the “turtle lady” on Isle of Palms because of her dedication to the loggerhead turtle nests she protects on the beach.

Each chapter opens with vignettes about the life and nesting habits of loggerhead turtles. Each loggerhead prelude most creatively foretells the struggles and events that were strikingly similar to the lives of Cara and Olivia. I loved this parallel, and the way the loggerhead turtles were also such an prominent part of the renewal between Cara and her mother, as well as the rest of the family.

Cara thinks that she and her mom couldn't be anymore different. But she is wrong. Cara is strong and independent while her mom lived her entire life with a man controlling her every decision. But the move out to the beach represents a new chapter in both of their lives. A chapter of renewal, understanding and freedom. It's a story about strong women facing difficult times with grace and perseverance.

It's a great beach read! MARY ALICE MONROE is known for moving character and emotional honesty. In this book she explores the tenuous but enduring bonds between a mother and her daughter.

Nancy LiPetri says

Although I started out thinking the writing was a bit corny at times, I give it 5 stars for all the wonderful, clever and moving analogies between women/life and loggerhead turtles and their amazing life cycle. It was fitting that the first part to move me to tears, about motherhood, I read on Mother's Day on a plane headed back to where I was hatched. That was about 20% into it, and the story only got better and better from there, winning my hanky rating with a predictable but beautiful and thoroughly enjoyable ending. Great story about family love and pain, romance and life on the seashore.

Alina says

I hoped to enjoy this book, especially since I previously lived in Charleston, SC -- and, I did. The author put the "happily ever after" spin on all the storylines; that's what I prefer. There was just enough of everything: mystery from the past, simmering romance (with a hero who would have swept me off my feet), personal redemption, coming of age and 'seize the day'. Plus, the main character is thankfully 40. (I'm not keen on reading about teenage love!)

The book was not a 4 or 5 for me because of the lack of oomph with the characters. This is the type of book to enjoy, smile a few smiles while reading, and then pass on to someone else as an easy reach. It was not a page-turner; I had no problem putting it down. It was not a brain-twister; I had no problem following the story.

I enjoyed the way the details of the loggerhead turtles were woven in to the story. I definitely felt like I learned something about loggerhead turtles.

Evelyn says

After losing her high-powered advertising job in Chicago, Caretta Rutledge grudgingly returns to her low-country home at her mother's behest. Cara has long resented her mother, who focused her maternal efforts more on looking after the annual loggerhead turtle spawn than on protecting herself and her children from their abusive father. But when Cara learns that her mother is ill, she must lay her bitterness aside and try to make amends. Cara starts by restoring her mother's small beach house and joining the same turtle brigade she resented while growing up. In the process, she reconnects with an old friend and finds love in the arms of a local boat owner and naturalist.
