



## The Heart of Home

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## **The Heart of Home** Stephenia H. McGee

Once a wistful romantic, Opal Martin now simply aspires to scrub the remnants of the War Between the States from her tattered life. But when a nearly drowned soldier appears and asks if he can die on her porch, she must guard against the sudden revival of her heart's hope for love.

Haunted by the war, Tristan Stuart just wants to escape the pain. But when he wakes up at a house that looks too much like home with a woman determined to mend him, he may discover a new life worth fighting for. In order to save the last of what Opal holds dear, will he become the man she needs or let the troubled waters carry him away?

The Heart of Home is a companion novella to In His Eyes. While The Heart of Home stands entirely on its own, readers will enjoy seeing Ella and Westley again in Opal's story.

## **The Heart of Home Details**

Date : Published July 17th 2018 by By The Vine Press

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Author : Stephenia H. McGee

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## From Reader Review The Heart of Home for online ebook

### Suzie Waltner says

Before this novella, I have not had the chance to read any of Stephania H. McGee's civil war fiction, so I was thrilled to see this novella in the Timeless Love collection. What better way to get an introduction to an author I haven't yet gotten to!

And let me say, this will not be my last read by McGee.

In a time of loss (of life, of home, of self-respect), Opal Martin and her mother are facing a decision that will change their lives. With the appearance of two men, Opal must deal with her disappointment with one and her interest in the other.

McGee paints a vivid picture of post-Civil War life in the south when many homes are left bare if at all. Tristan Stuart is haunted by war and loss. His world is bleak without his loved ones in it. Can these two wounded hearts release the trials and traumas to build a foundation of love and future?

Disclosure statement:

I receive complimentary books from publishers, publicists, and/or authors, including NetGalley. I am not required to write positive reviews. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

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### Debbie says

I just finished this novella, The Heart of Home, from Timeless Love: Romantic Stories that Span the Ages and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. I love stories about the Civil War and how strong people had to be to survive that war.

In this novella, Opal Martin lives on the Riverbend plantation with her widowed mother when she discovers a soldier passed out on their front porch. Tristan Stuart thought he was at death's door when he saw home, or what he thought was home. Making it to the porch, he passed out where Opal found him. She and her mother nursed him back to health and he stuck around to help them out for a bit.

Tristan and Opal find an attraction for each other, but they both don't seem to want to acknowledge it. Tristan, because of his sins during the war and Opal, because of the fairytale stories she's been reading that make this relationship sound more like a friendship and she is confused.

What will come of this attraction for each other? Will they express their feelings for one another or let love get away? Now that the war is over, can Tristan forgive himself for what he perceives to be his sins of the past? Check this out for yourself. Fans of clean, Christian historical romances will love this novella. Enjoy!

I was given an ARC of this novella separate from the book Timeless Love: Romantic Stories that Span the Ages for an honest review. The opinions stated are purely my own.

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## **Pat says**

If you love a good clean Christian historical romance then you have found it. The Heart of Home is part of a series but a stand alone. Previous characters are brought in but you don't have to have read the previous books. The story begins at the end of the Civil War and the carpet baggers are out. Tristan is wounded and a confederate soldier. Opal finds him on their porch and nurses him back to health. Opal and her mother are all that's left of their family and their plantation has been ransacked. Its a struggle to get food on the table and her mother decides to sell to one of the dreaded carpet baggers. Not a good decision.

Misty Beller will keep your interest, enough action to keep you turning the pages, romance, characters are easy to relate to and a good plot. I've read the other books in this series and thoroughly enjoyed them. I received this book from the author as part of her review team. No expectations on my review. I recommend anything by Misty M. Beller if you like sweet historical romance. Heart of The Home is well written and I do think you will love this book

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## **Angie Thompson says**

Overall, I liked the story and characters, but I thought the novella length left things feeling a little rushed, especially when we completely skip three weeks in what's already a very short time frame. It doesn't give a whole lot of time to really get to know and understand anyone's feelings and attitudes, so maybe that was why I was a bit confused on some of the characters' motivations.

