



# Shepherds Abiding

*Jan Karon*

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**The eighth novel in the beloved Mitford series, by the bestselling author of *At Home in Mitford* and *Somebody Safe with Somebody Good***

Millions of Americans have found Mitford to be a favorite home-away-from-home, and countless readers have long wondered what Christmas in Mitford would be like. The eighth Mitford novel provides a glimpse, offering a meditation on the best of all presents: the gift of one's heart. Since he was a boy, Father Tim has lived what he calls "the life of the mind" and has never really learned to savor the work of his hands. When he finds a derelict nativity scene that has suffered the indignities of time and neglect, he imagines the excitement in the eyes of his wife, Cynthia, and decides to undertake the daunting task of restoring it. As Father Tim begins his journey, readers are given a seat at Mitford's holiday table and treated to a magical tale about the true Christmas spirit.

## Shepherds Abiding Details

Date : Published September 28th 2004 by G.P. Putnam's Sons (first published 2003)

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Author : Jan Karon

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## **From Reader Review Shepherds Abiding for online ebook**

### **Joy Gerbode says**

This book is wonderful ... of course, I collect nativity sets, so Father Tim refurbishing a nativity is right up my alley. I love these wonderful stories. They are so inspirational, and while they inspire a closer relationship with God, they especially inspire closer relationships with people, love and forgiveness, and acceptance of people who are "different" ... whatever that may mean. Wonderful books, and so very easy to relate to.

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### **writer... says**

December 2016 reread of Hope's Happy Endings bookstore story segments for the pure enjoyment of it!

December 2014 reading : Multi layered stories of Mitford residents leading up to Christmas. Stories are told randomly from varied residents' experiences.

The retired priest's new found creativity in preparing an extraordinary gift for his wife and the bookstore employee's Christmas were two that impacted me especially.

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### **Stephanie Blake says**

I have read nearly everything Jan Karon has written. Reading any book in her Mitford series is a great way to relax. This was no exception. I enjoyed it just like I enjoyed the rest of her books. She has a true gift for making you want to be part of the family in Mitford!

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### **Bonnie says**

Beautiful Christmas book, Father Tim is one of the many captivating characters in this series. Other characters beautifully come alive. The book ends on Christmas morning, all the threads are woven together & has a wonderful captivating ending.

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### **Camie says**

In the midst of a busy Christmas season, I always find some quiet time to return to small town Mitford by rereading this book. I cannot recommend it to everyone as it is #8 in Jan Karon's endearing Father Tim / Mitford series. 5 stars

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## **Joyce says**

Public library copy. This book is #8 in the Mitford Years series, starring Father Tim.

This was a bit of a quick read, not as much of a plot, more about the characters and the season. That being said, it is a great read, just not as complicated as some of the books in the series.

I am partial to nativity sets. I had one taken away from me years ago, and I am more partial to them than ever. I just love the whole idea of Father Tim's gift to his wife Cynthia, and the relationships developed and grown in the process.

This story has several nice pieces which accentuate in a non-preachy way the meaning of the advent season, as well as the ties that bind us together. This story is more subtle than most, and possibly more effective because of that.

I recommend this book highly to readers of all ages, men and women. There's something in it for everyone. It will not disappoint! Don't wait until Christmas to read it. You can always read it a second time during the advent.

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## **Kelly says**

I'm going to write the same thing for the entire series. It's a syrupy sweet old fashioned read which does not demand anything of the reader. Many find the series feel good, and there are some sparkles of true conflict here and there, but mostly it's about the mundane daily plight of a vicar who finds love later in life and saves people - emotionally and physically.

If you like the first in the series, keep reading because you will be comforted by the characters and will want to see who is added to the "family." This reads like it was made for a TV series, which I am surprised it has not been made into for PBS yet!

What I like about this series is that it doesn't try to be anything it is not; that in itself makes it charming, and if you want to read a simple, feel good, clean series, then this is it.

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## **Sarah Grace says**

\*happy sigh\* This is just such a beautiful book, y'all! Such a sweet, fun, simple Christmas read. Highly recommended!

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## **Kathy Worrell ? says**

It's funny that at first glance, I didn't really find this book appealing! I had a bunch of Christmas novels and

kept putting it aside, almost not reading it at all. What a shame that would have been. I wasn't a Jan Karon fan, even. I must have picked this book up somewhere along the way this past year.

Anyway it's the 8th book in a series. The novel takes place in a town called Mitford. It's a comfortable tale about the people in Mitford and what happens to each of them prior to Christmas.

I would say this book would be similar to a Fannie Flagg novel. Good, wholesome, country Christmas reading.

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### **Lorraine says**

“Shepherd’s Abiding” is a warm and fuzzy book that is part of the Mitford Years Series. I read about three or four of the series and always felt refreshed after reading them. Places like Mitford are where we all want to be at times—away from the maddening crowd.

In this novel Father Tim and his wife Cynthia are preparing for Christmas. It begins in October when everyone is waiting for the maples to turn their brilliant colors. He finds an old plaster nativity set in the antique store and is somehow captured by it and decides to buy it, restore it and give it to Cynthia for Christmas. He has never done anything like this before and discovers that he loves working with his hands and doing something completely different. In each chapter of the book he introduces another figure he has restored.

And as in all the Mitford series we are introduced to others in town. Hope Winchester operates the Happy Endings bookstore and sets out to buy it. Velma and Percy Mosely, who have operated THE GRILL for 40 years are about to retire. Uncle Billy who is house ridden and recuperating is trying to figure out what to give his wife Rose of 50 years. And finally Lew Boyd is struggling because his new wife Earlene is taking care of her ailing mother and not living with him. And his marriage is a secret in Mitford.

Naturally, everything comes together beautifully at the end, and with the help of Father Tim many people’s faith is strengthened. It’s magical and it’s a feel good read at this time of the year.

