

A children’s home in the 1950s must have been one of the most desolate places on earth. Donna Davis spent her childhood in such places, deprived of all childish joys like warmth, good food and family life. So little was thought of these children that it was not until she was eleven that she discovered she had sisters in other Victorian orphanages, just a few hours away.

There are many mothers in Sins of the Mothers, and most of them are at best inadequate. The nuns at her first orphanage were all addressed as Mother, but most behaved with thoroughly unmotherly coldness and cruelty to the children. Donna’s own mother was a wreck and Donna could never form a relationship with her. Even when she grew up, the mothers of her various men friends were mostly cold and unwelcoming, with one or two honourable exceptions.

So what sort of mother was Donna likely to become? This book is about her progress from a frightened bedwetting waif who had no idea of love to a strong and finally contented single mother of three children. Harrowing and intense, The Sins of the Mothers is plea for humane treatment of the most vulnerable.