



## The House on Bellevue Gardens

*Rachel Hore*

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Rosa has arrived in London from Poland to look for her younger brother Mikhail. He is supposed to be staying with their English father, but when she visits the house she finds it's locked up and there's no sign of either of them. She urgently needs work and somewhere to live while she continues her search, but what can she do and where can she go?

Stef is running away from her boyfriend Oliver and the claustrophobic life she's been living in his opulent flat. Frightened, friendless and far from her family, she needs somewhere to hide.

Rick is living in a limbo, a shy young man hiding from the world to write and draw and dream. How will he find fulfilment?

All three find refuge at 11 Belvue Gardens, the shaggiest house of a smart white-painted Georgian terrace in North London. Here, its owner Leonie herself once found sanctuary following a short career as a model in the sixties and a destructive marriage. Now, out of gratitude, she opens her house to others in need.

However, as she helps Stef and Rosa and Rick to find their way, Leonie finds that once again the very foundations of her own life and happiness are under threat.

## **The House on Bellevue Gardens Details**

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Author : Rachel Hore

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## **From Reader Review The House on Bellevue Gardens for online ebook**

### **Joanne Baker says**

#### **A nice read.**

A nice way to idle away the hours with some interesting twists. But very similar to other books , although this does not diminish it's storytelling skill. A very likeable read.

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### **Juliet Butler says**

Number 11 Bellevue Gardens, is in an Edwardian Terrace in a quiet square in London. It may look like the other houses, if a little more shabby and in need of paint, but to its residents it is a safe haven, a place to call home. Leonie came to the house nearly forty years ago when she needed a place to stay after the breakdown of her marriage, and now lets out rooms to others who need a place to stay and sort out their lives. Rick, works in a supermarket but really wants to write his Graphic Novel. Rosa comes to London from Poland in search of her brother who came to London a few months previously. Steph, who ups and leaves her boyfriend and needs somewhere to feel safe and decide what she wants to do with her life.

When the house comes under threat, Leonie and the other residents have to look at what the future may hold for them all outside Number 11 Bellevue Gardens.

Rachel Hore is one of my favourite authors, her books are always well written with a good plot and characters. I find she excels in her understanding of people and their traits and relationships with each other. The characters in this book are very diverse and all come from very different backgrounds but they all share the love for the house and the safety it offers them.

The book follows Leonie's story from her teenage years working in her parents shop, to her becoming a model then her marriage and its subsequent demise and her coming to Bellevue Gardens. The plot also includes the story of Rick, Steph and Rosa as their lives intertwine and overcome hurdles in their lives. The book deals with issues such as the slave labour of immigrants, emotional and physical abuse, all dealt with great understanding and knowledge. The book written from the perspective of the main characters so each section is told from a different perspective. I found that this kept my interest, and attention.

I read this as part of bookclub's March choice and really enjoyed it. I found it a compelling and interesting read that had the message that everyone should feel safe in their home, no matter what 'home' means to them. It is a beautifully written book full of characters you will love.

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### **Penelope says**

A sweet story but a little unsatisfying and lacking in any of the atmosphere and mystery of the author's

previous novels. If you haven't already read it I'd highly recommend The Glass Painter's Daughter as an alternative to this one.

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### **Ann says**

I have read and enjoyed all Rachel Hore's novels apart from her last one A Week In Paris which I found disappointing. With this one she is for me right back on form. The story is about the house at 11 Bellevue Gardens and its very diverse occupants. Mostly set in the present there are bits from the sixties when Leonie the owner of the house was a model. There are quite a number of characters but I didn't find that a problem as they were well defined and easy to empathise with. The ending was well handled not too cozy but hopeful. I really enjoyed this book. I read it in a day but was sorry when it ended. An easy but worthwhile read.

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### **Kiran says**

I've read 5 or 6 of Rachel Hore's books and unfortunately this book is just not up to the standard of some of her others - my favourites so far being A Gathering Storm and A Place of Secrets, both of which had me really absorbed, in contrast to this rather slow dull novel.

