



# Home for Christmas

*Annie Groves*

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Home for Christmas is a tale of four very different young women thrown together by war. Finding freedom and independence – as well as love, passion and heartbreak – for the very first time, a unique bond is formed as the hostilities take their toll on Britain.

It's September 1940 and the German blitz on London has just begun. The four young girls who live at No. 13 Article Row live under its constant threat. But life must go on...

Tilly and Sally both work at Barts Hospital where they witness the cruelty of war first-hand.

Agnes volunteers to work extra hours at her underground station to help with the nightly influx of people seeking safety from the bombs.

Dulcie, with her broken ankle, tries to make peace with her mother, following the news of the death of her sister Enid. But her grief-stricken mother doesn't want to know.

Sally returns to her painful past in Liverpool. But it's not seeing the man she once loved, nor her father and ex-best friend's child that hurt most...

As Christmas approaches, the arrival of the handsome young American Drew, ignites new life in the heart Tilly thought was broken.

As the bombs continue to rain down on a frosty London, perilous challenges lay around every corner. And all anyone wants this year is to be home for Christmas.

## Home for Christmas Details

Date : Published (first published September 1st 2011)

ISBN :

Author : Annie Groves

Format : Kindle Edition 400 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Holiday, Christmas, Fiction

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# **From Reader Review Home for Christmas for online ebook**

## **Book Addict Shaun says**

Another fantastic read from Annie Groves. Her books are usually set in Liverpool however she moved to London with this saga set in Holborn at Article Row. Article Row is a fantastic creation and it is lovely to think of this little street surviving in the Blitz and all the characters pulling together. Of course this is fiction but it is known that Londoners and indeed everybody else affected by the war pulled together against Hitler and I'm sure there were many little streets like this back then.

Dulcie is a fantastic character and my favourite out of the lot.

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## **Tracy Terry says**

Expecting a typical world war at Christmas romance story I was actually delighted at the depth of some of the threads that made up Home For Christmas, the second book (though perfectly readable as a standalone novel) in the Article Row series.

OK so there were all of the usual characters you'd expect of such a novel - the salt-of-the-earth landlady, the beautiful blonde, the dedicated nurse, the disapproving mother, the dashing surgeon, the handsome Americans (rather surprisingly not all of them pilots) - but there were also those (though sadly very much secondary characters) generally less well featured (if at all) in books of this genre.

Ultimately heart warming stuff. A story of the unquenchable nature of the human spirit and yet by no means a sugary sweet read, this may well appeal to those who enjoy war time stories or those simply looking for a good Christmas novel with a bit more substance.

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## **Cathy says**

Lovely story, did not realise that it was the second part of a series. Thankfully, you don't need to have read the first part of it to make sense, as it briefly explains what has happened before. My only criticism is that the ending seemed a bit rushed, however there is at least one more book in this series.

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## **Janice says**

I read this on the Kindle

This is a series & i believe there is one before this but i got this one (look under Article Row if wanting to know what books there are)

It set it World War 2 & about the people who live at 13 Article Row You have Olive & daughter Tilly with Sally Agnes & Dulcie who are the lodgers, you get to about each of them

Also you get to hear about the neighbours you love to dislike Nancy the next door neighbour of Olive she one who you think why does she go to church as she certainly not a person with christian thoughts & don't hang back in saying

I enjoy this so much i went & got the next book straight away this is a series i will be reading, the author has written quite a few books mostly set around Liverpool & just before & during the war

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## **Ruth says**

Annie Groves's saga following four women on the London homefront during the early days of World War II continues in *Home for Christmas*. Picking up just a few short weeks after the conclusion of *London Belles*, which saw Olive, her daughter Tilly, and their lodgers Sally, Agnes, and Dulcie survive the first wave of Hitler's blitz on London, these five very different women find themselves newly bonded in a sisterhood forged by the hardships of war. Sally continues to bury herself in her work as a nurse at St. Bart's -- immersed in the horrific impact of the Blitz first-hand, she remains haunted by her mother's death and father's hasty remarriage. Agnes is thrilled to be "as good as" engaged to her boyfriend Ted -- the only blight on her joy the shadow of her past as an orphan and the obvious disdain in which Ted's mother views her son's relationship. The vivacious Dulcie finds security in her new-found friendship with her fellow Article Row residents, but struggles with her mother's rejection and chafes against wartime restrictions. Tilly, determined to forget Dulcie's handsome brother, blossoms in her work for the ambulance service, and catches the eye of a handsome American reporter newly-arrived to bring stories of the Blitz home to audiences across the sea. And Olive worries for all of "her girls," but particularly Tilly, as she fears the desire to seize a scrap of happiness in these uncertain times will lead one or more of the girls to irrevocable heartache, little realizing that it is perhaps her own heart in need of guarding most of all.

