



Farther Afield

Miss Read

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Miss Read, whose real name is Dora Jessie Saint, has been producing these delightful novels of English village life since 1956. On the first day of the summer holidays Miss Read plunges literally into the end of term, by falling downstairs and breaking her arm and twisting her ankle. Her old friend Amy Garfield insists on taking her on holiday to the idyllic island of Crete. The two women, so dissimilar but united in friendship, have time to assess the values of married and single life.

Farther Afield Details

Date : Published December 1st 1991 by Academy Chicago Publishers (first published November 30th 1973)

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Author : Miss Read

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Iru Sai says

A bent from the usual Fairacre books, where Miss Read spends some quality time in Crete with her old friend, Amy, followed with some self introspection. She is intermittently torn between the joys of spinsterhood and the companionship of a married life, but she happily decides to settle with her current situation. She and her friend Amy, both live up to the age old adage, 'A friend in need is a friend indeed.' And like all other books of hers, this too was filled with the usual delightful descriptions of the quaint English village, which I devour. A good 4.5 stars!

Melody says

This struck me as something of a departure for Miss Read. This book is concerned with comparing and contrasting spinsterhood with marriage- and deeply, philosophically so. Examines infidelity, chores, solitude, loneliness and more- all with the proper British reserve, of course. It's a lovely book, but not at all sweet village tales, as I've come to expect. I think this will shake out as one of my favorites after all is said and done.

Clare O'Beara says

This was published in 1965 when foreign holidays were not commonly taken.

I found the story bland and the protagonist, a single teacher who breaks a bone and is whisked off to Crete for a holiday by a livelier friend, to be a dull person. Nobody ever addresses this teacher by name and she does not share her name with us. She watches the progress of two relationships and reflects - without any depth - on what marriage has or has not to do with love.

Maybe the books set in her village are livelier with a larger cast, but having read this one I'm not inclined to seek them out to read.

Kirsty says

Miss Read's stories are easygoing and not at all taxing to read. I felt that selecting the eleventh Fairacre novel, *Farther Afield*, would be just the thing for quite a busy week. I must admit that I haven't been reading the series in any kind of order; the novels work very well as standalone reads, and nothing feels left out or unexplained from one to the next. The descriptions of the natural world here are charming; there is such a celebration of the English countryside, which made me feel a little homesick! Important matters are discussed here, but in rather a lighthearted and accessible manner. *Farther Afield* is such an easy novel to immerse oneself in. I found this enjoyable book to be very calming, and a lovely dose of escapism.

Sally says

Wouldn't be summer without a reading foray to Fairacre!

Kathryn says

I always like Miss Read books. I love the details of village life and the beautiful countryside descriptions. This is one of the ones set in Fairacre and told by Miss Read, the schoolteacher, but this had the added interest of a holiday in Crete, which I thoroughly enjoyed reading about.

Carolhs says

I like all of Miss Read's books, but this wasn't my favorite. It's good, I guess I just prefer the English setting v. Crete

Harriet says

Superb Miss Read: gently humourous and thought provoking as Miss Read explores the advantages of spinster hood over marriage and vice versa.

Emily says

Continuity isn't the author's strong suit. She can't seem to decide if the cat is a he or a she.

This book was originally published in 1974. Part of the story involves Miss Read's friend Amy debating whether she should give in to her husband's request for a divorce or to try to keep her marriage together. Amy relates an anecdote about her aunt, whose husband had also asked for divorce, requesting that she take leave the house so he could install his new woman.

I'm not sure when this previous incident is supposed to have happened (these books are a little hazy on the timeline anyway - the characters don't seem to age by as many years as have obviously passed), but I was struck by how, in neither case, did the option seem to occur to either wife to tell her husband that if he wanted to have it off with his little bit on the side, he could remove himself from the house.

Susan says

A summer vacation takes an unexpected turn for Miss Read, the village school teacher. I love the depiction of day to day life and landscape in this series about the little Cotswold town of Fairacre --great cosy reading when that's what's wanted. This was cosy, but mostly set somewhere else.

Sukhi says

I love this series. The descriptions of the English countryside are always spectacular and satisfy something deep inside me. And as always, I love the observations of life offered up by the protagonist, Miss Read. This book had an added attraction for me: a change in setting to Crete. The author gives Crete her particular attention and skill in descriptive writing. I loved it and am about to pick up the next book in the series!

Sarah Crawford says

It's the end of the term and Miss Read has plans for vacation. This is a case of 'the best laid plans of mice and man gain oft aglay.' First, Miss Pringle gets an appendicitis attack and goes to the hospital. Then, if that wasn't enough, Miss Read falls and injures her arm (she needs to wear a sling now) and her ankle.

She accepts to spend time with her friend Amy who, herself, is having problems as it seems that her husband is cheating on her and even has asked for a divorce. To literally get away from it all they both go to Crete. That part of the book is fascinating as they describe their surrounds and the people they meet.

We also find out Arthur Coggs beats his wife regularly. Amy is also determined not to give her husband a divorce, a decision strengthened when he refuses to wear a seat belt and is injured in a car accident. It's one of the best of the series, in my opinion.

Laura Bang says

Another lovely visit with Miss Read, both in Fairacre and "farther afield" in Crete. Miss Read's descriptions are always so beautiful that I long to visit these places myself. (Fairacre, of course, has the small problem of being fictional, but maybe I'll get to Crete someday.) Miss Read takes a fall down some stairs and her friend Amy is in emotional distress, so they fly off to Crete to soothe their battered bodies and hearts.

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p. 103:

'It is a truth universally acknowledged,' Jane Austen tells us, 'that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.'

A lesser truth, universally acknowledged, is that the first week of a fortnight's holiday is twice as long as the second week. Why this should be so remains a mystery, but no doubt the theory of relativity might throw some light on the matter if one could only understand it.

p. 135:

Really, civility puts almost too great a strain on mankind at times.

Joyce says

Public library copy. Re-reading this series in order.

Love reading this series. Miss Read transports me to another time and place in a way few writers do. This book is about friendship and loyalty and the strength of community, things which sometimes get lost in our technologically-based world. I highly recommend this book to all readers. The series is generally without language, though the later ones (around 1970) use occasional language.

Pam says

Time spent in Fairacre with Miss Read, Amy, Mrs. Pringle and all in the village always lifts my spirits and gives me hope.
