



## Wild Grows the Heather in Devon

*Michael R. Phillips*

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Bestselling novelist Michael Phillips crafts a new historical fiction series, "The Secrets of Heathersleigh Hall", set in 20th-century England. With the coming of World War I, Amanda Rutherford returns from London to Devon to become Lady Heathersleigh. But her cousin Geoffrey comes forward claiming to be the true heir. Will he foil her legacy in the old family estate?

## Wild Grows the Heather in Devon Details

Date : Published September 15th 2015 by Bethany House Publishers (first published 1998)

ISBN :

Author : Michael R. Phillips

Format : Kindle Edition 447 pages

Genre : Christian Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Christian, Fiction

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## From Reader Review Wild Grows the Heather in Devon for online ebook

### **Beth says**

I just couldn't decide how to rate this book. I love the historical fiction aspect. And I like reading Christian fiction because there isn't foul language that I have to ignore. Further, I don't mind an author expanding on the characters' journey through their Christian faith - including basic foundational messages and truths of the Christian faith. As a Christian, it's important to continually fill your mind with the Truth. However, since the majority of the people who will read Christian fiction will most likely be Christians themselves, I thought this book went a little overboard with stating the Christian message. As the author states in the introduction, it's always a wonderful thing when a book causes you to be intellectually and spiritually challenged. But I'm guessing the vast majority of readers will already have a well established foundation in Christianity. So I'm not sure how much they would be spiritually challenged by this book. Further, I just don't see too many non-Christians picking up this book to read when the genre is given as Christian fiction. And those are the readers who may need the pages upon pages of doctrine that make up this book in order to be spiritually challenged. I would suggest, though, that non-Christians would be turned off by the overwhelming amount of discussion of Christian ideals and wouldn't hear the whole message anyway. I really wanted to enjoy this book. However, sadly, I thought it just became a tedious read that I was anxious to get finished so I could move on to another book on my reading list.

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### **Renee says**

Very good story and writing!

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### **Christine Wingate says**

It was an interesting read, but a bit plodding. My main frustration was that it started with a compelling bit of mystery that never actually got resolved in this book (at all). I didn't bother continuing the series.

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### **Chuck says**

I don't know quite what to make of this novel, although I enjoyed it very much. This is apparently the first of a series calling itself "The Secrets of Heathersleigh Hall." Scant attention is given to the mystery during this first book.

It is an enjoyable historical fiction concerning the 1890-1910 in the area of Devonshire and London. Liberal/Tory politics are prominent in the first half but really disappear in the second. A wide variety of interesting topics are touched on, including the rise of Communism, women's suffrage, the industrial revolution, and evolution, all seen through the eyes of Victorian England.

The essential question is what would happen to a modern family of the age when they are called to follow

the Lord? It is an interesting treatise and it is well, and enjoyably, covered. I found it a facinating read.

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### **Joan says**

I have discovered a new author. This is not generally my genre of novels, since I am a fan of neither historical fiction nor what is usually marketed as "Christian" fiction. This novel is long, very detailed, and perhaps a little too philosophical and religious at times. The author is one of the most skilled writers I have read in quite some time - his use of the language is precise, and his writing style is smooth and effective. I greatly appreciate the fact that he writes of Christianity not as some "feel good - almost fairy godmother's magic" kind of spirituality but as a genuine, intelligent experience of living as God's child in the world. His theology, while sometimes too heavy, is sound and steady.

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### **Lee says**

I would take exception to those who review this book as "too preachy." It is first and foremost a truly Christian novel. It is not shallow and easy reading. It is a breath of fresh air in the modern Christian fiction department. It doesn't hint at Christianity, it walks the reader through the steps and struggles of what it means to be a Christian as seen through the lives of well-to-do thinking people. I thoroughly enjoyed the writing style. In an age where it is almost expected that one "park their brain" before beginning a novel this book stands out. This is a book of character development, not action adventure. I would encourage you to take this book on a longer thoughtful read and don't be rushed to begin another book. Enjoy the character development along the way and strengthen your walk with Christ.

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### **Sandra says**

I absolutely loved this book, not only the story but the writing style used by Michael R. Phillips. He "got me" in his introduction to the story and kept me right with him all the way through over the 10 day period it took me to read it. I started it at the beginning of a trip to the Caribbean and it was perfect reading for our flight to and from our destination and, as it is a very long book (700 plus pages), I was able to sneak in some reading time while vacationing and visiting. The story starts from the 1800's and takes the reader through various life styles and political and historical events through to the mid-1900's. It centers around a "well-to-do" family (the Rutherfords) living in Heathersleigh Hall and passes down through a few generations until we reach Charles and Jocelyn Rutherford and their three children, George, Amanda and Catharine. All goes well with the family until Charles and then Jocelyn make some major changes in their lives - changes which are accepted readily by young George and Catharine, but certainly not by the strong-willed Amanda. She has visions of following in her father's footsteps and making a big name for herself, but when her father decides to change his career, Amanda is devastated, and wants nothing more to do with her parents' new way of life. This story will keep you thinking and will pull at your heart-strings, as you follow the delightful characters through trials and tribulations. I definitely want to know more about this family and about the mysteries of Heathersleigh Hall.