Whereas *London Belles*, the first installment in Groves's Article Row series, was tasked with introducing five heroines from wildly varied walks of life, in its sequel roles and personalities are established, allowing Groves to shift her focus to the impact of the war on the homefront society as a whole as seen through the experiences of her heroines. While I enjoyed the nostalgic, sentimental feel of *London Belles*, that novel as an introduction to Groves's writing is not without its problems -- among them the aforementioned sentimentality and the arguably often glacially-paced plotting -- I genuinely felt invested in the characters' lives and experiences. I love the fact that Groves opts to explore in great depth the lives of women on the homefront, and how the war not only gave them increasingly wide opportunities in the professional realm but she invests great time and detail and explicating the war's emotional and practical effects.

Happily Groves's second outing to Article Row goes a long way toward ameliorating -- if not eliminating -- many of the issues that plagued the first book in the series. With London deep in the throes of the Blitz, Groves's character development is given the chance to shine, as -- having established the players -- she is now free to delve more deeply into the impact the war and its attendant fears and privations have on their lives. One of my favorite storylines is Tilly's sweetly developing romance with Drew, the American reporter. He is SUCH a gentleman and I loved how he gently persisted, determined to win her friendship first, and then her heart. Groves continues to develop Agnes's romance with Ted, and my heart just broke when she first met Ted's battleaxe of a mother, and celebrated when she finally received her longed-for ring. And though it may be the stuff of pure soap opera, I'm anxious to see how the ever-proper Olive's feelings for her very married policeman neighbor develop, as even in wartime such a whisper of scandal could ruin a single -

- albeit a widowed -- woman's reputation.

Groves touches on the issue of changing moral views in almost every woman's life, but the focus on such comes in to sharp relief as concerns Sally and her struggles to reconcile her past with the possibility of a future with her doctor boyfriend George. As the war and the Blitz progresses, and casualties on the homefront and abroad mount, society -- particularly young women -- were faced with a choice: cling to a pre-war moral mentality, or bend and embrace a more carpe diem approach to the increasing uncertainties of life. Sally in particular is susceptible to this effect of war, as she is plagued by lost romantic opportunities in her past and faced with death on a daily basis in her role as a nurse (brought into stark relief in the aftermath of a harrowing train derailment). But bending moral views as regards intimacy between men and women is not without consequence, and here Groves hints at drastic changes -- and consequences -- to come, as women both young and old, as embodied by the likes of Sally and Olive, struggle to reconcile societal expectations with the pressing desires of the heart.

Home for Christmas is a wonderful, nostalgic glimpse into a world at war, improving in nearly every respect on its predecessor. While not without its faults (the flashback to Sally's earlier heartbreak feels shoe-horned in and overly long), its occasional "clunkiness" is forgivable in light of its improved pacing, plotting, and character development. Groves is at her best when exploring the emotional, human toll of the war, and while her characters are simply drawn they are heartfelt and genuine. I like these women, I want them to triumph, but above that my vintage-loving heart appreciates Groves's writing as more than just a love letter to the time, but a tribute to the ordinary men and women who, in the face of the unimaginable horror of the Blitz, found in themselves the ability to become extraordinary survivors.

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### **Kim says**

I have a real soft spot for books set around the second world war and I really enjoyed this one. It felt as though it was set up for a sequel and I would love to read more about these characters. I wasn't ready to let them go! I have a few christmassy books out of the library and this one leapt to the top of the pile.

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### **Ro says**

The second book in the Article Row series and just as good as the first. All the characters are thoroughly likeable although I can't help wondering what horrid fate is likely to fall on one of them. Looking forward to the next one in the series.

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### **Debbi Berenz says**

#### **Great read!**

I am obsessed with this genre and Annie Groves' Article Row series is splendid! I love how different each of the girls are and even though it's war-time, it's still a happy time!

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## **Crystal Blake says**

Sometimes you just come across a book that you think will be a light easy read while you are doing something and it ends up being truly special. Not only was it a nice change from the books I have been reading or re-reading lately but it was lovely to not have female characters who turned into idiots or nutters over men and male characters who didn't turn out to be horrible. I only hope the other books in this series are equally as good because I will be eagerly looking forward to reading them during the summer holidays, preferably in a nice hot bath with a locked door as my end of the day reward for the endless trips to the park and my kids inevitably testing my patience to breaking point during the holidays.

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## **Denise says**

“Home for Christmas” is the second book in Annie Groves’ Article Row series. We pick up with the women struggling through the London Blitz with courage and they are becoming even closer to one another. The character development goes more in-depth in this second book. We see Tilly (Olive’s daughter) falling in love with an American reporter and becoming a mature young woman at the same time. We find that Dulcie’s character has softened, somewhat, with the real love and acceptance she has found on Article Row. Dulcie family experiences tragedy, but her mother still doesn’t show her the type of love that she receives from Olive and her new friends. Agnes is dealing with her fiancé’s Mother, who is less than welcoming and she has to struggle through shame and rejection. Sally is fulfilling her nursing career dreams and working non-stop during the devastation of the Blitz. Sally is still not ready to forgive her father and former best friend for marrying so soon after her mother’s death. Her work keeps her mind busy and less focused on her heartbreak. This reader can’t help but hope for a loving man to come along for widowed Olive. Olive works tirelessly as a volunteer to help with the war effort on the home-front. I absolutely adore this series and this book was even better than the first! I look forward to the next book.

