



Bel Lamington

D.E. Stevenson

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Bel Lamington finds London a very lonely place-- until a charming young artist literally drops in on her rooftop garden...

Bel Lamington Details

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Author : D.E. Stevenson

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From Reader Review Bel Lamington for online ebook

Julie Durnell says

I didn't like this book nearly as much as Music in the Hills and Shoulder the Sky even though it had a few of the same characters toward the end of the book. Bel was just a wee bit tiresome and wishy/washy. When she became a temporary fill in cook/housekeeper for Rhoda and James her latent cooking ability and inability dealing with the two small boys seemed incongruous with her secretarial office duties.

Bree (AnotherLookBook) says

A novel about a young secretary whose solitary personal life is stirred up by the unexpected appearance of an artist on her rooftop garden. 1961.

Full review (and other recommendations!) at Another look book

And the verdict is...3 stars. It wasn't my favorite DES (The Blue Sapphire still holds that honor, I think, followed up by The House on the Cliff), but it still bears all the markings of DES: great writing, superb and realistic characterizations, and happy, tidy endings all around. I recommend this if you've been reading too many depressing books lately. I can't think of a better antidote.

Diana says

I was excited to dig into this out-of-print text when I stumbled upon it at a book fair, as I read D.E. Stevenson's earlier novel Miss Buncle's Book a few years ago and found it to be a fun, escapist depiction of an English village.

Bel Lamington, first published in 1961, follows a much different protagonist. Orphaned at a young age, Bel (an abbreviation of her initials Beatrice Elizabeth Lamington) finds herself alone in the world after her aunt and guardian passes away. She embarks upon a secretarial career in London while navigating romance, unexpected friendships and urban life. Early in the narrative, Bel arrives home from work to find a young, attractive man sitting on the rooftop balcony she has cultivated in the capitol. This unexpected discovery sets the events of the novel into motion. The prose in these early chapters charmed me, lulling me into a sense of cosy ease:

'There was nothing that gave her so much pleasure and satisfaction as planting out seedlings – making the little holes, putting in the plants and tucking them up firmly and cosily. She liked to be silly about it ("There you are," she would say. "That's comfy, isn't it? You'll grow into a big plant with lovely flowers") but how could she be silly with a large young man sitting and watching her? It was impossible.' (p. 21)

Unfortunately, I don't think Bel will appeal much to the sensibilities of twenty-first-century readers. She's far too prim and proper. I don't mind a wishy-washy protagonist if readers get to watch them grow and develop over the course of a narrative, but Bel is as spineless at the novel's conclusion as she is on the first page. She never seems to take charge of her own life, allowing others to push her hither and thither – Bel

can't even realise she's in love without another character pointing it out to her. On that note, the romance was rather predictable. Again, I don't mind a predictable story if it's highly enjoyable, but this didn't leave me in raptures.

CLM says

Bel is a little too passive for me but the book is still very enjoyable upon reread and includes interaction with James and Rhoda from earlier books.

Polly says

A lovely, gentle romance. One of my favourite books by one of my favourite writers for when the world seems awfully cold, hard and depressing.

Susan says

Many people would find Stevenson's books dull, but they provide the perfect gentle break for me from some of the grisly thrillers that I read.

Ellen says

So delightful!

Clara Ellen says

I think this is my favorite D. E. Stevenson book! I just love Bel - she is portrayed with such warmth and sympathy that I just root for her in all her endeavors and am so glad and satisfied with how everything turns out for her in the end..I especially love the parts in the countryside, but really all of the book is just a wonderful read! Good to read before bedtime to give those lovely English countryside dreams of love and belonging and joy..

Tabitha says

3.5 stars-- a little cheesy, dated, and patronizing, and yet I couldn't put it down. I do wish Bel had decided to face her troubles instead of running away and being rescued, but I admire her hard work and fortitude and I probably would've done the same thing if I had to deal with Mark and Mr Wills.

Dorcas says

2.5 Stars

IN A NUTSHELL: A young woman (orphan) works as a secretary at well known shipping firm and lives in a little apartment with a balcony she uses as a garden. One day a man climbs the neighboring roofs and literally drops in on her. Thus begins an innocent friendship. Things happen at the firm and Bel meets new friends and travels to Scotland for a holiday with them. What kind of future is in store for Bel?

This is only my second D.E. Stevenson and it was a sweet gentle read. Not a whole lot happening. The heroine is a mouse, very quiet, very proper and things are wrapped up just a bit too easily to satisfy. Strangely, the first half was much more interesting than the second half. At about 70% in it got veeeery snoozy and I was pretty glad when I'd finished. It might just be me or it might just be a boring book. I'll leave you to decide.

