



## Home to Holly Springs

*Jan Karon*

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Readers of the nine bestselling Mitford novels have been captivated by Jan Karon's gift for illuminating the struggles that creep into everyday lives along with a vividly imagined world (*People*). They learned quickly that after you've spent time in Mitford, you'll want to come back (*Chicago Tribune*). Millions eagerly awaited the publication of each novel, relishing the story of the bookish and bighearted Episcopal priest and the extraordinary fullness of his seemingly ordinary life.

Now, Jan Karon enchants us with the story of the newly retired priest's spur-of-the-moment adventure. For the first time in decades, Father Tim returns to his birthplace, Holly Springs, Mississippi, in response to a mysterious, unsigned note saying simply: *Come home*. Little does he know how much these two words will change his life. A story of long-buried secrets, forgiveness, and the wonder of discovering new people, places, and depth of feeling, *Home to Holly Springs* will enthrall new readers and longtime fans alike.

## Home to Holly Springs Details

Date : Published October 30th 2007 by Viking (first published 2007)

ISBN : 9780670018253

Author : Jan Karon

Format : Hardcover 356 pages

Genre : Fiction, Christian Fiction, Christian

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## **From Reader Review Home to Holly Springs for online ebook**

### **Joyce says**

Public library copy. This is the first in the Father Tim series. I read the Mitford series first. I recommend reading the Father Tim series where it goes in the order of the Mitford series, which is between #9 Light From Heaven and #10 Somewhere Safe with Somebody Good, I believe. This book does stand alone, as all of her books do, but if you like reading books in the order in which they happened, that's where it goes.

I really enjoyed this book. It told the story of Father Tim's childhood, things he didn't know about himself. If you like to put puzzles together, you'll like this book. Everything fit nicely together except for the last piece still being a mystery. I love the way she wove so many pieces of his past together in this story. Anyone who dreams of reconciling their past with their present (and future) will enjoy this author's work in Home to Holly Springs.

That being said, it is not an easy or light read. And it sheds light on the wisdom in not knowing everything when you are going through it, or when you are young. The wisdom of experience is a great teacher.

The only thing I didn't like about this book, which is necessary to the story, is that I missed all of the Mitford characters. I hope the author writes more Holly Springs books! It would be nice to get to know the Holly Springs characters better. I highly recommend this book, but caution young readers because it is not light reading, and while clean, it may be better for mature readers.

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### **Jerusha says**

I have enjoyed every book in the Mitford series & this one now more than all the previous. maybe it was the timing in my own life...i read this book as I travelled home for my Grandma's funeral.

This books reminds me of much our God works through the whole mess of life!! He is worthy of our trust & praise!

I want to tell more of all that he has done in my life, tell of His wonders...miracles still happen!!

The emphasis on Scripture & Truth and the sharing of both even in the darkest moments of life...and the freedom to live that it brings....makes me want to stand a shout of His goodness!!! His mercy!!! to me and so many others all throughout time....

Share the stories!! look at your life and see when He has done!!!

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### **Tina says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The issues Father Tim deals with from his past as he returns to Holly Springs are not easy, but God is in it all and grace abounds. And, any book that has a character quoting Elizabeth Goudge is a winner for me. ?

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## **Steven says**

Sometimes you cannot divorce a book from the personal context in which you read it. In this case, it was a divine pairing. Just when I needed it most, I reached some of the most climactic events in this grace-filled work. It ministered to me and helped me to better handle the challenges I was facing.

Briefly, my son, vice president of his freshman class, got in trouble at school for horseplay, was railroaded through a kangaroo court, was not allowed to offer a defense (or to speak at all) and no recourse was available when he suffered a punishment only one step short of expulsion from the private Christian school (a school whose motto last year was “a culture of grace”).

As a lawyer, father, and former teacher, accepting the school’s decisions was difficult at best. But Karon’s book helped me. Each morning, lunch hour, and evening, her work imparted nuggets of grace to me that not only blessed me, but blessed my family. The grace in her book helped me give grace to my son when he felt beaten-down and rejected on all sides. The book helped me encourage my wife, who struggled with the loyalties she felt as both a Bible teacher at the school and as the mother of a son she believed had done the “crime,” but not a crime worthy of the outrageous sentence. The book helped me remain quiet when other parents of similarly prosecuted sons were arguing with the administration in the mornings and meeting with lawyers in the afternoons. In short, God used the simple, charming book, *Home to Holly Springs*, to give grace to me and my entire family during a time when we needed it desperately.

I have not read any other books by Jan Karon. But I will.

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## **Ellen Trautner says**

I love the Mitford series, and this is the beginning of a spinoff series about Father Tim, the main character, going off on adventures outside Mitford. While it was enjoyable and wholesome, I missed Mitford and all the "regulars" and I just didn't really care about the new characters that much, except for the mysterious Peggy. I also got confused a lot, because there were a lot of unannounced flashbacks that were disorienting. This story was about Father Tim finally returning to his hometown and dealing with family skeletons and tracking down the truth about unsettling family scandals. Even though there were lots of storylines that were neatly tied up in a bow, they were kind of dark and a bit sadder than usual.