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## **Clare O'Beara says**

This story follows four women in London during the Blitz. One of them, Sally, has come from Liverpool, and at the start, after a description of a pre-war Christmas day, we get a rather melodramatic account of why she chose to leave Liverpool for London - I thought it unnecessary. This girl refuses to let go her hurt and aggravation, which just keeps another burden on her young shoulders as a nurse during the war.

Sally, the nurse, is the most admirable character in other ways due to the training and self-possession which carry her through drastic situations of bombing.

The other characters are not that distinct apart from one shallow-minded girl who is a sales assistant in expensive shop Selfridges, conveniently forgetting that her family come from Stepney. She learns nothing except that keeping a man dangling will get her gifts. Another girl is a ticket seller in the Underground but that job is only shown early in the story as the public start to insist on using Tube tunnels for shelter. The fourth is their landlady with a kind heart.

We see some amusing scenes of bargaining for shampoo when it can't be bought normally, and a pub on Fleet Street which is populated by more American journalists than British. The details of normal life at an

abnormal time, including romances, are well presented.

Overall the story is light enough to read quickly. Because we keep chopping and changing among four women I found it hard to get deeply involved with any of them except during the bombing scenes. The story is suitable for young adult readers but aimed at adults.

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## **Lainy says**

Time taken to read - In and out over 3 days

Pages - 311

Publisher - Harper Collins

Source - The Works

Blurb from Goodreads

'Home for Christmas' is a tale of four very different young women thrown together by war. Finding freedom and independence - as well as love, passion and heartbreak - for the very first time, a unique bond is formed as the hostilities take their toll on Britain.

## **My Review**

Set in 1940 the story centres around no. 13 Article Row in London, bombs are dropping daily but life must go on. Sally, Tilly, Agnes and Dulcie are all living with Tilly's mother Olive, a kind hearted lady pulling together to survive another day. Sally fled from Liverpool after a betrayal, now working as a nurse. Dulcie is all about the attention and men, Tilly is a sweet girl who catches the eye of an American, Agnes finally gets to meet her beloveds family and has to deal with the dramas that follow. With all their personal dilemmas each is faced with survival, rationing and trying to enjoy life in such dangerous times.

I do enjoy nursing stories although this one only has brief snippets of nursing as it is mainly the relationship/friendship being the heart of the story. Relationship issues, courting, family issues, betrayal, friendships all during the war. Dulcie would be my least favourite character, she comes across quite shallow, working in a pricey department store Dulcie knows the life she wants. She always has to be the centre of attention and her friendships I think would be severely tested in modern day. Her background story, we only get snippets of that which does go a way to explain her behaviour. I think some folk will love her but I couldn't warm to her. Sally can't get over her past which impacts on her current situation and we do revisit that. Agnes a fair few issues many of us could relate to, meeting her future inlaws, trying to keep the peace and not upset her betrothed. And Tilly and Olive are just really sweet lovely characters, the relationship between mother and daughter warms the cockles.

It is a lovely wee Christmas read, it has a dash of everything. I could have read it in one sitting to be honest, it is one of those books you can just slip into. Despite it being book two, I hadn't known this, I didn't feel disadvantaged at all. I will get the first one and read the next in the series, I found the writing easy to get into. The characters, there will be at least one if not more characters for the reader to relate to and like or



dislike them you do engage in the story and want to know what is coming next for them. 4/5 for me this time, I absolutely will read this author again.

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### **Sally Seymore says**

This book is well written and gives an account of how people in London coped with the Second World War. The main focus is on four girls who live at 13 Article Row and we learn about their lives in a time of great turmoil. While reading it, I wondered how we, today, will cope with something like the great war as we tend to complain about everything. It is a love story, yet it portrays the different personalities of the girls and also shows that in the midst of all turmoil we still act according to who we are.

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### **Danielle Mitchell says**

An easy read, for those who like reading about war times.

I quite enjoyed the storyline, with Olive, Tilly and Sally being my favourite characters. Dulcie was my least favourite with her self absorbed nature becoming more evident as you continued reading.

I wasn't sure the title really summed up the storyline of the book as the focus on Christmas wasn't until the very end of the novel.

Despite having realised about half way through that this book is actually second in a series, I didn't feel at a disadvantage. In saying that, I will leave this book as a stand alone novel as the ending didn't really leave me enticed to read the entire series.

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### **Shirley Revill says**

Loved this book and I really couldn't put it down.

Highly recommended.

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