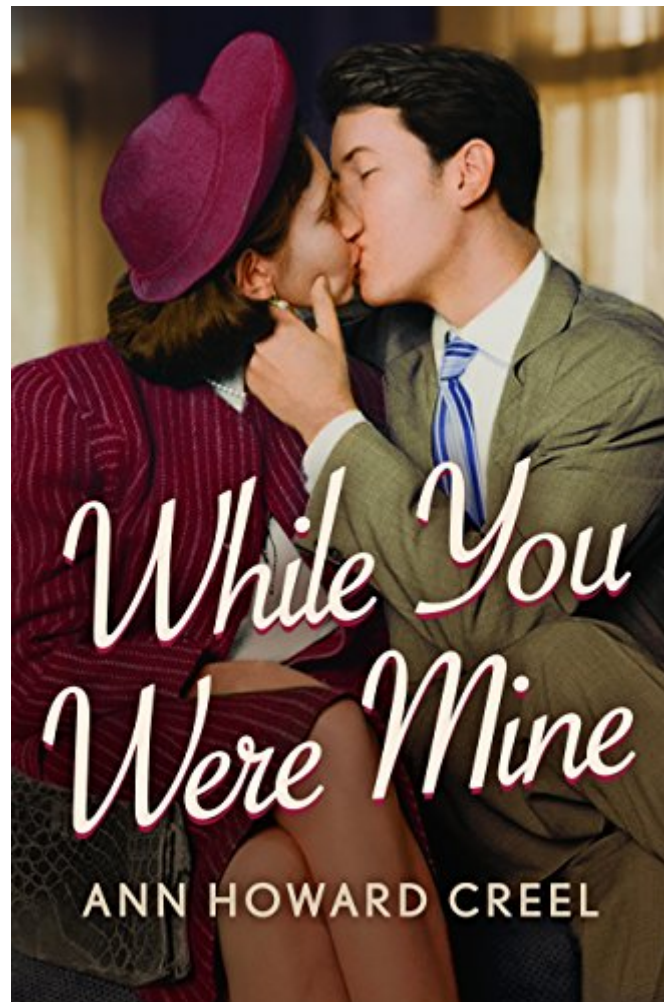


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# While You Were Mine



## Synopsis

Everything she loved could so easily be lost. The end of World War II should have brought joy to Gwen Mullen. But on V-J Day, her worst fear is realized. As celebrating crowds gather in Times Square, a soldier appears on her doorstep to claim Mary, the baby abandoned to Gwen one year earlier. Suddenly Gwen is on the verge of losing the child she has nurtured and loves dearly. With no legal claim to Mary, Gwen begins to teach Lieutenant John McKee how to care for his child, knowing that he will ultimately take Mary away. What starts as a contentious relationship, however, turns into something more, and Gwen must open her heart to learn that love means taking chances. *While You Were Mine* paints a vivid portrait of 1940s New York and tells an enchanting tale of the nature of love and trust.

## Book Information

File Size: 2461 KB

Print Length: 301 pages

Publisher: Lake Union Publishing (April 1, 2016)

Publication Date: April 1, 2016

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B012EZ3OMY

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,831 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #32 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Literary Fiction > Romance #47 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Literary Fiction > Historical #87 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Family Life

## Customer Reviews

I am going to admit to reading some books like this. I also read some romance novels and wear pink on occasion. So sue me.!! Actually, this book details a very difficult time in American history. The war is over, and soldiers are coming home. Wives and sweethearts are waiting at home and some of them will be faced with some harsh reality. Some of the war veterans will be faced with similar

realities. Loves and lives lost or irreparably damaged. Families torn apart and children left to wonder why..?? Ann Creel does a great job pulling together the disparate parts of those existences. She opens our heart to the happenstance, and in so doing opens our eyes to the reality and the wonder that can coexist. This is a coming of age book, except the lead character is not that young. This is a story of an impending difficult childhood, except the child is loved and cared for. In short, this is a story to cross generations and leave all of us with a sense of wonder. Our lead character, Gwen, has a sense of duty toward the child. As with most of us, should we be thrown into a similar situation, Gwen bonds with the child and her heart won't let her consider the potential ramifications... until the time for the child to be united with her father. Gwen is then faced with the prospect of losing "her" child to a soldier home from the war. Gwen has no legal claim to the child.... yet our sense of morality tells us that it is only "right" that the child, Mary, stay with Gwen. But what of the rights of the father..?? And what about the mother who abandoned the child..?? Can Gwen figure this out and maintain her sanity while doing what is best for Mary.?? This is a great story. A story of responsibility and righteous indignation. A story of stagnation and growth.

Let me just say that I find the fact that this story is based on the famous soldier-kissing-nurse photograph pretty amazing. What wasn't so great was the realization that I flat out could not stand John, our protagonist/substitute mother to his child's love interest. This does not bode well when reading a romance novel. This review will contain spoilers because I think it's important to note just how forced and unbalanced this relationship seems. Gwen's actually pretty amazing as a character, handling parenthood with grace after a roommate leaves a baby in her care. She works full time as a nurse and has a supportive best friend and a kindly babysitter. After John shows up her life is completely upended, but she recognizes she has no legitimate claim on the child and decides her best option is to teach him how to care for his daughter. Things are going well and some romance blooms before Alice, the long lost wife and mother, suddenly shows up again with the intent of picking up right where she left off. And, by golly, she gets exactly what she wants! John leaves Gwen immediately, saying that otherwise he risks Alice getting custody of the baby and really they should just try to be a family anyway for the kid's sake. This is all, mind you, despite the fact that Alice continues to show no interest in the baby. Put her in front of a mirror, she'd stare for hours. The worst part of this is they expect Gwen to keep custody and play nice until they're all ready to play house. Is there a happy ending? Yes. But if you ask me Gwen has some reflecting to do. The love she feels for Mary, John's daughter, is clear on every page. Her feelings for John are less so.

I am a hopeless romantic who loves romance movies that make me cry like a baby and books that tell such a beautiful love story that they feel extremely real so I was delighted to discover one of the Kindle First books this month is a historical romance! By now, I'm sure many people have seen the iconic WWII picture of a couple kissing taken in Times Square shortly after Truman announced that the war was over. *While You Were Mine* is the story of the nurse being kissed in the picture and her experiences in post-WWII New York City. Gwen Mullen is a 25-year-old nurse who left her family behind in rural Colorado to make something of herself. She moves to New York City to become a nurse where she meets other women like herself who are working as nurses to take care of the wounded soldiers. Gwen's circumstances leave her as the caregiver for a friend's infant where Gwen loves her and cares for her as a mother would. Then, the day she is dreading the most arrives when young Mary's father returns home from the war. Gwen knows she can't legally keep Mary as her own and she and John McKee, Mary's father, start spending a lot of time together so Mary can get used to him and get comfortable with him. What Gwen hasn't counted on is falling for the one person who can take her whole world away. Once I started this book, I had a very hard time putting it down. I feel *While You Were Mine* is a nice historical romance that tells the story of a woman who has never known true love. It is a timeless tale of love and I was easily able to picture the setting and now I've got that picture stuck in my head when I think about this book! I would like to mention that this book is more of a historical romance than historical fiction.

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