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## **Kate says**

Without giving too many spoilers away, I loved how this book brought the snippets of his past that we'd learned about Father Tim from previous novels and made them into a more cohesive 'backstory' for the character. There were many twists and turns to the story as well, and it left me more than satisfied.

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## **Margaret says**

Reading this book was like sitting on the porch sipping lemonade and talking with old friends. Truth be told

it reminded me of my childhood days listening to my parents and family talk about the old days. I was thinking back to the visits to Kentucky listening to conversation and meals at the dinner table. One of my favorite things to do is to read and when a book helps me to re-capture a memory of an age long gone, I am quite happy. There are few authors that can handle conversation between characters deftly as this author. Father Tim rang true to me in this story and became fleshed out thoroughly. I am going to miss him now and I plan on reading all the books in the series.

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### **Red says**

Totally LOVED this book. Travel with Father Tim back to his home town. Find out what happened to his family and boyhood friends. Laugh and cry with him as he remembers, revisits and renews.

There has to be, at the very least, two more books. We must have the upcoming trip to Ireland with cousin Walter and his wife, and then the story where Dooley and Lace finally get married.

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### **Deborah says**

It is so hard to explain what happens to me when I read the Father Tim books. I laugh, I cry, I can't wait to finish the book and yet I don't want it to end. Is it because Father Tim is a minister who is so humanly fallible? Or is it because he is surrounded by intriguing people and circumstances that make such a good story?

One thing that appeals to me is that even though Karon's characters struggle and face hard decisions and physical difficulties (in other words, all of life!) she writes in a uplifting tone. Being an optimist myself I really relate to this kind of writing. Can't say anymore without spoiling the book!

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### **Julie Gentino says**

Jan Karon's Mitford series are my comfort books - the first books that come to mind when I am sick or depressed or just need a light, heart-warming read. It is hard for me to describe just how much I love these books and the characters in them, but let's just say my husband thinks it's very weird! Home to Holly Springs is the first of Karon's new Father Tim series (sequel to the Mitford series). The reviews I had read said it is not as good and I would agree with them. Karon is a terrific story-teller and I think anything she writes is a pleasure to read, but Home to Holly Springs just didn't have the same magic as her former novels. She seemed so intent on wrapping up all loose ends of Father Tim's childhood that her characters fell a bit flat and too many unrealistic coincidences occurred.

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### **Ginger says**

I loved this book in the end. It was a little hard getting there, because as one reviewer said, this is Karon's "most emotionally complex novel."

Truth be told, I've avoided reading the Father Tim novels for years, because I've just loved Mitford too

much, and I didn't want it to really end. But I've been rereading the whole series this year (they are great comfort when going through major life changes of your own), so I thought I'd finally delve on in.

I love going to Mitford to escape. And I've come to love Father Tim dearly, so to see him go back home and face some of the hard things of his childhood (not to mention to see him be a little naughty as a boy in some cases), wasn't always pleasant.

But it made the character so much more deep, well-rounded, and in the end, it was beautiful and enjoyable.

Oh that we could all have the close, trusting relationship with the Father that Tom Kavanagh enjoys! Karon's books never fail to make me pray a little more, love others a little more, and trust God's plan for my life.

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### **Glenda L says**

I have read all of The Mitford Series books and loved them. This one fills in the early life of Father Tim. He travels back home for the first time in 38 years. He received an envelope with a note that says Come Home. There are many stories of his childhood, some he remembered and some that surprised him very much. I enjoyed this book very much and would recommend it to anyone who has read the Mitford Series.

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### **Barbara says**

With the shift away from Mitford, I wondered how things would work for the Father Tim stories. Well...just fine!

This was my second time reading it and it was worth multiple readings. Probably the most emotionally charged in a way, potent with Father Tim's memories of growing up, as he fills in the gaps between what he remembers and the realities he didn't understand (or wasn't even aware of). After the years of "dropped hints" in the other Mitford novels, it was cool to get a more full story regarding Father Tim. Just make sure you have the tissues handy!

I know it's been criticized for a few too many "coincidences" but a good author can get away with those in the right context, and this time it worked. Especially in Father Tim's long-standing desire for a brother. Overall this is really a story about grace, forgiveness, restoration, and yes, what home is really all about.

While many beloved characters never make an appearance, I think this is probably one of my favorites in the series.

