



To Love and Be Wise

Josephine Tey , Robert Barnard (Introduction)

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When a young strikingly handsome photographer mysteriously disappears, it's up to Inspector Alan Grant to discover whether he accidentally drowned, committed suicide, or met his death at the hands of one of his many female admirers.

To Love and Be Wise Details

Date : Published August 18th 1998 by Touchstone (first published 1950)

ISBN : 9780684006314

Author : Josephine Tey , Robert Barnard (Introduction)

Format : Paperback 224 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Crime, European Literature, British Literature

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From Reader Review To Love and Be Wise for online ebook

Dorothy says

Long ago, in what now seems like another lifetime, I read a lot of Josephine Tey's books and admired her clever plots and superb writing. Last year, I reacquainted myself with her writing by rereading my favorite book of hers, *The Daughter of Time*. It gave me an appetite for reading more.

When I was reading her books in the past, to the best of my recollection, I never read this one. And I think I would have remembered for it is a devilishly clever tale.

It's the fourth in her series of books featuring Inspector Grant. This time he is sent to the remote English village of Salcott St Mary to investigate the disappearance of a young man.

Leslie Searle was a uniquely attractive man who was an ultra-fashionable portrait photographer from America. He was famous for taking pictures of actors and actresses, including some of Hollywood's big stars. He was talented and so good looking that he turned heads wherever he went.

But why did he go to this backwater village?

He claimed a connection to a man, now dead, who was a particular friend of one of the villagers. As he introduced himself, the villagers accepted and took him in and invited him to be a guest in one of the country homes. Soon he was firmly ensconced.

He teams up with one of the local celebrities, a writer and radio personality, to write a book about the river that runs through the village. The local person will do the writing and he will take pictures to illustrate. They plan to canoe down the river and camp by it every night, but shortly after they begin their adventure, one night, Leslie Searle disappears without a trace.

There is no sign of foul play and no body found. There seem to be no clues as to what could have happened, but attention focuses on the river. Was he murdered and thrown into the river? Did he accidentally fall into the river and drown? Did he deliberately jump into the river to commit suicide? Or was he kidnapped by some unknown party? The river is dragged repeatedly but no body and no evidence is found.

Then, a young boy out fishing brings up a shoe that is identified as Searle's, but nothing else is found.

Inspector Grant proceeds methodically with his investigation but is making no headway. He's given up and is pursuing other cases, when suddenly a lightbulb goes off over his head. He has that ah-ha moment that helps him to see what might have happened and why. As Tey told us in that other book of hers, truth is the daughter of time, and sometimes it takes time and distance to be able to see the truth.

The mystery is complicated and it is not one that your typical armchair detective - of whom I count myself one - will readily solve, and yet, once the solution is explained by Grant, as we look back over the book, we see that all the clues were there. Tey has given us all the information we needed but she has camouflaged it so well that it was not readily apparent.

This is not in any way a traditional mystery. The mystery is hardly even the main point, but rather it is an exploration of psychology and personalities, identity and gender. It is, in fact, a literary mystery, full of

unforgettable characters, an intricate plot, and a wonderful use of language. It is classical Tey, a thoroughly diverting and delicious read.

Kim says

In my opinion, Josephine Tey is up there with the best British crime novelists of the last century. She wrote intriguing mysteries in clear, crisp and witty prose. Her detective, Inspector Grant, is well-developed and interesting without having any of the obvious eccentricities many crime writers choose to foist upon their detectives. Tey was also good with the minor characters, although in this novel it's fair to say that some are more believable than others.

Here, Inspector Grant is sent to investigate the disappearance of a very attractive young photographer whose arrival in an English village has had a disturbing impact on a number of the locals. Not surprisingly for a crime novel, there's more than a touch of the implausible in the narrative. If you're going to read this type of novel, you have to be able to suspend disbelief and just go with it. You also have to be prepared for a resolution that you can't work out for yourself, as some fairly crucial information is withheld from the reader until the big reveal. That's not my favourite style of mystery, but when it's written by Josephine Tey, I'm prepared to forgive a lot.

Carol ?? says

Josephine Tey's life was cut tragically short. If not for this I do believe would be talking about "The Big Five" Golden Age Detective Writers, rather than "The Big Four." I can't comment on Margery Allingham's works as I have only read one, but Tey at her best is definitely superior to Ngaio Marsh - & while Tey has weaker works, so do Sayers & Christie. This particular novel is all kinds of awesome & one of the very few 5★ I have given this year for fiction that isn't a reread.

It isn't just that this is a very well constructed mystery - all the characters are well realised. The world building (to use a modern term) is also quite wonderful. I felt I was living in the village & engaged in all the local affairs.

