

ECLECTIC READERS GROUP
JUNE 19, 2010
SERIES CHARACTERS

M Barr, Nevada
BARR **FLASHBACK**

“The series character in the Nevada Barr books is a National Park employee named Anna Pigeon. Each book features a different national park. I read *Flashback*, which is her 11th book. I usually like to start a series at the beginning, but I chose this novel because I had been reading *Last Train to Paradise* by Les Standiford about Henry Flagler who built the railroad down through the Florida Keys (destroyed in the hurricane of 1935). *Flashback* features Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, which is about 80 miles south of Key West. The author tells two stories at the same time alternating between present day problems at the Fort and a series of letters written by a relative of Anna’s during the Civil War period. I like the series main character Anna. She is very capable, responsible and knowledgeable about her job. She can do all kinds of things, like deep sea diving and small boat repair. She could probably survive in the wilderness for some time using skills she has learned in previous books” - Robin

F Berry, Steve
BERRY,S **THE CHARLEMAGNE PURSUIT: A NOVEL**

“The 7th in the Cotton Malone series. Cotton seeks the truth about his father following clues gathered by former Nazis about the 'Language of the Heavens' from the time of Charlemagne. He cracks the code, and it takes him to Antarctica where he finds his father's body and truth of his death. Very exciting and suspenseful. The puzzles in this one are not as compelling as earlier books in the series. He is trying to humanize Cotton with the search for his father, but it doesn't work too well with the genre. Not my favorite book in the series” - Teresa

SF Carey, Jacqueline
CAREY,J **KUSHIEL'S MERCY**

“A prince of the blood of Terre d'Ange and son of the traitoress Melisande Shahrizai, we first meet Imriel as a kidnapped and abused child of ten in *Kushiel's Avatar*. He narrates the last three books in the series, *Kushiel's Scion*, *Kushiel's Justice* and *Kushiel's Mercy*. In the previous books, he fell in love with his cousin Sidonie, the heir to the throne. Because of his mother, half the realm doesn't approve of the match, including the queen. To test his loyalty, she makes it a condition of her blessing on the union that Imri find his mother and return her to Terre D'Ange for execution, but nothing goes as expected. I was very impressed with the way Carey developed Imriel's character, from an angry and frightened ten-year-old to a young man willing to sacrifice for his lady love and for his country. He really earned his happy ending. I enjoyed the book a lot, and it ended with everything in the series brought full circle. This really is a wonderful series” - Linda

J F Collins, Suzanne
COLLINS **THE HUNGER GAMES / CATCHING FIRE**

“This was recommended by a friend and I was quickly drawn into it, despite the disturbing theme. It's a futuristic dystopian novel set in a country called Panem, what is left of No. America after a series of natural and man-made disasters and a nationwide rebellion. Now the capital rules the 13 Districts with an iron hand, including the mandatory annual Hunger Games in which two teens between the ages of 12 and 18 are chosen by lottery from each district to fight to the death in a televised tournament. The games are used as a yearly sacrifice to keep the districts in line. The protagonist is Katness, a 16-year-old girl from District 12, the Appalachian mining area, who takes the place of her younger sister whose name is chosen. Fortunately, her father taught her to hunt, so she isn't completely unprepared for the games. She's smart, with good survival instincts, but a bit of a loner. In the course of the first book she learns that there is strength and comfort in joining forces with another. In *Catching Fire*, Katniss evolves from someone determined to stay alive at all costs to a girl who will do whatever she can to keep someone else alive. This series is fantastic, compelling and emotional. I cried real tears at one point and generally had a hard time putting it down. A movie version is in the works and may be a big deal. Highly recommended” - Linda

M Hill, Reginald
HILL,R **MIDNIGHT FUGUE: A DALZIEL AND PASCOE MYSTERY**

“The Dalziel-Pascoe series started with *A Clubbable Woman** (1970) and now numbers in the twenties, and the characters have all changed and grown, and their relationships have also changed and deepened. The central character, larger than life, is Yorkshire DCI Andrew (Andy) Dalziel (pronounced D-L), and it's not so much that he changes, but that we learn more and more about him as the series goes along. Then there's his partner, David Pascoe, who is young and inexperienced in the first book, and overwhelmed by Dalziel, but soon can hold his own smartly. Then there's Ellie, Pascoe's often grating wife; WPC Novello, whom Dalziel refers to as 'Ivor,' after a long-ago movie star; Sgt Wield, one of the most patient, endearing characters you could ever hope to meet; a young constable known as 'Hat,' because of the first name his parents burdened him with. Then add Hill's wonderful, literate prose, intricate plotting, and imaginative scene-setting, and you get a simply wonderful series!” - Ruth

