



Time and Regret

M.K. Tod

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When Grace Hansen finds a box belonging to her beloved grandfather, she has no idea it holds the key to his past—and to long-buried family secrets. In the box are his World War I diaries and a cryptic note addressed to her. Determined to solve her grandfather's puzzle, Grace follows his diary entries across towns and battle sites in northern France, where she becomes increasingly drawn to a charming French man—and suddenly aware that someone is following her...

Through her grandfather's vivid writing and Grace's own travels, a picture emerges of a man very unlike the one who raised her: one who watched countless friends and loved ones die horrifically in battle; one who lived a life of regret. But her grandfather wasn't the only one harboring secrets, and the more Grace learns about her family, the less she thinks she can trust them.

Time and Regret Details

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Author : M.K. Tod

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From Reader Review Time and Regret for online ebook

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot....>

Time and Regret is M.K. Tod's third novel. I've both of her earlier releases and was eyeing her latest long before it was made available for review. WWII is my usual stomping ground, but I find myself increasingly fascinated with the Great War and, as such, couldn't help bumping Time and Regret to the top of my TBR when Lake Union Publishing granted my request for an ARC.

The book impressed me on a number of levels, but I was floored by Tod's illustration of a woman trying to move forward after an unexpected divorce. By coincidence, I intimately understood a lot of Grace's insecurities and I was both impressed and appreciative of the authenticity Tod managed to convey in her make-up. Trends favor young, confident women, but Tod chose to feature a woman with relatable life experience and I think her novel stronger for it.

Secrets buried in letters and diaries are war lit clichés, but I really liked how Tod used Martin's service memoir in Time and Regret. The volume contains many surprising revelations about Martin's experiences at the Front, but I felt the way he repurposed it to convey his final wishes to Grace gave interesting insight into both his character and the relationship he shared with his granddaughter. I am used to relatives discovering the letters and diaries after the fact, but I found Martin's active role as 'game master' refreshingly engaging.

Cynthia was a difficult character for me, but I grew to appreciate her very deeply in the end. I'm not used to seeing grandmothers portrayed as difficult, but here again I found myself applauding Tod's unconventional approach. She threw stereotypes out the window and created a very unique personality in Cynthia and I like how the revelations into her character led me to believe different things about her character at different points in the narrative.

The climax of the novel was entertaining in its way, but I felt the intensity and emotion faded in the final chapters. I don't mean to sound critical, but I appreciated those elements more than the mystery surrounding the paintings and while I liked how the story ended, I would have favored a more emotive conclusion. That said I greatly enjoyed the time I spent with this piece and would definitely recommend it to my fellow readers.

Sophia says

A discovery amongst her grandfather's things sends a woman on a journey through the past that leads to a danger in the present.

I seem to have been drawn this year to stories with split time lines featuring a person in the present and a person in the past during the war years. I believe this is my fourth one. However, this was my first one with a WWI backdrop. War is always hell. No doubt. However, the trench warfare and massive losses of that series of battles is horrific and staggering. And that doesn't take into consideration those who survived it and were never the same. I found getting the split perspectives of a soldier during that time and his granddaughter in

the present to be equally engaging.

Grace Hansen is a middle-aged woman with a successful career, two wonderful sons, and a good home life until her husband wants a divorce. This decision forces her to look about her and reassess her life. But the catalyst that really brings change is when she is clearing out all that her husband left behind and comes across a box in the attic that her grandfather left with her before he died. She was raised by her grandparents when her father died and her mother fell apart. Her grandmother was strict and cold to her, but her grandfather was everything. Finding the box with some old war effects and his war diaries along with a cryptic note about regret and wanting Grace to solve his riddle and finish his task sets her on quite the soul-searching journey.

Martin signs up and is soon shipped across the Atlantic and into war with his three close friends. As junior officers, they all must keep their men heartened and alive as best as possible. It is not long before Martin sees the gross ineptitude of the leadership and he and his men pay the price. Mired in the trenches and counting victory and defeat by the yard, his hope is extinguishing. Losses of friends and men snuff it out completely until he meets Cynthia.

Grace follows the path of her grandfather from battle to battle over the same terrain hoping something will speak to her. What does he regret and what does he want to fix? She ponders this as she realizes that she is being followed and also encounters a handsome Frenchman who shows an interest and makes her feel like a desired woman again.

As I mentioned earlier, this story is split time line. Grace narrates the contemporary portion. There are excerpts from Martin's diary and also portions where Martin narrates the historical portion. The story is a cross between women's fiction, romantic suspense, and historical. I liked how the author brought together all three elements.