This is the 4th Inspector Grant mystery. I am really looking forward to rereading *The Daughter of Time* which is another mystery from Tey's very creative brain. I'm hoping it lives up to my memory.

I will mention that the edition I read doesn't have Tey's usual racist comments, so I'm assuming it has been cleaned up.

In case I haven't been clear, I highly recommend this one.

Donna says

A delightful mystery story with Alan Grant as the debonair detective. Grant does police work because he likes it. A relative has left him a legacy on which he could retire, but he keeps at his job and is good at it. In this story a young photographer goes missing in the night. Was it murder? Suicide? A practical joke? I'm proud that I detected the key to the mystery, even if I didn't get it completely correct.

I especially like the part where two policemen recite poetry to each other and then burst out laughing at whether those crazy detective story novelists would ever think of policemen reciting poetry. Lovely.

Incredibly well written.

Read for Golden Vintage Mystery Challenge -- Read one book with a professional detective (Grant)
Read for Climbing Mt. TBR Challenge

Leslie says

Delightful, delicious, and downright devilish—oh, I loved this book!

Elizabeth MacKintosh, writing as Josephine Tey, was only responsible for a very few books—too few, to my mind—but the ones that I've read (and I've now, sadly, read most of them) have been excellent. *To Love and Be Wise* stands up to her best, *The Daughter of Time*, and was such a pleasure to read that I really took my time with it, even as I wanted to rush and get to the end; the plot, the characters, and the setting come together to create a very fun and classic mystery.

Inspector Alan Grant—Tey's great detective who appears in most of her books—meets American photographer Leslie Searle at a literary party, where Searle is invited by the guest of honor, author Lavinia Fitch, to visit her home in the art colony at Salcott St. Mary. Soon after, Searle disappears and Grant is put on the case, but becomes thoroughly baffled. Conventional wisdom tells him that the young photographer has drowned—but there is no body. Did Searle just walk away? Why?

I don't want to say much more about the mystery at the heart of this book, because the resolution made me laugh out loud; I saw it coming only a couple of pages before it became clear, and only because it becomes fairly obvious.

In addition to the fiendish story, Tey's succinct character sketches are peppered with telling details that made me smile; many of the artists in Salcott St. Mary are so wonderfully English that if you're an Anglophile, I dare you not to appreciate their quirks. And Tey's writing is simply sublime and worth slowing down to savor, in this book of times so far removed from our own.

Kaethe says

To Love and Be Wise - Josephine Tey

Edited to add a picture of Calder Alexander Eno the preternaturally enormous cat. He loves lying on books and devices; probably he can absorb books by osmosis. He is extremely affectionate and loves to lie on the sofa with me while I read. But not now, because it is warm and he would like me to get up and feed him. The Gorey cat looks like him, I think.

I now return you to the book review.

Oh, well done. It would do nicely for Cozy Mystery as well. There isn't much to it, but it is so well-mannered.

Library copy

Laurie says

Tey does things with her apparently simple plots that no one, but no one else can manage. A deliciously sly woman.

Jaline says

In this 4th book of Josephine Tey's Inspector Grant series, he is active in it from the beginning. A young man disappears – or is disappeared – and Scotland Yard has assigned Alan Grant the responsibility of figuring out whether it is by fair means or foul.

Once again, I am impressed by the writing and Josephine Tey's excellent grasp of psychology. How and why people take the actions they do is always in depth and real in her characters. As many other writers of her era, the main character gets those "lightbulb" moments that we are not quite privy to. If we are paying very close attention we might catch one or two, but while Inspector Grant shares some of his ah-ha moments, he doesn't share the details.

I don't mind this device at all because it gives my brain a good exercise in trying to figure out what it is he knows or has discovered and how that links into the other facts we have.

I enjoyed this read as a nice easy read between heavier novels and recommend it for pure, enjoyable light reading.

Marti Booker says

Not as stellar as *The Daughter of Time*, but thoroughly enjoyable. Well, it took me like three hours to read it all, without pausing except to stop the dog from barking at the coyotes. That should tell you how much I enjoyed it!

Emma Rose Ribbons says

God can this woman write anything worthy of less than five stars? How is she not more famous? Her talent is so underrated. I'm consistently impressed with her work. In *To Love and Be Wise* (which is a lovely title) it's fair to say the investigation makes absolutely no progress for 90% of the book, and yet so much happens. Tey is unparalleled at drawing vivid, jump-off-the-page characters. I have never met a more self-confident author. Her voice can be incredibly hilarious at the most unexpected moments and though the case itself is fairly light throughout (for most of the novel indeed nobody's sure there's even a case at all) it's a wonderful occasion for her to display her knowledge of human nature and she does so beautifully. The end is incredible - both completely out there and so logical. I've never read an end that feels both like a tremendous deflation and the greatest stroke of genius ever. She's amazing. Please do read her if you haven't already.

