

## **Libya's 1970s Retold**

Chicago, IL, USA

*Chameleon in my Garden* is the debut novel by British author NITA NICHOLSON. Set in Libya's 1970s, it describes the brutality of the Gaddafi regime towards its own people, as it suppresses freedom of speech.

### **Brief Synopsis:**

A son is imprisoned for dissent, and then disappeared. As his fate remains unclear, communication and trust within his distraught family break down. Innocent actions of individuals are not as obscured from scrutiny as they imagine. The garden, where the chameleon hides, is the family's only place of refuge. The atmosphere is ominous. The story unfolds relentlessly, often taking the reader by surprise as the reality of unfettered power is revealed.

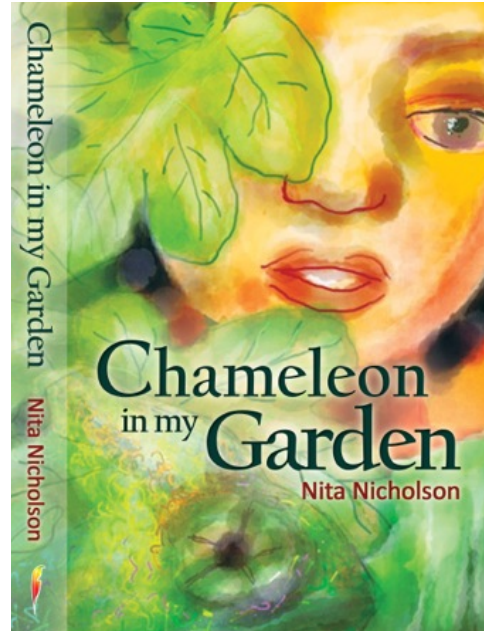
First released in the United Kingdom in April this year, Nita Nicholson's debut historical fiction novel will be released in paperback in the United States November 29, 2014.

Reviewers describe *Chameleon in my Garden* as "visually powerful," "a very special read," "riveting" and "beautifully written."

*Chameleon in my Garden* sheds completely new light on the early years of the Libyan regime of Colonel Gaddafi. Fear of reprisal towards her Libyan family, including her children made this an impossible story to tell before now.

Ms Nicholson writes from first-hand experience of the 1970s, when Gaddafi was still being portrayed in the world at large as a benign revolutionary leader. Surveillance was extensive and invasive of private and public life, both obvious and hidden. Those who spoke out paid the price with their lives. Gaddafi's rule was capricious and vindictive. Public hangings reinforced the reign of terror which continued for forty-two years, until the uprising in February 2011.

More information available at [nitanicholson.com](http://nitanicholson.com).



**Full Synopsis**

The novel is set in Benghazi in the East of Libya and focusses on a family whose son, a medical doctor, has been imprisoned for dissent, and then disappeared.

His English wife and two children, along with his extended family, await his return, with waning and waxing hope. As his fate remains unclear, communication and trust within his family break down. Innocent actions of individuals are not as hidden as they imagine.

Life in general is fraught with the exigencies of a dictatorship that tolerates no dissent, and which attempts to confine the lives of its subjects to the menial tasks of basic survival devoid of normal human expression and social relations.

Different family members take risks in their search for the missing son. The silencing of the human voice is represented in the fates of three central characters – all poets.

The garden, where the chameleon hides, is the family's place of refuge. The atmosphere is ominous. The story unfolds relentlessly, often taking the reader by surprise as the reality of unfettered power is revealed.

**Author Biography**

Nita Nicholson is an author, poet and artist living in the UK.

Ms Nicholson lived with her Libyan family and two children in Libya in the 1970s. She spent many years visiting her husband, a political prisoner, in Tripoli and Benghazi prisons. While there, Ms Nicholson taught at the university in Benghazi.

Years later, Ms Nicholson returned to the safety of the UK where she remained with her children. Already a graduate in Fine Arts from Leeds University where she had met her husband, Ms Nicholson went on to study for her Masters Degree in Applied Linguistics at Birkbeck College London - all the while campaigning for her husband's release.



Reflecting on the long and dark years of state killings and disappearances, she returned to writing. When in 2011 the Libyan 'street' spoke out despite its fear of retribution, she was spurred on to conclude and share her first novel on the social impact of state terror.