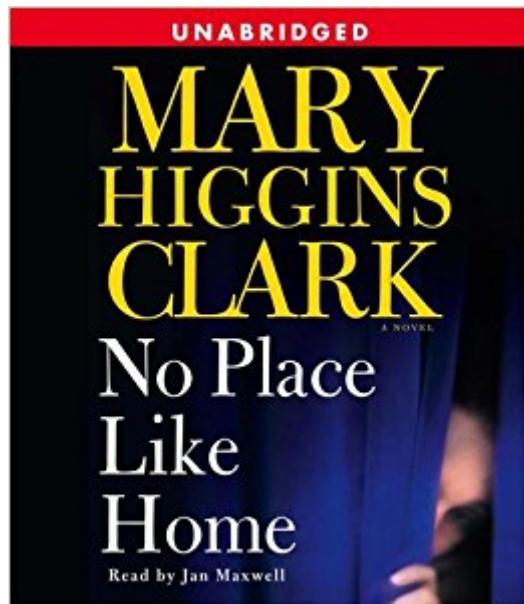


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# No Place Like Home: A Novel



## **Synopsis**

At the age of ten, Liza Barton shot her mother in their New Jersey home while trying to protect her from her violent stepfather. Despite her stepfather's claim that the shooting was a deliberate act, the Juvenile Court ruled the death an accident. Trying to erase every trace of Liza's past, her adoptive parents changed Liza's name to Celia. At the age of twenty-eight, she married a sixty-year-old widower, and they had a son. Before their marriage, Celia confided the secret of her earlier life. On his deathbed, her husband made her swear never to reveal her past to anyone, so that their son would not carry the burden of this family tragedy. Happily remarried, Celia is shocked when her second husband presents her with a gift-the New Jersey house where she killed her mother. On the day they move in, the words BEWARE -- LITTLE LIZZIE'S PLACE have been painted on the lawn. Determined to prove that she was the victim of her stepfather's psychotic behavior, Celia sets out to gather the evidence. When the real estate agent who sold the house is brutally murdered she is once again branded a killer. As Celia fights to prove her innocence, she is not aware that her life and the life of her son are in jeopardy.

## **Book Information**

Audio CD

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Audio; Unabridged edition (April 5, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0743540034

ISBN-13: 978-0743540032

Product Dimensions: 5 x 1.2 x 5.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (198 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,866,060 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 inÂ  Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > ( C ) > Clark, Mary Higgins #3357 inÂ  Books > Books on CD > Mystery & Thrillers #3668 inÂ  Books > Books on CD > General

## **Customer Reviews**

Alex Nolan saw the house in Mendham, New Jersey and bought it as a surprise for his wife Celia as a birthday present. Celia is shocked and speechless because it is the same home where she grew up in until she was 10 years old. Her mother, Audrey Barton was accidentally shot by Celia, known back then as Liza Barton, and her stepfather, Ted Cartwright was seriously wounded. There was a trial, but Liza was acquitted. She was adopted by distant relatives and relocated to California. Liza

returned years later as "Celia Kellogg" to New York to attend the Fashion Institute and fell in love with her first husband Larry Foster. When he died, Larry left his estate to his wife and son, holding her to the promise that she would never reveal her true identity. She met Alex Nolan and a romance very quickly blossomed. Living in Mendham was a chance for them to start fresh. Alex was a successful attorney and was going to head his firm's New Jersey office. Alex seemingly did not pay attention when his realtor Georgette Grove tried to disclose the story of Liza Barton to him. Their house over the years had become known as Little Liza's place and had been recently vandalized. As police try to follow up on the vandalism, two murders take place. Celia is suspected in both, especially as her former identity is disclosed. As she is haunted by her own memories, Celia becomes more determined to reveal the truth of what happened 24 years ago. Well-done, nicely tied together, with great twist at the end.

I love Mary Higgins Clark books. I have read every single one. With that said, I can't say this is her best, or even in her top 15. But I did read it all the way through, and it was entertaining, though somewhat unbelievable. Positive points: admirable protagonist, beautiful and smart (typical, of course!) Many characters to draw suspects from, several twists and turns that keep you reading. Also, family-friendly writing; you can always lend MHC books to your teenager and your grandma without worrying about the content. Not so great points: The "coincidences" that were pretty hard to believe. Also, the circumstances that the storyline takes place within are also questionable. You may question the main character's judgment at times and wonder what she was/is thinking. As long as you don't think about it too hard, you'll be able to look past these things. Bottom line- if you like a quick mystery/thriller and aren't bothered by glitches in the storytelling or circumstances, then you'll enjoy this book.

The only reason I gave this one star is because won't let me give it zero stars. The writing in this book is so amateurish that if it had been sent to a publisher by an unknown writer it would have been immediately rejected. I thought Clark couldn't get any worse than her last book "Nightime Is My Time", but with her latest "No Place Like Home", she surpassed "Nightime". There isn't room to list everything that's wrong with this book. The lowlights are: Chapters alternate between first and third person, which makes a very jarring, disruptive and irritating read. No character development; all so one dimensional it's impossible to care what happens to any of them. A weak, dimwitted heroine who holds to a unrealistic deathbed promise to her first husband, agonizes over what to wear today, and seems naturally inclined to make dumb decisions. When she finally decides to tell her second

husband she is really Lizzie (afterall, the NY Post is going to front page it the next day!), she leaves a phone message for him to call her, turns off her phone, takes a sleeping pill and goes to bed! Possibly the most grating, infuriating aspect is the repeated unrealistic police procedures and actions. A reporter thinks another murder may occur so the prosecutor gives her a key piece of evidence because he "owes her". Good grief! I can't believe this book and "Nightime" were written by the Mary Higgins Clark I have read for years. This latest effort seems geared to a young teenage mentality and could, in fact, have been written by a teenager, given the very, very amateurish writing.

My husband and I listened to the unabridged audio cd of this book on a car trip and we were captivated! This author is exceptional. We couldn't wait to hear what happened next as we listened to each mesmerizing chapter. I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a good old fashioned mystery filled with intrigue. Great character development and the reader was terrific. Don't hesitate... buy this one!

Mary Higgins Clark is the best, hands down, mystery writer of my generation. Page turners, "clean," fun trying to guess "who done it." I have all of her books in my personal library. In fact I just finished reading them all again in 2012. Her stories are mystifying and her vocabulary so rich.

Mary Higgins Clark is by far one of the greatest writers ever - and this book just confirms yet again that she found her true calling in life! True to her reputation - Higgins Clark gives us a story previously untouched.. Imagine the horror of your mother dying in front of your young ten-year-old eyes - and then being accused of murdering her.. You finally are aquitted of the murder and move away and on with your life.. You marry the perfect man - but based on a deathbed promise - you don't tell him about your past.. And as a present he buys you a house.. The same house where your mother died.. Before long people start turning up dead - one-by-one - and now you're scared that people will recognise and eventually blame you for the murders.. Who will you trust? Five out of Five - Excellent easy read!.. Always Mirren.

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