Opal left me a bit mystified--one minute she was fighting down her feelings for Tristan and the next minute she was bemoaning the fact that love and romance didn't exist in the real world. And while I appreciated the complexity of Tristan's background, some of his thoughts and attitudes didn't ring quite true for me. (view spoiler)

I did really like the way the tension of holding on vs. moving on was portrayed and the growth in Opal's mother over the course of the story. Also, I haven't read the first book, so I probably didn't appreciate the appearances of Ella and Westley like I should have. ;) Still, I enjoyed the story overall.

Content--a few kisses; some vague, near-suicidal impulses; mentions of a young woman not being allowed to undress a man she is nursing; mentions of profanity (not written); (view spoiler)

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## **Joan Arning says**

The Heart of Home is set in the south post Civil War as Opal and her mama attempt to carry on in their mansion with no servants following her papa's death. Opal is a well-written protagonist as is Tristan, a former Confederate soldier, who asks to be allowed to die on their porch! Sometimes a seed of love is all it takes to grow something mighty! Opal celebrates the new Yankee holiday, Thanksgiving, in a surprising manner! I enjoyed The Heart of Home and recommend it to others. I received an advance e-book of The Heart of Home from the author. This is my honest opinion.

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### **SheLove2Read says**

This was my first time reading Stephenia McGee. While looking through KU for a historical, I ran across this civil war story and it sounded intriguing. It was! I really enjoyed the authors voice and found myself reading this in one sitting. I do wish she had spent a little more time on the angst between them, but as this is a religious romance (although there isn't much in the book, but that's how it is marketed) I understand why she didn't. If you enjoy Civil War era stories, this one might work for you. 4 stars

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### **Becky says**

Opal fears she's going to be an old maid when two men show up at her door. One is a carpetbagger who wishes to buy her family's plantation; the other is a wounded Confederate soldier in desperate need of care. It's quickly apparent that the carpetbagger is not the man Opal wants. But Tristan ... may just be the man she's been waiting for.

Though this is a novella, I felt like I really got to know and care for the characters, and I appreciated the slow burn romance. While the villain was a bit too over the top to be believable, I very much enjoyed the story.

Disclosure of material connection: I received a complimentary copy of this novella. I was not required to write a positive review, and the opinions expressed are my own.

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### **Debbie says**

"The Heart of Home" by Stephenia H. McGee is a companion novella to *In His Eyes*. "The Heart of Home" can be read as a stand alone, but, I recommend reading "In His Eyes" first to get the background story.

This novel is a love story that begins in an unusual way, a nearly drowned soldier appears and asks if he can die on her porch.

The 109 pages are filled with lots of twists, like the man who appears on the porch who wants to buy Opal's and her mother's house, but what is his reasoning. I really didn't see this plot turning up the way it did.

The ending was a complete surprise and so really romantic.

I recommend "The Heart of Home" by Stephenia H. McGee to anyone that wants a short clean love story with the hero coming in to save the heroine when least expected. I am including this quote from the story "No, life is not a story,..." "where every problem is immediately resolved and every couple falls in love and then never has a care in the world."....." But real love is much better. You are stronger for the pain you fight through together, and closer for the wounds you help one another heal. Love isn't without conflict, nor is it without sacrifice. But, my darling, that is the love that seeps all the way into our souls, and has the substance to last."

Doesn't that quote give you goosebumps and make you want to experience that for yourself?

Definitely a five star novel.

I was given a complimentary copy by the author. These opinions are my own.

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### **Rebecca says**

3.5 stars

"In some ways the river was like life. It gave and took of its own volition, with no sense of justice."

The war torn South often extended its casualty list to the living as well as the dead. Tristan Stuart is among many who are grieving the loss of entire families, so when he steps into the swirling waters of a Mississippi river, he seriously considers letting the current deliver him to paradise; instead he wakes up on the front porch of Riverbend Plantation, hearing a gentle voice declare, "Sir, you need tending".

Opal Martin and her mother are barely making ends meet; their once thriving plantation home in sore need of repair, and their future as murky as the waters of the river that flows along their property. Unexpectedly, two men make their presence known; one at the point of death and the other very much alive. Might one of them consider Riverbend as "the heart of home" or must Opal and her mother leave it all behind?

The author has gifted her readers with an insightful reminder that God can truly make all things new and that love runs much deeper than romantic notions often suggest.

I received a copy of this novella from the author. The opinions stated are entirely my own.

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### **Vicky Sluiter says**

It was wonderful to visit the south once again, and see Ella and Westley. I loved them in In His Eyes. Don't worry if you haven't read it, The Heart of Home is a standalone, but you will want to read In His Eyes.

Being a novella this was a quick read, but that doesn't mean it was not a wonderful, full story. To "see" some of what happened after the Civil War is wrenching. So many trials and heartbreaks. Yet the characters in this story were determined to survive. They were written with such strength and passion that I fell in love with them. And her descriptions of the plantation and the area around it are fabulous.

Author Stephenia Mcgee does her research with her period piece stories. So many facts are woven into the fiction that you will learn new things while enjoying a wonderful story.

If you enjoy historical fiction with some clean romance you must read The Heart of Home.

I received a complimentary copy of this book but was not required to leave a review.

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### **Evelina | AvalinahsBooks says**

This was terrible. Third grader level plot, loopholes, flat characters - it had it all. The funniest thing is that

romance is supposed to have feeling, but this was as bland as you can imagine. They don't know each other, then we skip to "three weeks later" (I'm not kidding) and there's suddenly feelings? That I'm just not feeling at all...? This book had zero emotion. To think I've been trying to read romance lately to stay more positive. This wasn't positive. This was just a boring waste of time. I guess I need to be more choosy if I'm going to try genres I've never read before.

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### **Sandra says**

An exciting, clean, fun, easy read! This sweet heartfelt home could easily be read in one sitting, and I almost did. Reading books in this era enlightens one to the disadvantage that young ladies had in the 1800's and especially during the war years. Young Opal who is just barely 18 years old is already considered at risk of becoming an old maid, as she lives alone with her widowed mother. And then, out of the blue, along comes two possibilities, one who thinks he can scam her mother out of the family estate and get Opal to wed at the same time, and one who literally is dying on her back porch in his army uniform after dragging himself out of the nearby river. The author of this delightful novella did a great job of setting the stage for young Opal to be met with and deal with some very difficult decisions in her life.

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### **Winnie says**

Although The Heart of Home is a novella and a fairly quick read, it is packed with feeling and heart. Take a post-Civil War backdrop, throw in some Southern belles, a wounded and broken soldier, a run-down plantation, and an oily carpetbagger, and there's intrigue brewing at Riverbend! Stephenia H. McGee has obviously done much research on the life and times of the Civil War era. She is also talented at creating vivid, engaging characters that come to life on the page.

I enjoyed the sweet messages of forgiveness and hope that shine through this story. This novella can be read as a stand-alone, although characters from a previous book make appearances in this one. I recommend this to those who enjoy clean, sweet historical fiction. I purchased this as part of a novella collection called Timeless Love: Romantic Stories That Span the Ages.

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### **Jeanne Alfveby crea says**

4.5 I really enjoyed The Heart of Home by Stephenia H. McGee from this collection. This post civil war novella found it's way into my heart early on. Poor Tristan Stuart barely made it to Opal Martin's porch before asking her if he could die on her porch. Lieutenant Tristan Stuart, head wound bleeding and barely conscious was on his way back from war to a home that no longer existed when he collapses on the Martin's porch. Opal and her mother are living a life of drastically reduced means in their family home after the loss of their father and husband, who died alone on the battle field. Everyone has been affected by the war. I enjoyed the authors writing style, she made it so easy to keep reading. I enjoyed the setting, the dialogue, and the 'real' characters. I love the author notes at the end, and how she used words from her grandparents sweet romance in the story. For historical fiction fans, you don't want to miss this post civil war novella about healing and a sweet romance.

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**Brenda says**

I just finished this novella and enjoyed the action right from the start. After the Civil War the men had to come home and start trying to live again but Tristan was having a hard time with that. He really couldn't see a reason to live because he had so much loss. But God, with Opal and her mother's help saved his life. Troubles and obstacles stood in the way of plans for the future of Opal, her mother and Tristan. If you like historical fiction with romance and hardships you will enjoy this book. I received a copy of this book from the author for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

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