Bill says

To Love and Be Wise is the 4th book in the Inspector Grant mystery series by Josephine Tey. If you enjoy Agatha Christie or Ngaio Marsh or Dorothy Sayers, you'll also enjoy this classic writer of mysteries. Inspector Grant is a Scotland Yard inspector who has been assigned to investigate a disappearance of an American. It turns out that Grant had previously met this American when he was attending a party with his actress acquaintance, Marta Hallard. The American, photographer Leslie Searle, meets Grant and through him another acquaintance of Grant. Searle is asked to spend a weekend with the at the families estate. After a time there, Searle disappears, is presumed possibly to have drowned or been murdered and Grant is assigned to investigate.

The rest of the story is taken up with Grant's investigation. It's quite a gentle story but it is thoughtful and well-written and keeps you engrossed. Grant is a likeable, appealing character to carry the story. His investigation is tidy and intuitive and the people with whom he interacts are also quirky and interesting. I especially liked his Sgt, Williams, as he is a nice foil for Grant and he admires Grant very much. I also liked Grant's 'girlfriend', actress Marta Hallard; lovely, intelligent, sensible and someone who Grant is able to bounce his thoughts off.

All in all, I enjoyed this story more than I thought I would. It was well-crafted, thoughtful and ended satisfyingly. (4 stars)

Anmiryam says

I went into this looking for a light read to suit my mood and came to discover that this classic mystery is still strikingly modern in its central issues of identity and gender. It has set my brain ticking on how these issues

crop up in other of Tey's novels. Why has no one has written a serious work of criticism about these novels? Val McDermid wrote an excellent piece several years ago that you can find here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/auth...>

I want more! More context, more interpretation, more analysis of themes that appear and reappear in these all too brief and wonderfully twisty books.

Harry says

Josephine Tey is the pseudonym for Elizabeth Mackintosh (1896-1952). Both a playwright (under the pseudonym Gordon Daviot) and novelist and due to a fierce predilection to keeping her life private, little is known about this author. She guarded her life jealously, avoided the press, side-stepped photographers, and never did any interviews. Biographers for the most part are therefore fairly well pissed-off about the whole secretive thing.

And that's actually why Tey's novels are a bit of a game with readers and biographers alike (including myself). Absent documentary information about this writer, it is to the novels they turn for hints about her life. It's like knitting, a pleasant past time with many a reader and in fact Tey often referred to her novels as being tantamount to "Yearly Knitting." One might compare this to a comparable story in today's music industry where Taylor Swift who though not exactly shunning the media, steadfastly refuses to discuss her personal life and points her critics and admireres to her singer/songwriter work for the answer to their questions. Just so with Ms. Tey.

And though she wrote primarily mysteries, they appear more as an afterthought to Tey. When reading her novels, you get the feeling she's pursuing something other than a conclusion to the mystery...something always wrapped in a puzzle in and of itself and something always decorated using a wonderful sense of language. She has been described as writing with *exquisite characterization and a meticulous prose style*.

The books are period pieces, written over half a century ago and require a particular love of reading such pieces (which I fortunately possess). *The Man in Queue* her first mystery with Grant (written as a beginner) was reportedly written in two weeks for a competition sponsored by the publisher Methuen and is dedicated to her typewriter named: *Brisena*. Her second Inspector Grant novel, which I've not read, was *A Shilling for Candles*. Throughout the novels I get a sense that Ms. Tey was not fond of celebrated figures in history. Her most famous mystery *The Daughter of Time* would be a good example of writer-frowning-upon-writer (in this case, Shakespeare).

Romance, or rather marriage is often avoided in her novels. It's like: Success must be brought to oneself and not through others. It describes Inspector Grant, who appears in a number of her novels, perfectly (though there are some deviations here and there). *Bratt Farrar* another of her famous novels reveals to the reader Tey's obvious fondness for horses. And perhaps through *The Singing Sands*, a posthumously discovered novel and her last, the reader catches a glimpse of Tey's life long fondness with the poetry of the English and Scottish landscape. It is also one of my favorite book covers because it perfectly illustrates the essence of this mystery novel.

And who is Inspector Grant? I imagine him as a stoic - outwardly calm and thoughtful; inwardly brimming with intelligence and emotion. As with most policemen, he is dedicated to his craft and in typical British mannerisms does so without succumbing to mind numbing intoxicants to forget the horrors of murder and sociopathic behavior...thus avoiding becoming one of the flawed heroes we often encounter in detective mysteries.