The war is not sugar-coated in either time line. I did enjoy that there is a broader focus to the story. All the places Grace visited were described so well that I felt I was there from the points of interest, the food, the hotels, and even the life of the people. Her handsome Frenchman was urbane and knowledgeable about food, art, and history so they had wonderful times together.

The mystery is the catalyst driving Grace's pursuit of truth, but the suspense of who is trailing her and why slowly build momentum to a startling finish. Most of the story takes its time, but then starts hurdling faster and faster near the end.

In the end, Grace has been on a journey of self-discovery and I loved seeing it happen as she worked out her grandfather's final request. This was a lovely story and I can easily recommend it to those who enjoy historical fiction, light romantic suspense and women's fiction with a touch of romance.

I received this book from Net Galley in exchange of an honest review.

Margaret says

I have previously read *Lies Told in Silence* also written by M.K. Tod and looked forward to reading this new one. Though I finished this book a month ago it has still stayed with me, there is more to Time and Regret than the actual story.

The cover reflects the story nicely (and is gorgeous) while the title perfectly matches the story. With the modern day story taking place in 1991, where there is no need for internet and cell phones to distract.

The author did a great job with Martin's diaries. Beginning when he first enlisted you can see and feel his emotional struggles as the war, with all its brutality, gets worse and unbearable. It wasn't hard to feel his emotional state as he loses his best friends and other young men. His feeling of helplessness and the guilt of being the one in charge and knowing those you stand with in battle might very well never go home.

"There's no point in friendship in this mess. You make friends and they die. It's that simple. God knows why I'm still alive."

Meeting Grace when a recently divorced mother of 2 and watching her journey of self discovery was a great experience. Traveling as she retraces her grandfather's footsteps through France, visualizing the scenery and culinary experiences showed the authors vast knowledge of the times and locale.

I enjoyed the story, the mystery and Grace's adventure. Though I anticipated the ending it was a great read. There was so much about this book that really enjoyed as a reader and also on a personal level. There was more here than the story. It's personal, to go outside your comfort zone, take a risk, grab life and live it on your own terms. It's a reminder about regret and doing the things that you love out of your own desire.

Definitely a book that I highly recommend. Thank you to Emma at France Book Tours for the invite to be part of this tour and to M.K. Tod for a print copy of *Time and Regret*.

Kelsie Engen says

Sadly, I could not get into this book. I got about 10% of the way through, but even by then I was skimming. I honestly don't think it was the author's fault, as the writing is clean, efficient, and perfectly lovely. It's just not the book for me.

I had hoped that the Parisian setting would get me past the fact that this was a war novel, but ultimately, at least in the first tenth of this book, the setting comes into play very little. I usually hate war novels and even have a hard time with much historical fiction, unless it's British history, then I for some reason I am fine. And I did not expect there to be quite so much war here.

There was nothing in particular that drove me away, except that the focus was much more on the war story than I anticipated and less on the modern story. For me this was a turnoff. I did get the feeling that there would be more emphasis on the later story as time went on, but I couldn't get invested enough at this point to want to continue and find out more. The hook just wasn't strong enough for me.

Essentially, this novel just wasn't for me. And instead of struggling through a novel I'm not connecting with, I have learned just to move on.

I think if you like slower paced novels set around a war and with multiple generation storylines, this would be a good choice for you. But I could not connect and must leave it for those who will appreciate it more.

*Thanks to NetGalley for the ARC.

Karen • The Book Return says

Read this Review and More on my Blog: The Book Return Blog 'Time and Regret' is the story of Grace, a newly divorced career woman and mother, struggling to regain her identity. Grace finds an old tackle box of her grandfather's while cleaning out her attic. Inside is a cryptic note, a journal, and several war souvenirs. Grace decides to retrace her grandfather's war travels through Europe.

The story alternates between Grace's first person view in the early 1990's, Martin's third person view during WWI, and sections of Martin's war journal. I find this style of writing, in historical fiction, works very well. It allows the reader to understand not only Martin's point of view and feelings but also how his granddaughter, Grace, reacted to the events Martin experienced during the war.

The character's of both Martin and Grace were well-developed and realistic. This is demonstrated by the fact that even though her grandparents raised her, Grace knew very little of Martin's war experience. I have found this is often true of many war veterans. They tell their families little to nothing about their war experiences.

'Time and Regret' is also somewhat of a mystery. As Grace is pursued by an unknown stranger. Grace also attempts, throughout the story, to decipher her grandfather's cryptic note.

I really loved this novel. I think we as a society have largely forgotten how brutal, gory, and dirty WWI was. Tod presents amazing detail of the day-to-day lives of the soldiers.

Historical Fiction can often be on the dry side but Tod wove the story in such a way that I was swept along with the story. 'Time and Regret' is a must read for anyone looking for an accurate.

Dianne Ascroft says

Like her first two novels, this is a well written, poignant novel and, as I read, I quickly lost myself in the story. I was moved by Grace's very different relationships with her grandmother and grandfather, and her grandfather's experience of life in the trenches during the First World War.

The story deftly contrasts the dilemmas and difficulties in Grace's modern day life with her grandfather, Martin's experiences on the battlefield. Although I approached the book as an historical fiction, I found that a larger portion of the story is devoted to her modern day quest to solve the puzzle her grandfather left for her in a letter. But I wasn't disappointed by this. Both eras were vividly portrayed and I didn't mind spending time with Grace in the present day.

Once again, as in her first novel, the author examines intergenerational relationships within families: mothers and daughters from the daughter's perspective, grandparents and grandchildren, mothers and sons from the mother's perspective. The dynamics of these relationships are timeless and touch the reader's emotions.

In a way, this is a coming of age story for both grandfather and granddaughter. Martin grows and matures in the trenches and his future is formed by what he experiences while his granddaughter has a chance to start again, taking her life in the direction she wants it to go after she finds herself single again.

The author vividly describes the settings: the chaos of New York, the grandeur of an upmarket New York apartment and the homeliness of a house in the suburbs, as well as the tranquil modern day French

countryside and the horrors of World War I trench life. Using every sense, she brings each of these places to life. The battlefields are often uncomfortable, disturbing places for the reader to be but this is necessary for the reader to understand what Martin and his comrades endure.

The novel is an interesting blend of historical war drama, thriller and love story and I enjoyed each element of it. It is at once gripping and tender. The elements of the thriller and the love story both keep the reader turning the pages. This is a complex and entertaining story and I would recommend it equally to historical fiction and contemporary novel lovers.

NOTE: I received a free copy of the novel in exchange for an honest review.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

I believe that we all have different kinds of weakness when it comes to books, some of us have a passion for WW1 books, some of us love time travel romance, some of us can't withstand a book with a gorgeous cover, and some of us loves mystery books, etc...

For me when it came to this book was first the gorgeous cover and then the tantalizing blurb. I just adore parallel storylines with a mystery that a relative or a stranger has to solve in "modern" time. So, I was thrilled to get a chance to read this book.

And, that makes it quite sad to write a review about a book that I thought I would love, but that I just couldn't connect with. Sometimes that happens, sometimes I just can't find myself enjoying a book, despite my deep will to do so. And, this one, oh I wished so that I had found the characters and the story to my taste. But, alas, it was not to be.

For the right person is this probably a great book. We have a woman that is trying to find out more about her beloved grandfather and discovers more than she could dream of. A secret that has been waiting to be revealed. Unfortunately, neither the past and the present story really caught my interest, and the secret was pretty easy to figure out, and there come a time when I thought everything that happens was way too convenient. And, the romance between Grace and Pierre just didn't rock my boat. If the mystery had been more engrossing could I have overlooked the romantic story, but it wasn't and that meant that I couldn't find much enjoyment with the story.

So, this was not the great book that I had hoped it to be, still just because I couldn't find myself enjoying it, doesn't mean that you can't...

I want to thank Lake Union Publishing for providing me with a free copy through NetGalley for an honest review!

Elysium says

4,5 stars

The book alternates between Martin's life during WWI and his granddaughter Grace's life in early 1990s. Grace is recently divorced with two kids who's trying to get her life back together. When she discovers her grandfather's old war diaries and a message with a puzzle in her attic, she decides to visit the war sites in

France.

I don't remember if I've read books set in WWI before, it's usually WWII so this was a great change. Although reading Martin's diary entries it could have been set in either war. I'm not usually a fan of letters in books and mostly just skip them but here it worked.

I liked both Grace and Martin and couldn't choose which POV I liked better which is rare. Martin was so eager to go to war but it soon turns into bitterness and rage as the war goes on. The war changed him forever and it wasn't easy to come back and live with a survivor's guilt.

