



# LGBT Reading Group



## August/September 2008



### The Read... Fried Green Tomatoes...

**At the Whistle Stop Café** By Fanny Flagg

Evelyn is a depressed, overweight, middle-aged wife and mother. One day, whilst waiting to visit an aunt in a nursing home, she befriends an elderly woman called Ninny who tells Evelyn tales of the two young women that ran a café in the town of Whistle Stop, Alabama, during the 1930's - Idgie, who enjoys drinking and gambling, and Ruth, who is in an abusive marriage.

Evelyn finds herself empowered by the story of these two strong-willed, independent women and goes on to develop a great friendship with Ninny. A humorous yet touching story of friendship, love, courage and self-sacrifice. ISBN: 978-0804115612



### The Author... Fanny Flagg

Author and actress Flagg was born Patricia Neal in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1944. She could not use her birthname professionally as there was already a well-known star with the same name. