



Mrs. Tim Flies Home

D.E. Stevenson

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The countless readers of D.E. Stevenson's delightful novels will be especially engrossed by this one, the final book of her four-part "Mrs. Tim" series, and will find Hester Christie, herself, more lovable than ever. Humor, charm, and a superb talent for storytelling are the hallmarks of D.E. Stevenson's work.

Leaving Tim (now a colonel) in Kenya, Mrs. Tim flies home to her children for the summer in her beloved North Country. A stopover in Rome allows for the unexpected renewal of an old friendship with Tony Morley—a friendship regarded as highly suspect by fellow passenger Rosa Alston.

Once installed in The Small House in Old Quinings, a host of local characters—some familiar to followers of Mrs. Tim's adventures—brighten and shadow Hester's life. Tony Morley turns up, but so does Rosa Alston with her gossipy innuendos. Mrs. Tim has a trying time with a singularly unpleasant landlady, but two young romances enliven the village, and Mrs. Tim closes her diary on a note of infectious happiness.

Mrs. Tim Flies Home Details

Date : Published January 1st 1974 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston (first published 1952)

ISBN : 9780030131714

Author : D.E. Stevenson

Format : Paperback 284 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, European Literature, British Literature, Humor, Literature, 20th Century

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From Reader Review Mrs. Tim Flies Home for online ebook

Ivonne Rovira says

I should be very, very sad; after all, this is the final Mrs. Tim book. However, author D.E. Stevenson does such a wonderful job entertaining the reader that the book is over before one has the chance to turn melancholy.

In this (fourth or fifth, depending on whether one counts *Golden Days: Further Leaves from Mrs. Tim's Journal* as half of *Mrs. Tim Christie* of a stand-alone) novel, Hester Christie comes to the English countryside to await her husband's return from Kenya, where he is currently stationed. She rents a house in the backwater village of Old Quinings -- called *The Small House* after a home in an Anthony Trollope novel -- from a harridan named Olivia Stoude. This rude, greedy woman inherited the house from her kindly step-mother, the beloved Lorna Stroude, who built *The Small House*. Hester meets some wonderful new people, such as Susan Morven, a pretty young girl saddened by her parents' rocky marriage; Anne Carlyle, the learned but awkward spinster who's schoolmistress and librarian in Old Quinings; and the malicious Miss Crease, who lives next door. She also is reunited with old friends Tony Morley, now a general, and Annie and Fred Bollings.

All of the Mrs. Tim Christie novels are magnificent, but, in this one, there's more action than usual as wagging tongues malign Hester as an adulteress, several romances are kindled, and a missing valuable letter penned by Lord Byron goes missing. That the resolution will reward the good and give the wicked their comeuppance, while foreordained, still contains a twist or two. (view spoiler)

However, as with the other Mrs. Tim books, the real pleasure remains in enjoying the characters. Whether the detestable Miss Stroude, the shy but loyal "Hedgehog" Edgeburton or the lovable but mischievous MacDougall twins, Stevenson makes her characters into living, breathing folks who feel you really know. Even in novels where not much happens, such as *Mrs. Tim Gets A Job*, it doesn't really matter: Stevenson paints the everyday situations as so humorous or interesting that nothing else matters.

Readers would be best served to start with the first book, *Mrs. Tim of the Regiment*, also published as *Mrs. Tim Christie*. But the final volume, *Mrs. Tim Flies Home*, proves a fabulous capstone to a memorable series.

Jeanette says

The fourth and final Mrs. Tim book and I am exceedingly sad to have it all come to an end. I shall miss reading about Mrs. Tim, all her exploits, friends and family. How I wish there were more! Just an absolutely fun and charming group of books.

Rosemary says

This is the final book in Stevenson's "Mrs. Tim" series about Hester Christie, a young(-ish, in this one) British wife and mother. This installment begins with Hester "flying home" to England from Kenya, where her husband, Tim, an Army officer, is stationed. She's taken a house in the small village of Old Quinings for

the summer and fall, and in the way of the series, the book recounts her "adventures" there in journal form.

As with all the "Mrs. Tim" books, this book is character- and description-driven, not highly plot-driven. Oh, you have the usual Hester-Christie dilemmas as she tries to help two young lovers get around the boy's interfering mother, befriends the lonely village school mistress, and deals with rumors that she's having an affair with longtime family friend Tony Morley.

That summary makes the novel sound as dull as can be, but the books are really about Hester's (and Stevenson's) wit and sly observations about village life, romance, friendships, and the impossibility of English picnics.

I didn't find this final book as charming as the first three, and not nearly as funny. The characters here aren't as well-developed and played out as in the previous ones. But it's still a lovely, light, nostalgic read...which is just what I was in the mood for in these dreary early days of February.

Fave quotes:

I leave her standing there and walk on. Somehow I am rather pleased with myself, for this is quite definitely a victory; not only a victory over Miss Crease but also over my own cowardice. I see now that I should have tackled Miss Crease before. I should have walked up to the bull and seized it by the horns instead of sitting back and pretending I did not notice its antics. Like all bulls--and bullies--Miss Crease should be firmly handled.

Anne Carlyle: "I have a great deal to make me thankful, and usually I am thankful and contented. But today is my birthday and...I am foolish enough to feel it to be a milestone. I was sitting on the milestone reckoning up all the miles I have traveled and feeling a little anxious about the miles in front of me when you found me."

Carolyn says

Delightful as always.

Mrs. Tim flies home from Africa after a prolonged stay with her husband after the war's end. She rents a house in Old Quinings and unravels a mystery about her house and the town schoolteacher. She also traps a human bull by the horns. Hester's children are growing into adults and she discovers that a friend is romantically interested in her daughter Betty.

This is the fourth installment of D.E. Stevenson's pseudo biography character Hester. She started writing the series from her journals as a military wife at the request of a young bride-to-be who borrowed them because she wanted to know what life was like as a military wife. The young lady encouraged Mrs. Stevenson (Peploe) to publish them, so she spiced them up and published them with her alter-self as the lead character.

connected to: Mrs. Tim; Mrs Tim Gets a Job; Mrs Tim Carries On; Kate Hardy

Susan says

This is the last in the series about Mrs. Tim, the wife of an English career army officer. Mrs. Tim leaves Tim and their temporary station in Kenya to return to England for a visit with their children. Visiting an old Army friend in Rome en route leads to rumors and possible complications with her husband. Once in England, Mrs. Tim gets involved with the people and life in the small town where she is residing. Mrs. Tim is a delightful character, and her adventures usually recounted in a lightly humorous way make pleasant reading.

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Iffah says

The final installation of the Mrs Tim series, neatly wraps up and gives the reader closure. We met again all the familiar characters. I was especially interested to find out what had happened to Annie, Betty and Bryan, as well as Major Morley.

It is always fun to read Hester's diary, and I always feel that I should really start journaling again. If only I had the time!

If you haven't read any of DE Stevenson's books and you're thinking of starting, I would highly recommend you begin with this series.

It is always a delight to "meet" Hester, her family and friends again.

Katharine Holden says

Shallow post-war sequel to Mrs. Tim of the Regiment (or, Mrs. Tim Christie). In this one, Mrs. Tim seems to have lost all her oomph. At one point a landlord demands she vacate a rental house on short notice. We readers are supposed to believe that Mrs. Tim, an army wife and veteran of many a household move, is too helpless to remember she signed a lease agreement for the house. Also, Mrs. Tim Flies Home purports to continue the series' use of diary entries. But Mrs. Tim Flies Home is written in straight narrative.

Cera says

Mrs. Tim becomes less and less competent and more and more silly, but there are some bits I liked very much. Her endless naivete about the guy who is in love with her still drives me nuts, though.

Squeak2017 says

I try not to judge books from earlier eras from a twenty first century standpoint, but I find it hard to see the Christies as the model family the author would have us believe they are. The teenage children at boarding

school have not seen their parents for 18 months; the wife is leaving her husband for six months to spend only a few weeks of that time with her children. Dysfunctional hardly begins to cover it, and the war is long over so that is not a factor. I agree that services families must make some sacrifices but Tim could have resigned his commission a year or two after the war as planned and yet he is still in the regiment, and the children might have visited in their school holidays. No amount of letter writing could sustain a close relationship for 18 months with children that age. I find it hard to believe they could casually come together as a loving family after such a long estrangement. (Perhaps that says something about my family life?)

As usual, the book is a competent and lighthearted romp through domestic trivia. Surprisingly Stevenson does deal with one ugly aspect of life in 1950s England: respectability. The smallest hint of impropriety, such as a gentleman visitor to a married woman, sets the malicious tongues of local gossips wagging and Hester is banned from arranging flowers in church by the straitlaced vicar's wife as if she were a social leper. The suggestion that Tony is in love with Hester has cropped up before and seems common knowledge to everyone but Hester, who as a married woman with an absent husband probably ought to have been more careful of her reputation. But her iron-clad innocence seems to blind her to the obvious. Tony is horrified to think he may have compromised her but as a man of the world, he ought to have been more aware of the effect his behaviour. Unfortunately the subject is dropped before being fully resolved – Tim suggests his reappearance will put paid to all the “old cats gossiping”.

Naturally a young couple fall in love and the engagement is encouraged by Hester, though sadly no fly fishing holidays in Scotland this time round. A couple of bullies are rebuffed and a sympathetic character is spared genteel poverty to show that all is well with the world and good prevails. Then Tim arrives and as usual this is a signal that the novel is over, for the diary is to provide him with news of what Hester does when he is away. It seems odd that Hester spends more time in the novels with Tony who regularly turns up to resolve various crises at critical moments like the proverbial knight in shining armour and offers an external perspective on the merits of the Christie family.