I'm not going to write a review for each one of her novels. I'll leave it to the reader to tell me who Ms. Tey really was. And, as always where it comes to series books, I'll repeat this one for all of her Inspector Grant novels. Enjoy!

John says

[(a subterfuge couldn't be maintained because humans excrete) (hide spoiler)]

Tracey says

To Love and Be Wise boasts another absolutely gorgeous cover by Pamela Patrick. This is one time when I understand the Goodreads folk who obsess about uniformity in a series. My editions are a ragtag group; someday I'd like to have the matched set.

The story: A disconcertingly beautiful young man becomes part of the lives of an extended family – and then disappears. He leaves behind amidst the bewilderment a girl who loves him despite herself, her fiancé who is all at once a suspect in foul play of some sort in the disappearance, and a detective (Alan Grant, of course) intensely frustrated by a puzzle whose solution evades him. I don't recall ever reading this before (though given my memory that means little), and so the basic effect of having new Josephine Tey to read is a wonderful thing.

I enjoyed the exploration of the effect an extravagantly attractive man has on those he meets. Beauty is one of those attributes, like wealth or height or curly hair, which many who lack it envy, and which is, sometimes at least, not all it's cracked up to be. This gorgeous creature Leslie Searles attracts attention, including from DI Alan Grant – and he has learned over a lifetime of it to manipulate it, to some degree.

I liked that there is no implication that for the most part the attention is sexual in nature. I have the feeling that in a book written more recently the instant interest Alan shows in him would be hedged about with explanation and defense. Here, it is quite simply that he is something extraordinary, and his entrance into a room is something like the arrival of a bird of paradise: even if you're not a bird lover, you have to take notice of the sheer extravagant splendor.

The vicar of the village where he roosts for a lengthy visit states his belief that Searles is a demon in disguise – it's the only explanation for his beauty, and for the unsettling effect he has on everyone. He is disconcerting. It also nicely explains his so-abrupt disappearance as he and a comrade (Walter Whitmore, a Thoreau-wannabe who mellifluously reads nature essays on the radio) canoe down the river with plans to turn the adventure into a book.

"But – but Walter Whitmore!" Grant said. *"There is something inherently absurd about it, you know. What*

would that lover of little bunnies have to do with murder?"

"You've been in the Force long enough to know that it is just those lovers of little bunnies that commit murder," his chief said snappily.

But the demon theory is not an explanation the police are prepared to carry on with, however it appeals to Alan Grant, and he irritably steps up the search when locals' attempts to find Leslie fail. If it were only that Leslie is missing, the initial sweeps might be held sufficient – after all, an adult may abscond with himself as he pleases. But the circumstances under which he vanished are the problem: he was seen to bait the "bunny-lover" Whitmore at a pub the night before his disappearance was noticed – again, by Walter Whitmore. Walter, through a native self-confidence or naïveté, is ready and willing to discuss the circumstances, including those that lead to conclusions that his fiancée was quite possibly falling in love with Leslie and that Walter was well aware of the possibility, seemingly never adding the two and the two to make the four: he is a very real suspect.

He's also a very real character, almost of Ted Baxter ilk: not a bad man, or a stupid one, really – just egocentric and unexpectedly oblivious. His fiancée, Liz, is lovely, an ordinary sort of a woman who knows Walter's shortcomings and cares for him anyway, but still finds herself swept away by the combination of stunning good looks and an equally deadly intelligence and humor that provides her with conversation she can never have with Walter. Leslie is more reserved; the short time he is in the picture presents a vivid image of his personality, but as Alan finds it's not that easy to get a handle on exactly who he was; part of it, though, is a little illumination of what it's like to live inside that spotlight, to be that bird of paradise, inspiring love and hatred and all sorts of other strong emotion simply by virtue of looking as he looks. Minor characters are, as always, wonderful portraits in miniature; secondary characters – including a deeper acquaintance with Marta Hallard – are, as always, unique and genuine; and Alan Grant, as always, is magnificent.

The mystery is, as is typical with Josephine Tey, not really one which is conducive to solution by the armchair detective. I want to say I guessed it, but that could just be internal Tonypandy. But, as is typical with Tey, the mystery isn't the point. It's just a hook – a clever and engaging hook – on which to hang an exploration of personalities. This must drive some mystery buffs straight up a wall. Since I read for character and quality of writing before anything else, I'm perfectly happy. I might have mentioned it in other reviews: I adore Josephine Tey.