Hore has done away with her usual dual-timeline approach as this is entirely set in the present. But this novel didn't seem to have a proper plot for most of the time so there was nothing driving it forwards and keeping my interest. It was just a collection of fragmented stories about this jumble of characters who live in the same house but don't really all interact a great deal. Half the house's inhabitants we barely hear of at all i.e Peter, Hari and Bela

Leonie seemed sweet but essentially a wishy-washy pushover. Although at least the chapters reflecting back on her life as a young model in the early 60s were far more interesting than the rest of the present day narrative. I'm afraid I thought that Stef was a completely annoying flake; a 'fragile female' that men always rush to rescue, who is not innocent or worthy of such care but is actually just wilfully stupid and bloody useless! But she was given far too much prominence in the book (not just the numerous chapters from her point of view but most of Rick's chapters were all focused on Stef, and large chunks of Leonie's were as well), considering how weak and uninteresting her life, her story and her personality was. Rick I simply had no idea about, and it seems the author didn't either as he wasn't really created with any backbone or interesting dimension to him. He just seemed to be on the outskirts of whatever was happening with other people - Stef, Rosa, Leonie and Jamie - rather than having his own storyline. Rosa probably should've been given more page-time as she seemed the most interesting character out of all of them to me.

So all in all, this is a fairly dull read I'm afraid. I'd suggest by-passing this in favour of one of her early novels.

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### **Aditi says**

*"The whole value of solitude depends upon oneself; it may be a sanctuary or a prison, a haven of repose or a place of punishment, a heaven or a hell, as we ourselves make it."*

----John Lubbock

Rachel Hore, an English best-selling author, pens her latest contemporary story in her new book, *The House on Bellevue Gardens*, that narrates the story of four central characters among whom three are trying to find their way in life as they are lost and heart-broken, and the fourth person is a god-send who is here to give them shelter in her sanctuary, the house which is centered around all the four characters and holds them together tightly with an invisible string.

### **Synopsis:**

*Rosa has arrived in London from Poland to look for her younger brother Mikhail. He is supposed to be staying with their English father, but when she visits the house she finds it's locked up and there's no sign of either of them. She urgently needs work and somewhere to live while she continues her search, but what can she do and where can she go?*

*Stef is running away from her boyfriend Oliver and the claustrophobic life she's been living in his opulent flat. Frightened, friendless and far from her family, she needs somewhere to hide.*

*Rick is living in a limbo, a shy young man hiding from the world to write and draw and dream. How will he find fulfillment?*

*All three find refuge at 11 Bellevue Gardens, the shabbiest house of a smart white-painted Georgian terrace in North London. Here, its owner Leonie herself once found sanctuary following a short career as a model in the sixties and a destructive marriage. Now, out of gratitude, she opens her house to others in need.*

*However, as she helps Stef and Rosa and Rick to find their way, Leonie finds that once again the very foundations of her own life and happiness are under threat.*

Leonie's 11 Bellevue Gardens home, with its shabbiness and a hidden history yet with a gorgeous surrounding, has always welcomed the warmth and the solitude of a lost stranger irrespective of his/her gender or age. This story particularly revolves around this home, as Leonie lets an Indian couple, Bella and Hari to stay along with a painter in this house. But three more new members join them, Stef, a woman running away from her abusive relationship, Rosa, a woman straight from Warsaw is here in London to look for her missing brother and Rick, a man, looking for means and space to give wings to his dreams of being a graphic artist. As the story laces from Leonie's early teenage-hood days when she was a celebrated model and days from when she suffered a distasteful marriage to the present days, along with the stories of Rosa, Stef and Rick, it will actually feel like the readers too are swaying in this shifting yet remarkable jumps in the timeline. As the house suffers a threat from the world hidden away from its love, support and free shelter, the lives of these individuals are on the verge of tumbling down.

*The Silent Tide* by Rachel Hore was the first book that got me into the world of this author's incredibly beautiful yet poignant stories and I was bound to become an instant fan of her writing. So when her new book came out, I couldn't resist myself from reading it. Firstly, covers of all her books are fascinating and mesmerizing to look at it. Similarly, in this book too, the cover image of a white mansion with a green and serene garden is bound to give the readers an atmospheric feel to it.

The writing style of the author is coherent as well as eloquent that is laced under a deep ocean of emotions. The narrative is at times bit dull, but most of the times the author kept it interesting and expressive enough

for the readers to comprehend with the dialogues. The story opens a bit slow and midway through the story, the story moves at a snail's pace and only near the end of the book, the story picks up pace where some of the major twists and unraveled and that is when it demands of a reader's full attention till the very end.

The flaws in this book are not that major and their presence is covered with the excellent set of characters. The characters are forever the best part of this author's books who will make the readers forget about their own lives and will force them to get completely lost into these character's devastating and troubling lives and circumstances. The characters are so well-developed that they will make the readers root out for them till the very last page. All the main characters are inspired from reality and their problems are very much relatable as they face some complicated issues like dominating relationship, beating shyness of one's own etc.