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### **karen says**

so i figured this, which i read for the christian/gentle segment of R/A class, would be the beigeest of the beige: dentist office carpeting, hotel room art, supermarket music (although my supermarket plays a lot of corey

hart and toad the wet sprocket, so - awesome) but what i didn't count on from "gentle reading" was *quite* so much attempted rape, whipping, and use of the word "nigger" by white people. sure, it takes place in mississippi, whose racial tolerance has come a long way, baby (oh, but i still do think he is dreamy...) but i thought the point of gentle fiction was to excise all the uncomfortable realities and serve up some pap for the grannies. guess not. the reality of *this* world is one where a man gets an unsigned notecard in the mail from his hometown (40 years after leaving it) that says "come home" and nothing more. and he *goes*, receiving cryptic phone messages and other notes throughout and DOES NOT GET DISMEMBERED at the end. this is a gentle world, indeed, full of obedience and no consequences for foolishness:

"who is \_\_\_\_\_??" (i have kindly avoided spoilers.)

"i have no idea, except he's the one who wrote me in mitford. i talked to him on the phone this morning, he wants me to meet this afternoon at one o'clock"

"where? and what for?"

"we'll meet at frank's place, he says someone wants to see me, insists the whole thing is covered by prayer. we'll drive out to the country about fifteen miles."

she pondered this. "how do you feel about going off with a total stranger who lacks the courtesy to sign what he writes, much less tell you what he's up to?"

"he sounds like an agreeable fellow. there's nothing to worry about. i promise"

.....

famous last words, in the real world. teenaged girls - take heed: THIS IS A BAD IDEA.

but be that as it may, i was going to give this three stars because i didn't hate the dickens out of it. but it's not great, and i will never read another of her books, and i can't see giving this the same number of stars as i gave borges, even to prove some anti-elitist point, for which i do not have the strength.

my favorite quote, which does kind of serve as a commentary of the genre:

"you want your lip balm in cherry, lemon, or chocolate?"

.....

"can't it just be plain??" nothing was plain anymore.

.....

well, not nothingzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

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## Karen says

Given that I'm generally down on most things religious, it's a wonder even to me that I am inordinately fond of Jan Karon's numerous works about Father Tim, his wife Cynthia, the fictional North Carolina town of Mitford and their collective "adventures." Karon has created an entire world populated with interesting, funny and all-too-human people. She brings us with them as they grow and change over a number of years. Tim is an Episcopal priest and faith has a large place in these works. But the faith part is actually inspiring

and deftly done. Karon is wonderful at bringing people and situations to life -- often with humor and always with great compassion for her characters. If you like a gentle but compelling story and haven't read any Jan Karon yet, give her a try. I think it's best to start at the beginning of the world she created: *At Home in Mitford*. If you like these, let me know.

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### **Jodi says**

I'm usually not a "series" person, but I find these books continue to have great content and quality that challenge and touch me every time. I have \*listened\* to all of them (highly recommend), so I'm not sure how I would have responded to reading them myself. I'm not completely sure why I enjoy them so much when other close friends "can't get into them." I guess we just enjoy different types of books. Someday I'll find my "bosom (reading) friend." :) I think it has something to do with me enjoying fiction/verse and the whimsical things in life. She's a prosaic, pragmatic, non-fiction kind of gal. I force myself to read both, but I'd eat up fiction all day long if I let myself.

Anyhow, yes, all the loose ends tie up, but I don't mind. Her insights into relational dynamics always keep me thinking. Hope she keeps on writing as long as she can.

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### **Rachel says**

Even though this is considered a Father Tim novel rather than a Mitford novel, it is chronologically number 10 of the Mitford series except for the fact Father Tim is visiting his hometown in Mississippi for the entire novel. So, I consider this to be the tenth book of a laid back series about an Episcopalian priest in a small town in North Carolina. It is often funny and sweet with the occasional sad vignette mixed into the plot. According to my records, I've read this novel before, but it must have been a long time ago because I'd completely forgotten it. Anyhow, it explained a lot about Father Tim's background and served to develop his character even more, and I enjoyed it.

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### **Marilyn says**

A feel good story, with very likeable characters from the south, that are easy to get to know.

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### **Kelly says**

3.5 stars. I am a huge fan of the Mitford Series and love Jan Karon's soothing beautiful writing. I liked the story, it was interesting to learn about Father Tim's childhood, but it wasn't as magical as the Mitford books. There were moments of that in this book...many that made me tear up and I did come to love Peggy and Henry and T and Ray and others :) Even so, I missed all the Mitford folks!

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## **The Library Lady says**

The believability factor of the Mitford books has always been dicey, but this goes beyond that and into fairy tale land. Without giving much away, Father Tim goes home and finds ALL of his various long lost friends and relations--often by pure serendipity. And hasn't Karon used the "relative you didn't know you had" bit once too often? Or does everyone born south of the Mason Dixon line fornicate that freely? (If so, I am worrying for my daughters--I live in Virginia :))

This is a cozy read, like all the Mitford books. And I don't expect hard bitten reality from Karon. But this one gives the term "suspension of disbelief" a whole new meaning.

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