The neighbourhood is one which will become more familiar as it crops up in later novels. We have already met Mr. Grace who will reappear with his family in the Four Graces. I wonder if Hester will make a cameo appearance in a later work?

Caro says

A very soothing read at the time, but a month later I don't remember much about it.

Tiffany says

I *ADORE* Hester Christie. What a fascinating creature. She's proper but not fastidious. She's lively yet mellow. She's unassuming yet discerning. I endeavor to be half the woman Hester Christie is! For a bit I was slightly bewildered about her ignorance of Tony's undying devotion to her. But if she realized it, or rather, if the character of her realized it, there would be instant awkwardness and a severing of ties with him. Then we would be bereft of the special banter and mutual affection between them and that makes up part of the charm of the stories of Mrs. Tim.

Liz says

Last of the Mrs. Tim books takes us to the years following World War II. Enjoyable as the rest of the series. Am writing a blog review for MadReads and will post the link when it is available.

Theresa says

This final book in the Mrs. Tim series, was like the others, a light, pleasant and fun read!

Hester Christie has now returned from Kenya where Tim is stationed. She has leased a house in the village of Old Quinings, and, coincidentally, she meets a future neighbor on the train coming home from London. On her way back, Hester has a stopover in Rome and she also comes across their old friend Tony Morley there, which is to have dire consequences for her later on.

But meanwhile, there are the usual new friends to make, (and more of the old to catch up with), and another romance that will need Hester's sage advice and tact to help along. There will be a nice twist at the end which is not too great of a surprise, but very satisfying, as the villain in this novel is really not a likable character.

Hester's children are growing up, and Hester has mixed feelings about their independence and maturity. We meet Hester's old friend Grace's twins who enjoy playing pranks upon her neighbors and enjoy Betty, Hester's daughter, being the belle of the ball at her first 'grown-up' dance.

Perhaps reading three of the "Mrs. Tim" books in succession was a bit overdone for me, as this book did not move as quickly for me. However it is a worthwhile read nonetheless as I came across Hester's life lessons and informative observations.

"You don't know what you're talking about," I explain. "The kind of love you're talking about is very wonderful no doubt, but when you've been married for over twenty years you love one another in quite a different way. You're partners in the game of life, you're necessary to one another. It's a far bigger thing than - than physical attraction which does not last."

"But in many cases -"

"No, it does not," I tell her. "It may develop into the other kind of love - the kind I'm talking about - or it may die a natural death. Only time can tell which of the two things will happen."

Alisha says

Rounds out the Mrs. Tim stories in a fairly satisfying way, although to me it wasn't as good as Mrs. Tim Gets A Job. This one is set in the early 1950's, and Hester's husband Tim has a military post in Kenya. As the book opens, Hester is just flying home from a visit to see him. When she gets back to England, she rents a house and proceeds to rather enjoy a bit of solitude, though she knows she wouldn't like it for too long a period of time. Soon enough she gets involved in the stories and concerns of her neighbors and her rapidly growing children come home during school vacation. Before too long they will be full-grown adults, and it is

as hard for the reader as for Hester to realize that so much time has passed.

I've enjoyed Hester's personality and wit, though to me these books just represent average D.E. Stevenson and I wouldn't necessarily recommend someone to start with them.

One thing I do really like, just as a side point, is that the characters in this series have more than a passing acquaintance with the novels of Jane Austen. In modern novels, references to Jane Austen are limited to things like the desirableness of Mr. Darcy or to Colin Firth swimming in a pond. In the Mrs. Tim books, characters refer to things about Miss Bingley, Catherine Morland from Northanger Abbey, and I forget what else, but anyway the point is that D.E. Stevenson was well-read enough to include references that are more than just surface.

Austen to Zafón says

This was a pleasant read, but Mrs Tim gets rather silly and annoying in some ways. It's hard to believe that a military wife, who has dealt with many moves and rentals in her marriage, actually **forgot** she signed a lease, or what a lease means. Also, how can she not see that Tom is in love with her? For that matter, how can her husband have not noticed after all these years?

While it was relaxing to bathe in the still waters of a rose-colored view of 1950s middle-class British village life, with its mild upsets, loyal servants, and frequent descriptions of the countryside, I found this final book about Mrs Tim's life to be less moving than others. The war is over, so there is no thoughtful examination of what war means to those at home. Lacking that, it becomes more clear that Mrs Tim, true to her class and race, doesn't spend much time ruminating over the plight of the poor, the immigrant, or the people colonized by Britain. Her rather patronizing descriptions of Kenya definitely highlight that.

I liked the series, but if she had written more, I probably wouldn't read them.

Edited to add: Tom Morley is an ass and I'm not sure why Hester likes him. The scene where he "punishes" the female clerks in the shoe store by going through all the shoes and dumping them on the floor was infuriating. And his views of women, which are not surprising, make me wonder why Hester puts up with him.