F Larsson, Stieg
LARSSON **THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO**

“This book is something of a publishing phenomenon. Stieg Larsson brought three manuscripts at once into a publishing house in Sweden. The first book was published and Mr. Larsson died shortly after that so he never knew how his books lived on after he was gone. Somehow (word of mouth probably) the book became very popular and was translated into English. I am waiting for Book #2 *The Girl Who Played with Fire*. Book #3 is called *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*. The girl in the title is a researcher with incredible computer skills (translation: hacking), and a very offbeat personality. She works with a magazine publisher on a cold case which they wind up solving together. The great thing about the book is #1 the writing which is really wonderful, and #2 the character development of not only the main characters, but all the other people in the novel as well. I loved this book but cannot really recommend it without a warning that it has violence and graphic sexuality” - Robin

M Peters, Ellis
PETE **A MORBID TASTE FOR BONES* / POTTER'S FIELD / BROTHER
CADFAEL'S PENANCE**

“My sister recommended this series to me, so I read the first, seventeenth and twentieth book in the Brother Cadfael series. It takes place about 1100AD in the British Isles, a political & historical setting new to me. In the first one, Brother Cadfael goes to Wales to collect bone relics of a saint. The series blends historical information with village life. Brother Cadfael himself has a good heart and mind and is very down to earth. He's strong, noble and heroic. I liked the writing style although sometimes it seemed a little laborious. The last book was my favorite. Good end to the series” - Karen G.

813.087 Prenzler, Otto
LINE **THE LINEUP, THE WORLD'S GREATEST CRIME WRITERS TELL THE
INSIDE STORIES OF THEIR GREATEST DETECTIVES**

“Ever wonder how Faye Kellerman came up with Rina Lazarus & Peter Decker?, or how did Alexander McCall Smith think of his character, Precious Ramotswe? Or how Lee Child's Jack Reacher got his name? CLUE: It has to do with a super market. Colin Dexter's Morse is another fascinating character and how did that person come to life? Well, you get the idea... In all, 22 authors give the information on their favorite sleuths. In all fairness, ideally he would have come up with more than just four female writers. But , all in all, I found it a very enjoyable book to keep by the bedside” - Gary

F Read, Miss
R2844 **THE SCHOOL AT THRUSH GREEN**

“As a past English teacher would have me analyze it, this book stresses setting. In fact I think the series character is really the village, not a human... It's very mildly interesting as long as nothing else is distracting me in the room... Two aging schoolmistresses who live in the teacher's house next to the school, decide to retire and move to a more happening location... We get to know the many inhabitants of Thrush Green (so many I was losing track with nothing to hang one's hat onto) and although it sounds idyllic I have to wonder how that type of life would be if I can't even get myself to read it very often” - Karen M.

SF Scarborough, Elizabeth Ann
SCARBORO **CLEOPATRA 7.2**

"In Scarborough's imaginative sci-fi series, scientists have found a way to 'blend' the DNA of deceased people with that of the living. The ethically-challenged NUCOR/HELIX corporation is happy to sell the process to anyone who can afford it. In this sequel to *Channeling Cleopatra*, Leda, Cleo and Egyptologist Gabriella Farouk are back in Alexandria, searching for Cleo's sarcophagus which contains a lock of Mark Antony's hair as well as more Cleopatra DNA. Before you know it, there are two Cleos and one Mark Antony blend, along with a Scottish entrepreneur/Sir Walter Scott, trying to stay ahead of the bad guys. The internal dialogue between the blended personalities is fascinating and frequently hilarious. This series brings new meaning to the term 'character development'. Loads of fun" – Linda

* Book not in APL system

Disclaimer: All books reviewed herein were checked out of the library or purchased by the reviewer. None were provided free of charge for the purpose of an endorsement.