



## War Ready: In My Father's Shadow

*Mary Lou Darst*

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## **War Ready: In My Father's Shadow** Mary Lou Darst

"Her memoir is seen through the eyes of the girl living it, not at decades removed, which gives it both freshness and ache." By Kirkus Indie For young Mary Lou, life was an adventure. Her father served in the military, and she traveled the world with him and her family. His assignments took them to Alaska, Virginia, Japan, Texas, and Germany, as part of the US Army's responsibilities in policing the world. This candid memoir recounts her family's life in new places and cultures following World War II. What was it like to be a child living in Japan seven years after the war? What was it like to be a thirteen-year-old living in Germany twelve years after the war? What was it like to grow up moving between cultures? This is the story of one family bound to service in the military at a time when the world was being redefined. For a young girl, it was the adventure of a lifetime as she learned the secrets of finding her own way in that new world. The author's story was informed by reading her father's diary, which offers up intimate and candid insight into the life of a typical soldier in a time of war. His entries describe his time serving aboard a battleship built for 800 soldiers--but carrying 6,000 to war. His tales--told from the perspective of a young soldier in southern England, Wales, and Scotland from 1943 to 1945--are glimpses into a life many will never know firsthand.

## **War Ready: In My Father's Shadow Details**

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## **From Reader Review War Ready: In My Father's Shadow for online ebook**

### **Carissa says**

This book was written to be more of a memoir to her family, and then I guess she decided to sell it as well. As something to pass down to her family, this book is great. I wish my grandparents had written something like this for me. But as a reader who is not personally connected to the author in any way, this book left me disappointed.

There is so much potential in her life to make a truly incredible memoir; Mary Lou has been to fascinating places at monumental times. But the book itself needs some editorial help. The stories are often jumbled and include unnecessary bits, there are many spelling errors, and in my opinion she often got distracted. This all distanced myself from what I was reading and I found it difficult to become engaged.

I really wanted to like this book. If she were to ever go through a different editor and revise it, I would be willing to read it again. But for the moment, I give it three stars (for the potential)

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### **Melinda M says**

War Ready: In My Father's Shadow by Mary Lou Darst is an account of her family and where they were sent during and after World War II. It is told as a child remembering so the view point of things is different then most books. If you like history and/or memoirs this is an interesting read.

I received a copy thru a Goodreads Giveaway

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### **Devyn says**

I received this book from Goodreads.

War Ready is a fascinating account Mary Lou Darst's experiences with her family as a military dependent in various countries after World War Two.

I can't describe how excited I was to read about her experiences in Japan a few years after the war. I am a Japanese culture fanatic and a WW2 history buff so this part of the book had me raving. I loved reading about it and was glad that my favorite country took up a good chunk of the book.

Not saying that reading about Germany, Alaska, and my home state of Texas wasn't just as good. I enjoyed the foreignness of reading about the German culture and how, to my surprise, the people weren't as downtrodden from the war as I'd imagined.

I'm not going to lie, some aspects of this book almost made me quit reading it. Reading about her abusive father and her mother's inaction made me furious.

I wanted to scream, I was so mad.

Mary Lou has obviously had many years to think over her father's actions and describes it often as his 'warrior personality' or his insistence that his children be raised as if they were soldiers.

I disagree.

Being in the military, the war, or a warrior's personality does not excuse or defend the emotional and physical abuse this man did to his two children. It's called being an asshole- a waste of oxygen. I could write on and on about how that man was a total douse-bag, but I figure anyone wanting to read the book has been

properly warned in other reviews.

Despite everything about the awful abusive father, this book really is worth the read if the reader likes history and memoirs.

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### **Christine Matha says**

I found this book to be a nice personal account of her family history growing up and tidbits of the time. It had thoughtful insight on what life was like for her growing up, but I had a difficult time relating. Her relationship with her father was sometimes confusing and often sad. It was a nice reflection of her life and most probably a therapeutic work for the author to write.

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### **Dawne says**

I enjoyed reading this book. a very touching account of her life remembering her father.

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### **Desley Mcleod says**

This was certainly an interesting read from the child's view watching the crazy world of wartime. I felt for her as she was pushed aside from her father and his regimented ways just looking for a sign of love. But that's how the wartime world was. But in the end they came out unscathed as such and returned to continue life in a free country.

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### **Ludwig Samereier says**

Well, I did not THINK too much while reading WAR READY.

To be honest, I cried a lot. Especially when I followed Mary Lou as a 9 year old around Nara, Japan, where she lived as a 9 year old. On post, her soldier-father tried to raise his kids according to Army-regulations. Her mother quietly goes along. Mary Lou, torn between her parents' expectations and her desire to make friends, is alone at first.

I couldn't but feel sorry for this little girl marooned in country whose language she doesn't speak. So did Japanese youngsters. As Mary Lou recounts in the chapter JAPANESE LIFE:

"The first week of school was difficult for me. I had to walk several long blocks from our house to the intersection of a main street. A military bus would stop and pick me up before heading to the top of Mount Kurokuyama, where the American school was located. When I walked to the bus stop in the morning, there were no adults or children out walking. I was the only one on the wide brick street. No one else came and waited for the bus. I stood all alone on the side walk.

In the distance I noticed large groups of uniformed Japanese school children on their way to school, staring at me while slowly crossing the street closer to the bus stop where I was standing alone, and they could have a better look at me.

By the middle of the week they walked to the bus stop, where they stood and stared at me for a long time

without smiling, or moving, or speaking- which terrified me. No one had ever stared at me in that way. My mother taught me that it was very rude to stare. I perceived them as suspicious and threatening. I looked for a place to hide, but there was no hope for an escape; in front of me were two empty lots across the street, and behind me was a row of locked gates and doors.

The students never took off their eyes off me and never smiled, but the group moved toward me slowly until I was completely surrounded. I could not have escaped even if I had tried. Without showing any emotion and avoiding any eye contact, a group of students put their hands on me with great care, rubbing their hands back and forth on my arms, watching and feeling my skin. After touching me, the first group moved on, but behind them others took their place. Each student took a turn touching and rubbing my arms, but no one smiled, no one spoke, and no one looked at me directly. I was so terrified. I stood as still as a statue, staring at the ground while my heart nearly palpitated out of my chest. Finally, the last students moved on. I could not endure this every day. I wanted to run home and never leave the house. When I stood alone trying to decide whether to head home or go to school, the bus arrived. The door opened and I ran up to the stairs, sat down, and felt a rush of relief. I was too young and too frightened to know that people care for each other, even when they do not speak the same language. I realize now how kind and caring the students were to show their concern for me. They may also have been very curious about the American student. It was quite different with adults...."

End of quote.

I wish Mary Lou's reaches many a reader's heart that may still be hurt by any war. Little Mary Lou may heal it.

Thank you, Mary Lou, for writing this book. I liked it from the start.

It is a great pleasure for me to have met you personally. Ludwig aka SGT SAM in Munich, Germany

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### **Brenda Ayala says**

The best way to describe this book is to say that it is a great addition to the author's family, but outside of that there isn't too much of merit. There's no plot to speak of; it's random tidbits of information about her life, and most of them are normal parts of a normal life.

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