

DECEMBER BOOK REVIEWS

THE GOOD, THE BAD and the DUMPED by Jenny Colgan (*Sphere* 2010).

I had forgotten how funny this author can be. Obviously, it is a chick-lit, and ideal for a lazy day on the beach! Posy is delighted when her boyfriend, Matt, proposes to her, but, although she says yes, her thoughts go back to the three previous long term relationships that she has had and that have ended in disaster – is she marriage material? What was it she had done wrong? Without further ado she manages to locate two of her ex-boyfriends on 'Facebook' and arranges to meet them. The third, although seven years had gone by, was the one who had broken her heart, to the point where she couldn't say his name, even after all this time. She does catch up with him in the end. In-between we have her rather weird Mother, her even weirder sister, Fleur and her best friend Leah. How does Matt react to all this and is there any hope for this relationship? You need to read it to find the answers and what Posy discovered about herself.

TWENTY WAGGING TALES *Our Year of Re-homing Orphan dogs* by Barrie Hawkins. (*Summersdale Publishers Ltd* 2009).

What a beautiful book. From page one I was hooked by the author and his wife. It is their first year of deciding to re-home, where possible, dogs that for some reason their owners can't keep them or as in a few cases they have been abused. They were just thinking about doing it but word got out and the telephone didn't stop. I laughed, I cried and I read it from cover to cover in 6 hours – the stories were brilliantly portrayed and I learned quite a lot about dogs, especially the German Shepherd/Alsatian – intelligent, sensitive and wonderful animals. The author comes over a wonderful, wonderful man as does his wife in a different way, as in, not so many weird and wonderful 'incidents' happen to her – she is the 'people' person, and they had lots of unexpected people that she had to deal with. Barrie the author (a retired lawyer) is the 'dog' person. The friendships they make on the first year journey, not only the canine kind but friendly, eccentric people who call on them for help. If you wish to find an ideal Christmas present for the animal lover in your family this is it. A wonderful book.

J is for Judgement by Sue Grafton (*Pan Books* 1994). Well here I am up to 1994 already! A few surprises this time before we actually get into the mystery. Firstly, her old company that had fired her and evicted her from her office get in contact – they need her help! This leads to her travelling to Mexico. Can someone who has committed suicide really be alive? Of course it was an insurance company that she has previously worked for. Guess why they want to prove he is alive? The next surprise to crop up is that Kinsey, this loner that she has always been, due to the death of her parents and then the Aunt who raised her, has family! I found it interesting, but not gripping and definitely not enough action. But, as I am finding throughout these books, she is definitely not the 'hard cookie' that I felt she was in the first few books and there is some emotional stuff happening under that tough veneer.

Recently I discovered a web page with the 'top 20 authors' of this year for Non-Fiction. I have chosen a few that you may be interested in for a Christmas present, or, if you are like me and like to hibernate with a mountain of books – enjoy.

Non-Fiction

Peter Kay - **The book that's more than just a book-book.**

Pam Ayres - **The necessary aptitude.**

Jamie Oliver - **Jamie's 30-minute meals.**

Jessica Fellowes - **The world of Downtown. Abbey.**

Alistair Darling – **Back From the Brink.**

Billy Connolly - **Billy Connolly's Route 66.**

Sue Johnston - **Things I couldn't tell my mother.**

Fiction

Randy Alcorn – **Courageous**

Terry Blackstock – **Shadow in Serenity**

The Killing Way - **Tony Hays**

11.22.63 - **Stephen King**

A Season to Remember - **Sheila O'Flanagan**

The Thread - **Victoria Hislop**

The House of Silk - The New Sherlock Holmes Novel - **Anthony Horowitz**

It is my aim to read as many of the above books and review them in the New Year.

I wish to take this opportunity to wish you all A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year – happy reading.