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Home To Holly Springs (Father Tim)



Synopsis

Sometimes a trip back home becomes a journey of the soul.

Book Information

Series: Father Tim (Book 1)

Audio CD

Publisher: Penguin Audio (October 30, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0143142542

ISBN-13: 978-0143142546

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1.6 x 5.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (507 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I was so happy to hear that Jan Karon was writing about Father Tim's early life. After all, he came to us fully grown, without much back story. Enjoying retirement and his life in Mitford, North Carolina, Father Tim receives a letter postmarked from his home town. The letter contains only two words: Come home. Although it's been 38 years since he was in Holly Springs, Father Tim and his loyal canine companion Barnabus set out from Mitford, to the small Mississippi town of his childhood. The book is lovely. Like the Southern town in the title, the story moves along at its own pace and we're the better for it. Getting to know the people from Father Tim's home town is both satisfying and fulfilling. I fell in love with each one. Karon is a great storyteller and a keen observer of human nature. As each scene plays out, we get the feeling that Father Tim is wrapping up a lot of unfinished business. We meet his first love. We learn why there was so much friction between Father Tim and his father. We learn why Father Tim's mother was sad. We learn how Tim found his way to the priesthood. When the "big reveal" comes, and Father Tim learns the purpose behind the letter, the emotions of all the parties just leap off the page and into your heart. I could see the sitting room in Peggy's house and I could taste the homemade lemonade she served Father Tim as she poured her heart out. Some professional reviewers have chastised Karon for a "Hollywood" ending. To me, it played out perfectly. Karon is a master of sweet, gentle fiction and she is on top of her

game here. I will be re-reading "Home to Holly Springs" again soon. It's that good. Enjoy.

Just as Father Tim had been away from Holly Springs for nearly 40 years and yet when he returns "it's like he never left," so likewise those of us who have read many of Karon's books have missed the time in Mitford with her, this new series brings us instantly back home to her comfortable style and easy prose. The mystery of a two-word letter for him to "come home" unfolds linked with flashbacks into his past which provide the historical setting. In this are such as suspected murder, rape and mysterious disappearance of family and friends, as well as inter-family spiritual matters between Baptists and Episcopalian. It's much like her Mitford series with joke tellers, and Fr. Tim making new acquaintances easily as well as reacquainting with past ones. Much to this reviewer's delight is her continued emphasis of the faith which easily intensifies in such a series focused around the developing life of this Episcopalian priest. However, even if the reader is not into this Christian side of things, there is so much other great veins running through this, such as human compassion for those of all color and race. Easily one can see possible projections of this series in return visits to Mississippi as well as development of this new set of characters that were not in sight in Mitford. Great to see the inclusion of many of Mitford cast which hopefully and likely will continue in this one. So we have the new, exciting series to wait and see where our wordsmith superb Karon will be leading us.

I have been a huge fan of the Mitford books since the first one came out. I even have the cookbook and bedside reader and read them often! So I bought this book with high hopes and great relief that I didn't have to say goodbye to my old friend so soon after all. Unfortunately, the way that Karon wrapped up every single solitary thing in Father Tim's past so miraculously and unimaginatively, made me wish that she'd left us with the complex, good, struggling man that we love so dearly from her past books. In addition, the writing was downright clunky for most of the book. She made really unclear and jolting transitions between past and future, so that I'd find myself going back a paragraph and reading more slowly to see if I had missed some kind of transition. Every time she went from past to future I was pulled out of the story because the transitions were confusing or nonexistent, and she went in and out of the past every other page in some parts. I think the problem might be poor editing? Had a good third to half of the first half of the book been cut or filled with some real substance instead of tediously written detail, the book would have been a lot better. And to get back to the miraculous happenings that allowed him to clear up every single thing in his past on one trip, I want to add a disclaimer. I like happy endings. I don't mind stretching my imagination

to believe that wonderful and coincidental things happen so that the main character can be happy. But Karon stretched it WAY past the point of believability. I was really disappointed in this latest from her. I will certainly buy the next one, but perhaps I will wait for the paperback.

I was afraid that when Ms. Karon finished the Mitford books and decided to explore Father Tim's early life that I would not like it because she had left Mitford behind. I was mistaken in my presumption. I quickly learned that, as Father Tim says in this book: "Home is not Mitford. Home is not Holly Springs. Home is where Cynthia and family are." To me, home is where Father Tim is. Tim is his usual warm and wonderful self in this book. He never meets a stranger and always has a kind and loving word for everyone. When I read Karon's books, it makes me want to be a better Christian. I want to go to Father Tim's church, hear him preach and have him pray for me. Karon explores Father Tim's boyhood and growing up years. My heart cried for him when his father treated him so badly. I loved Father Tim's mother and I think he got his generous soul from her. I love how he handled the big reveal hinted at in the two word letter that sent him to Holly Springs. I don't think we have seen the last of Holly Springs. I laughed and cried and was blessed by this book, just as I was at all 9 Mitford books and the companion volumes. There is a lot of sadness and pain in this book, but there is also tremendous joy and great love. I would have like to have seen more of Cynthia and Dooley, but it was such a wonderful journey we take with Father Tim. There are great characters in Holly Springs, too. My favorite is Mitford, though, I must confess. I just returned today from Blowing Rock, NC, where Karon lived when writing many of the Mitford books and which is believed to be the town she modeled Mitford after. It is a lovely little village and I feel like I'm maybe feeling a little bit of Mitford when I visit as I have done on many occasions. This is simply a wonderful and charming book and I look forward to more of Father Tim's life. I only wish she wrote faster! I read the book and then I was disappointed because I was finished and would have to wait for another one!

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