I wasn't a huge fan of Pierre. He was a nice guy and it was great that Grace found him but I don't know. I think he was boring and that they had no chemistry between them.

I didn't understand Grace's grandmother Cynthia's coldness towards her. I wonder what happened to her because she wasn't like that in Martin's diaries. I would have liked to learn more about her.

This was my first book by the author and it definitely won't be the last. I really loved this book and look forward reading more from her.

Alyssa says

After a somewhat slow start, *Time and Regret* quickly became intriguing. Martin's diaries gave way to sections set during the Great War, and I was fascinated. His words weren't the lengthy sort of diary one usually gets in books like this, but brief, blunt observations that set the stage. Then, to have Grace trying to find clues... I couldn't stop reading. Things built, and the ending wasn't quite what I expected it to be. In a good way.

I especially appreciated that Grace was not a 20-something year old, but a woman of an older age, with more experience, and having gone through a divorce. She was a more interesting character for it, and her friendship and relationship with Pierre felt very natural, and not overdone.

It was also refreshing to have a novel partly set in 1991. It's two historical periods in one novel, and it took me a few minutes to reset my brain to 'not present time' when reading about the more modern era. I had to remind myself that 1991 was pre-cellphone, internet, etc. (I am more than old enough to remember it, but still...)

And finally, the art world connection was a real treat. Museums and (*mumble mumble spoilers*). Definitely a book to pick up.

***Marsha, Marsha, Marsha* It's always Marsha says**

4 *loved France* stars

Stepped out of my normal genre and decided to add a new experience. This truly was the book for that moment. This book truly has so much going for it: suspense, family, loss, secrets, gorgeous French scenery and romance.

Grace Hansen finds herself divorced in her 40s and trying to piece together a very difficult puzzle left to her by her grandfather. Not only do we have the present day situation, but we are taken on a journey that encompasses The Great War, one that I know very little about. Grace finds a tackle box with a letter, a diary, and some interesting mementos left behind. Only problem is that she is having a difficult time trying to "decipher" what her grandfather is trying to tell her and ends up heading off to France to follow the journey of her grandfather during The Great War. Throw in difficult grandmother who is cold and unyielding, a stranger she becomes enamored with during her French travels, and a slow burning suspense that nothing is quite what it appears.

This book is simply worth reading if nothing ELSE than for the wonderful history, the journey through the French hillsides, and the diary of an old man filled with sorrow and regret. Honestly, I enjoyed all of that as much as Grace's journey and ultimate discovery. The lushness of the French countryside, the pain of the Great War, and a burgeoning caring for a Frenchman who may or may not be as he seems.

I truly encourage you to give this book a chance if you are interested into delving into a deeper topic and a haunting past. It's worth the time.

Karen says

Grace is a divorced mom with two kids. Her grandfather dies and leaves her with a puzzle mystery from his service in WWI. Grace goes to France trying to solve the puzzle, while we read Grandpa's diary entries and learn the horrors he suffered while serving during the war.

The story flowed nicely, jumping back and forth between the 1990's and 1910's. I appreciate the descriptions of daily life during war time and I could believe this story may have actually happened. I liked the style of writing and would recommend this book, and author.

I received this ebook from netgalley.com in exchange for a review.

3 stars out of 5

Carlissa says

I have both the ebook and the audio, but I mostly listened to the Audible version of this book. The narrators, Emily Sutton-Smith and Scott Merriman, are excellent.

This book has most of the elements I like in a book - historical fiction, mystery, and just a tad of romance. It alternates between 2 time periods, WWI (1914-1918) and present day (1991) and is told in 2 points of view, Grace in the present day and Grace's grandfather, Martin, during WWI, plus Martin's journals. It did get confusing at times when the story would switch from Martin's journals where he is speaking in first person and then the story switches to third person, but that may be because I was listening to the audio. It was an interesting way of telling the story though.

I liked the way Grace was able to solve the "mystery" using the clues in her grandfather's journals, but it did seem to take her a long time to figure it out.

Shree says

Note : This review is up in my blog Book and Ink

Time and Regret is the story of two people – Grace and her grandfather Martin. Grace is trying to move on after a depressing divorce. While cleaning out her house, she stumbles upon a box addressed to her. The box belongs to her grandfather and contains a letter addressed to her. Eventually she embarks on a journey (to France) tracing Martin's life as a WWI soldier and figures out the secret he conveys in his letter.