CONTENT:

SEX: None

VIOLENCE: None

PROFANITY: Very very mild

PARANORMAL ELEMENTS: None

MY RATING: G

classic reverie says

It has been awhile since I read D. E. Stevenson and when I found her years ago, it was like finding a reading "home"! I mean that she is my go to comfort read! She is deemed queen of the "light read". I know after reading her that I come away with satisfying romantic yet thoughtful human story. This was written in 1961 but Stevenson stays true to her style; old fashion romance and pure perfection! Then to find out today, that there is a book 2 and after this review, I will read to find out more about Bel Lamington.

I also thought it funny the part about parents learning about child care from books. I am not quite certain when that all began but being a listener to OTR (Old Time Radio) and hearing in the early 1950's The Great Gildersleeve episode where Margie and Bronco but a book for rearing the twins. When their Uncle Mort said that the author must have many children, the answer was he had none. Uncle Mort tries the psychology on Leroy and after the book is thrown away. In this book the mother was going by a book with chaos as a result. I had found this humorous and sadly probably more the norm in letting children do as they please.

"This was one evening when the boys had been particularly uncontrollable in the bath, had absolutely refused to have their ears washed and had drenched Bel from head to foot with soapy water. It was rather surprising that Rhoda, who was so sensible about other matters, could be so foolish about her children. If she had burnt all the books and had managed the boys according to her own good sense they would have been easier to live with. At least that was what Bel thought."

In brief- Bel is a lonely working girl in London with no family after her aunt 's death. She then finds many new acquaintances and love trials are ahead which brings much fun for the reader. This is not just a romantic read, it has much thought to characters and human behavior. Also characters from past series, Drumburly are mentioned which brings much enjoyment to the devout D. E. Stevenson reader, to find out how many faired.

I absolutely love her and would love you to try her!!!!???????

Cricket Muse says

One of DES's quaint romantic tales that is charming, somewhat predictable, humorous, and has a great cast of unique and predictable characters.

The story of what happens when a country mouse has to move to the city and how she nearly gets eaten by an assortment of critters, could aptly apply for Bel is quite a little mouse and she nearly gets devoured by artist rogues and jealous office workers. A typical happy ending takes place in the country, but the getting there is lovely. A favorite for weekend reads.

Carolyn says

Bel is a shy secretary to a shipping company owner. While her boss travels to America on business, she continues to run the company until the unbalanced co-owner/partner fires her in a violent rage. Her loyal friend Jim defends her and tries to correct the insult, thereby sending the seething partner to the hospital. But Bel has disappeared.

Bel leaves London to stay with a school friend and finally finds work in the Scottish highlands with the Dering-Johnstones in Drumburly (see Shoulder the Sky).

connected to: Fletcher's End (the sequel); Shoulder the Sky

Ann says

This book from 1961 tells the story of Bel Lamington, a country girl who moved to London to earn a living as a secretary. Although she enjoys her work in a big shipping firm, reporting to the kindly Mr. Brownlee, she misses the country and creates a private roof garden. One day she finds a charming young painter lounging in her roof garden, and they become friends. Bel even develops a bit of a crush on him, which is cruelly disappointed when he flits off to Italy without warning. In the meantime, Bel meets her old schoolfriend Louise, and Louise's father, Dr. Armstrong. A long weekend at the Armstrong's home is a welcome respite from city life, which has lost much of its charms now that Mr. Brownlee is off on a long business trip. Then Bel falls victim to office politics and is fired. Wounded and exhausted, she joins the Armstrongs on their vacation in Scotland (Drumburly, of the "Winter and Rough Weather" Trilogy) and stays on afterwards in a housekeeper job. Then one day Mr. Brownlee turns up, and of course all ends in an engagement.

Although this book is more than 40 years old, it is still a fresh and entertaining story. Young women have many more options than in those days, but the essential elements haven't changed : making a living, finding true friends, finding love. I thought the book rang particularly true when describing how living in a small apartment in a grimy metropolis can sap the resilience out of a country girl. The book is full of "nice" people, including the folks of Drumburly, who will be familiar to faithful readers of D.E. Stevenson's books. It is a nice little bit of escapism, but with believable and likable characters.

Mary Jo says

A "throw back" to the genre of book I read as a teenager. A small dose of this type of book from time to time is a lot of fun.