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## **Lanita says**

This book began with a promise it did not deliver. Mysteries were set up, but they were not resolved. Reading 521 pages should have been enough to finish the story!

There was so much sermonizing throughout that it should be billed as a handbook for turning to Jesus and being a Christian parent. It was not worth the time it took to read it. I'm also surprised that the flowery language was written so recently.

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## **Lois says**

### **Good book however...**

Great story line and many lessons however the author at times pounded them in again and again and again - preaching over and over when the point already been driven home; sometimes it went on for pages and I just wanted to quit reading. Sigh. The characters were described well although I found it hard to imagine Charles Rutherford, a strong and wise leader, unable to discipline his own daughter or even speak to her clearly - some of his discussions with Amanda were confusing and waffled on the reasoning making it as if he was confused about his own words.

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## **Mary says**

What a wonderful story that could be real! The way people change their perspectives when the Lord touches them, how your priorities might change, how you relate to other peoples, how your path changes. I love the setting, the gardens, the cottage, the secret, the children's personalities, the mother displaying attitudes real to women, the spoiled teen who fights against her parents, but really against God. I should be receiving the next #2 in the series soon. I can feel the Holy Spirit moving and am excited. This would be a great read for someone on the edge of believing the gospel "good news" and making it a personal belief.

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## **Stormy says**

I'm amazed I finished this novel, if it can be called such. It was sheer, dogged determination.

It had a nice title. It started with a lovely mystery that lures you in. It feels like it might be something akin to George MacDonald's Donal Grant. It is not.

Set in a wondrous time, it takes the main character who is fascinated by the changes and inventions of his time, gives him religion, and turns him into a dull man.

And then it completely derails into religious and political debate. And poorly done, at that.

I appreciate good religious essays, but these were weakly argued, at best. Furthermore, I don't pick up a fictional novel to get bogged down in these type of theological questions and have all forward motion of the story completely stop. You are walked through how a man is converted by reason and then forces his wife to convert as well so they can completely withdraw from any action other than prayer and discussion of scripture. This is a ridiculous representation of a faith I hold very dear.

I read the whole book to find out more about the interesting mystery that drew me in, but no. I know nothing

more and I do not wish to read any more of this man's writings.

I don't even want to talk about this book anymore. I wish I could have given it half a star...

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### **Wanda says**

It has taken me along time to read complete this book. I kept putting it down because I kept losing interest.

Sir Charles and Lady Jocelyn Rutherford are liberal people of influence and quite wealthy. While embarking on their Christian journey, their children have mixed reactions to the changes taking place in their lives. Mr. Phillips attempts to set the mood of the Victorian era in England. However, the book moves slowly and lacks enough meat to keep me interested. I expected more than just spiritually rich conversation without fulfilling the promise in the beginning of the book.

I doubt that I will continue on with the series.

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### **Rebecca Martin says**

This is a good book. It challenges you both to remember historical events and to evaluate what you believe. To help understand what I mean by evaluating what one believes I give the following as examples: one of the main characters struggles for a while with the goodness of God due to some previous life experiences, while another has to deal with his beliefs about the origin of the world before they are able to accept God as their loving Father and Savior.

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### **Taryn Spearey says**

This was amazing! In the beginning of the book, Charles Rutherford is very much against God. He simply doesn't believe that God exists. Then, he meets Pastor Diggersfeld, and this is how he is led to the Lord.

His wife, Jocelyn, takes a little longer to accept the Lord, because she feels that God could never love someone with scars. No matter how much Charles tries to make his wife see the truth of the Lord. After meeting Maggie, she finally accepts the truth.

Their daughter, Amanda, refuses the Lord fully. She keeps fighting with her parents, saying that she doesn't believe as they do. Eventually, she tells them that she has an invitation to go participate in the social season.

I hope to one find the rest of the series so i can find out what happens next!

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### **Cindy says**

Amazing book! Be sure to read the introduction before starting the book as it contains important information. He shows how society changes, and how worldly thinking affects people, and what happens to them and how they think when they get saved, and finally, how they grow. But he also shows what happens when one or more family members don't give their hearts to the Lord and the conflicts that come from it. What's neat though is that he doesn't just show the conflicts, he shows how the unsaved person is thinking, as well as the saved members of the family. It's really an amazing book, and I imagine that the whole series will be just as wonderful. I've added portions of it to notes in my bible, it's so good, and I've learned a great deal from it. Even though it's historical fiction from an earlier time, the way people began thinking during that time and how it corrupts faith, is what is affecting folks even more today.

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