Though the story started off with a cliché setting – lost diary chronicling war experiences, but it progressed in the right direction. Thankfully the history part of the book was set in the lesser explored period of WWI. Martin's experiences from the memoir are kind of surprising and interesting in a gruesome way. Obviously, the writer has done her research well. The plot as such was well paced, but kind of fizzled out at the end. In a sense, the climax was perfect just that it wasn't really emotionally intense. The writing was perfect and I loved the style. The tone of writing felt a bit raw, but that is actually the highlight of this book. In fact, I'm not the type to mark down notes from the book to use it later in review, but somehow I felt compelled to mark down this particular quote –

“If the newspapers reported the truth, if they wrote about the mud and filth and the body parts littering the ground and how young men look old before their time, would we still be here?”

That's hard hitting truth. If we were to know about war atrocities chronicled with all the gruesome detail, would any faith in humanity be left?

The timeline shift between the 90s and WWI period was done with much care. The writer managed to add all elements – drama, romance, mystery; and politics in the right proportion. The characters were quite complex and well developed. The highlight being they were all relatable except for Cynthia's character (Grace's grandmother). Grandparents are supposed to be lovable and supportive, but Cynthia sounded just so difficult. I suppose the writer gambled a bit with this character. The highlight however was Grace's character. She has her fair share of insecurities yet she is likeable, realistic and strong willed. With perfect narration, spot on characterization and a great setting, this book was one perfect read.

MY SAY: Perfect read for a windy day.

?

RATING: 4/5

Lauralee says

Grace is going through a hard time. Her husband wants a divorce. As she is dealing with the loss of her marriage, she discovers her grandfather's war diaries. He also left her a note that says that he regrets stealing them. What is it that her grandfather has stolen? Curious, Grace reads through her grandfather's diaries. Intrigued by what she reads, she decides to go to France to follow her grandfather's footsteps and piece together the meaning of the cryptic note that her grandfather left her

Grace is a likable heroine that readers can root for. We can connect to her. She is a woman, who is going through difficult times in her life. The grandfather's diaries provide her not only a diversion of drastic situations, but also provide comfort and healing. She is also very inquisitive and observant because she notices when things seem odd. Yet, she also has low self-confidence and seeks assurances from others to feel good about herself. Thus, while she has some weaknesses, she is a very strong-willed heroine. She is able to come to terms with herself.

I also like her grandfather, Martin. As a soldier in WWI, he is also going through hard times. There are times he faces his fears, doubts, and uncertainty. Yet, he is very smart, determined, and caring. I found him to be a complex, but fascinating character. I really loved reading his chapters and his diary entries for they are filled with action and tragedy.

Overall, this book is about family secrets, love, choices, second chances, acceptance, and hope. I found the characters to be realistic and complex. I also thought this book was very meticulously researched and the setting was very vivid. *Time and Regret* has elements of action, mystery, family drama, and romance. I really found it to be a very poignant, raw, and emotional read. I really felt compassion for these characters. Therefore, this book is beautifully-written and thought-provoking. It will linger with you long after you have read the final page. I recommend this novel for fans of Lisa Jewell, Kate Morton, and Beatriz Williams. (Note: This book was given to me as part of a blog tour in exchange for an honest review.)

Elizabeth St.John says

As I settled down to read this captivating novel, strains of "As Time Goes By" filled my mind. Throughout this sensitively written and heartrending book about love, loss and redemption, the author takes us on a journey between 1990's New York and the French battle fields of the Great War. Traveling smoothly between time and place, the writing is evocative and compelling, and with two points of view between recently divorced Grace Hansen and her grandfather, who fought in the war, we are quickly enfolded in a tale of family intrigue and mystery.

Ms Tod uses contemporary diary entries and superbly researched historical detail to bring the horror of the battlefields of Flanders, the Somme and Ypres alive, witnessing the brutality and carnage of a war that defied all understanding. The character of Grace's grandfather, Martin Devlin, evolves through his horrendous experiences, and as Grace traces his journey in an effort to unravel a mysterious puzzle he has left for her at his death, she begins to understand more of her own childhood and upbringing. Along the way, Ms Tod explores the worlds of art, travel, food and museums in a cultural feast that begs a comfortable armchair and a glass of wine to accompany the reader.

As Grace comes closer to solving the mystery of her grandfather's diaries, the action picks up, and with quickening heart we work alongside her in a race against time to find the answers. Complemented by beautiful travel writing and a dash of romance in the form of an attractive French museum curator, *Time and Regret* is a hugely satisfying novel that is rich in detail with multiple layers and perfectly paced. I found it impossible to put down.