Next the setting of the book is very well captured by the author and depicted in its brightest hue of colors that will only make the readers feel like experiencing the whole story right in front of their eyes. The house itself is described with lots of in-depth details and layers thus making it alive by the author with her carefully chosen words.

In a nutshell, this coming-of-age contemporary story is laced with love, drama, friendship, bonding, family and everything in between to make it delectable and deeply touching for its readers.

**Verdict:** *This is the kind of book that you need to carry in your handbag while you're travelling to your next vacation getaway.*

**Courtesy:** *Thanks to the author and her publishers from Simon and Schuster, for giving me an opportunity to read and review this book.*

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### **Sarah says**

2.5 bumped up to 3 stars. I quite enjoyed this audiobook, but it is certainly not as good as others I have read by the same author. It rambles on rather too much for my taste.

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### **Christine Ottaway says**

I was rather disappointed by this novel. It had quite an interesting story especially the part surrounding the fashion scene in the 60's but I did not find it well written.

The basic style of telling the story using different people's perspectives and particularly changing the point of view in the middle of a scene made for a very disjointed narrative.

Most of all though I found the 'showing not telling' aspect almost non-existent. Good writing is supposed to be show not tell but this story was almost exclusively told and rarely shown. The book also needed a good edit. I do find it hard that professional publishers do not take enough care with their authors to produce a well-written novel.

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## **Breakaway Reviewers says**

A beautiful look at life

For many years Leonie has opened the doors of 11 Bellevue house to strangers in need. No matter if they are young, old, rich or poor. If they need a safe place, they can count on Leonie.

The new additions in the house are going through the worst parts of their lives so far, just as their new found sanctuary falls into trouble.

I absolutely loved this book! The stories of each resident are precious in their own right. No matter what your history, you will find a story that resonates with you.

The contrasted look at the older and younger characters and their lives is fantastically written and woven into the present and past. The similarities remind you to never judge a book by their cover...we all have a story to tell.

The ending wasn't what I expected; yet somehow it was even better. The perfect ending to an incredible look at these lives during their most turbulent time.

This is the perfect book to read when you're at a cross road, it reminds you that nobody's life is untroubled, and that the bad times can lead you to something even better.

Curtana

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review

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## **Cece says**

I enjoyed the plot. It was an interesting point of view choice of how the chapters were spread out. However I felt the book moved a bit slow for my complete liking

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## **Laura says**

Book reviews on [www.snazzybooks.com](http://www.snazzybooks.com)

I really enjoyed the other novels I've read by Rachel Hore, and eagerly anticipated reading this one. It moves a bit away from the style of many of the other novels that I've read - often moving between time frames with an element of mystery linking characters in the past and present together, etc. This novel still had two time frames - current day, where the majority was set, and small parts from the 1960's, showing Leonie's life as a model in London.

The story was nice enough to read, with characters developing as the story went on, but it lacked any real tension or mystery/ unexpected links between the two time frames, and the characters - although nice enough

- didn't really grab me like her other novels have done. The story is quite slow paced which I suppose does allow the reader to get to know the characters more this way - it just didn't draw me in the way I hope it would.

I would definitely say that if you haven't read any other books by Rachel Hore, start with either The Silent Tide or A Gathering Storm, as they're probably my favourites and I utterly love the style and changing time-frames within those novels. Sadly The House on Velleve Gardens just didn't live up to my expectations - I think the bar has just been set too high by some of her other novels, to be honest! It's a pleasant enough read, though, and has a fairly satisfying ending, so it would be fine if you want something fairly easy to read and not too demanding.

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### **Alison Large says**

Goodreads Giveaway Winner - thank you!

I enjoyed the use of short snippets of story from the viewpoint of each of the main characters, made it a great book for winding down before sleep. The story progresses quite gently and heads towards good outcomes for all. Nothing very surprising in the plot but an easy read that put a smile on my face.

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### **Tracey says**

not my favourite of Rachel Hore's books , I felt that this was a rather disjointed read. so many characters with different stories that didn't thread well.

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### **Donna Irwin says**

Quite disappointed. Not nearly as good as the author's previous books. The style of the story telling didn't help - short bursts of story from the viewpoint of too many different characters. It ended well though.

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### **Katie says**

Having read one book by Rachel Hore and mostly enjoyed it I thought I would try another. This book for me was so much better than the other one I read of hers. I liked it because she told the story of several people all very different and kept moving about from one persons story to another. This kept my interest. I liked the characters and as I couldn't predict where the story was going I liked the plot too. Its encouraged me to try another of her books

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