



-News-

As you have probably already seen, we are having a charity preview of the second in the Millennium Trilogy – *The Girl Who Played With Fire*. I have already seen the shorts and it looks fantastic. The group we are fundraising for is AIM – Adults In Motion. They are based in Snells Beach and are a group who provide a quality day programme in Rodney District for adults with intellectual/physical disabilities. The tickets are \$20 and are available directly from us. We are hoping to fill both the Tivoli and Paradiso theatres. The tickets are selling fast so do get yours soon, if you are interested. I will send out a reminder of the date so you won't forget to come ... for those who forget to write things in their calendars! There are fewer reviews this month due to two things – my yoga teacher lent me her set of *True Blood* books which I found incredibly addictive, and I've also had the flu this past week, as has the rest of my family. It is that time of year I suppose.

-Book Reviews-

***Freeing Grace* by Charity Norman** – The author was born in Uganda, and brought up in Yorkshire and Birmingham and in 2002 moved with her family to New Zealand. *Freeing Grace* is the story of David, a curate and Leila his Nigerian-born wife who are waiting to adopt a baby – Grace. As the adoption gets closer to being finalised, we learn that Grace's birth family, The Harrisons, have changed their mind and want to keep her. Using their new kiwi friend, Jake, they plan to fight the system and do whatever it takes to present a united front. However, all is not as it seems with the Harrisons, and they must confront many hidden truths. Meeting and getting to know the Harrison family also has a profound effect on Jake. This is a great read and an impressive debut from this new author. (Nice to have a kiwi point of view in this story)

***Lost* by Alice Lichtenstein** – This is another debut novel and I found it incredibly moving. I'm going to write what is on the back of the book because I can't improve on that: "On a cold January morning Susan leaves her husband alone for a few minutes and returns to find him gone. He has Alzheimer's – he no longer knows how to dress or feed or wash himself and he has wandered alone into a frigid landscape with no sense of home or direction. Lost. Written in spare, beautiful prose, *Lost* explores the ways the simplest, briefest of moments can have a profound impact on our lives and the way responsibility, love, and sorrow can bind us together." Yes, I know this is another book about someone with Alzheimer's, and not everyone wants to read about this, but this is a very touching and real story that is beautifully and thoughtfully written. Thoroughly recommend it.

The Hamish Macbeth Murder Mysteries are a series of books that become a temptation, rather like a box of chocolates: sample one and you find yourself slipping into the next before you know it! Set in the sleepy Scottish Highland village of Lochdubh, these entertaining stories involve local policeman Hamish Macbeth, his dog Lugs, and a village full of odd and wonderful characters. The titles give a pretty good indication of plot: *Death of a Gossip*, *Death of a Charming Man*, *Death of a Witch* – you get the picture.

"The detective novels of M.C. Beaton, a master of outrageous black comedy, have reached cult status." – *The Times* (that is of course *The Times of London*, not of Rodney) Read one and you will see why: copies circulate like wildfire among groups of friends. A cult worth joining!

Next, I think I will try M.C. Beaton's other series of books, involving the exploits of one Agatha Raisin – they look equally enjoyable. (Sylvia)

***The Short Second Life Of Bree Tanner* by Stephanie Meyer** – The Twilight saga continues – this time we have quite a different point of view. Bree is one of the newborn vampires from Eclipse and this is her story. She struggles to survive within a pack of angry and out of control new vampires. They are being trained to fight, but are the leaders trustworthy? Bree feels very vulnerable, and just as she finally finds someone to trust, the newborns are sent to fight the Cullen family. Stephanie Meyer herself has said that if she had explored this avenue of thought while she was writing the Twilight series, she would have written Eclipse and Breaking Dawn differently!

***The Moorehawke Trilogy – Book 1: The Poison Throne, Book 2: The Crowded Shadows* by Celine Kiernan** – These books have been very popular with teenage girls, so I thought I should read them for myself. I was not disappointed – in fact, I'm joining all the girls who are waiting desperately for the third and final installment, The Rebel Prince. In The Poison Throne we are introduced to fifteen-year-old Wynter Moorehawke, Protector Lady, and qualified girl apprentice in a man's trade. Wynter and her father are newly returned to the King's court after being away for five years, looking after the King's interests in the north. Things at court have changed and of Wynter's childhood friends, one is in exile, and the other is being groomed to be king. Will Wynter and her father be able to negotiate this new fragile life at court? In The Crowded Shadows Wynter has set out on her own in search of Alberon, the king's son who is now living in exile. However, the forests are a dangerous place for a young woman to be travelling on her own. Loved, loved, loved these books and can't wait for the third!

There are a few movies out relating to books – Eclipse, and The Girl Who Played With Fire, are hot examples. I keep thinking everyone must have read the Millenium Trilogy by now, but people are still discovering them. Hope the winter is treating you all well and we are over the half-way mark already.

Tracey, Sharleen and Sylvia

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