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### **Sarah says**

In vain I have struggled! It will not do. I simply cannot stomach Mitford! As a faithful Episcopalian, I have given it my best, but I think I must be too cynical for all the saccharine. There. Now it's out there. (I also don't like Dr. Seuss and I've never seen Star Wars. I feel clean now having confessed.)

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### **Ruth says**

304 pages.

Since he was a boy growing up in Mississippi, Father Tim has lived what he calls "the life of the mind." Except for cooking and gardening and washing his dog, he never learned to savor the work of his hands. And then he finds a derelict nativity scene—twenty figures, including a flock of sheep, that have suffered the indignities of time and neglect.

Could he give the small company new life? Restore the camel's ear, repaint every piece, replace a missing nose on a wise man? "You can't teach an old dog new tricks!" he reminds himself. It's when he imagines the excitement in Cynthia's eyes that he steps up to the plate-and begins a small journey of faith that touches everyone around him.

The eighth novel in the bestselling Mitford Years series is a meditation on the best of all presents-the gift of one's heart. Lovingly written and beautifully illustrated, it seeks to restore the true Christmas spirit and give everyone a seat at Mitford's holiday table.

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### **Melinda says**

I loved how this book focused solely on one Mitford Christmas. I can see myself rereading it during the holiday season because it is such a delightful read and contains such a warm spirit. It was interesting to discover how the magic of Christmas seemed to touch so many of the residents of Mitford, resulting in glowing, radiant sentiment. A most worthy read!

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### **Erin says**

This was the charming Christmas read I was looking for. I had read the first book in this series a while ago, so I was somewhat familiar with the main characters and the town. But I don't think it's necessary -- you could probably enjoy the book on its own. A nice look into the lives and surprises of a handful of people in a small town. And I love the Christian tie-in, especially at this time of year. I listened to the audio book on my walks around the neighborhood, and was close to tears during one of the passages. This is certainly not an edge-of-your seat page-turner. Just a quiet, tender book to get you in the right spirit for Christmas.

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### **Judy King says**

Who knew that books could be just like comfort food? I've not read the Mitford books, stumbled onto this one (#8) because I'm on a Christmas-book reading binge this month.

I listened to this one and it was like having mac and cheese made by mom, or vanilla wafer/banana pudding or homemade egg custard with nutmeg browned on top. SIGH...I feel like I've gone home -- At various times during the story I felt as if I was in my childhood home town. Then there were parts that reminded me of the town where my children grew up, even parts that reminded me of facets of life with friends here in a Mexican retirement community.

It just FELT good, and comfortable, and easy. What skill Jan Karon has, with characters, dialogue and setting a scene. I loved the old guys in the beruffled pink tea-room "where all the food is one food wrapped inside another food."

Sweet, sweet, sweet. without being sappy or smaltzy...well ok, it's a Christmas story -- they are supposed to pull a few heart strings, ok???

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## **Lizabeth Tucker says**

Part of the wonderful Mitford series, this one is concerning Christmas and how everyone is dealing with the approaching holidays. Father Tim is shown a well-worn nativity set from the 19th Century that is badly in need of repair and repainting. Encouraged by his antique store friends, he dives in, hoping to complete it as a gift for his beloved wife. Things are changing in Mitford as they do all over. The Grill is closing, the husband and wife owners finally retiring. That leaves the townspeople searching for a new place to eat and meet. While there is a tea shop in town that serves food, it is healthy and fancier than many of the good old boys are used to. Lew Boyd misses his secret wife; Dooley comes home from school with an idea that thrills Father Tim; Hope wants to start a new life and finds love; Uncle Billy struggles for just the right gift for his wife and finds more than he expected from Santy.

There's something about this series that appeals to me. It can be found either in General Fiction or Christian Fiction, depending on your bookstore. It is never preachy, the characters are real and like people you might meet in Mayberry. The relationship between God and Father Tim is one of old friends. A solution isn't magically provided to every problem.

If you like cozy, friendly and well-written characters in your books, you should seriously considering trying this series. I would advise starting with the first volume, *At Home in Mitford*.

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## **Ellen Trautner says**

I intentionally read this last (that's right, I've read all the Mitford/Father Tim books now!!) because I realized it was a Christmas book so I wanted to read it at Christmas time. Father Tim finds an old derelict nativity scene and decides to refurbish it as a surprise for Cynthia. Other Mitford townspeople get into the holiday spirit. That's about it.

But it's sweet and Christmas-y and I love how so many people get involved with helping Father Tim meet the Christmas deadline. Good Mitford book to go out on, although now I ought to read them all in order.

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## **Ann Marie says**

I read Jan Karon's *Shepherds Abiding* every year at Christmas time and every year I find another heart warming message I hadn't found before. This years message was 'The first rule is to keep an untroubled spirit. The second is to look things in the face and know them for what they are.' It wasn't even close to any usual Christmas message I've treasured over the years. But the part about keeping an untroubled spirit encouraged such a feeling of free-spiritness in me. This book is about how an retired minister makes his Christmas in the small town of Mitford. All of the Mitford series characters are present but this time we get to see more of the ones that have kept a low profile in her other books. What a joy it was to get to know them better. As a gift to myself, I think I'll keep this book close this Christmas season to remind myself to keep an untroubled spirit during this busy time.

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**Marci says**

This is a book you read for heart-warming, feel-good happy endings. All the books in the Mitford series are the same way. Not that Father Tim and the others don't face hard things; they just show how to overcome the hard parts through faith with grace.

Spoiler: I especially liked the take-off on O.Henry's "The Gift of the Magi" in the twist at the end.

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**Jenni Simmons says**

Like comfort food, this is a comfort book. I unabashedly love Jan Karon's novels.

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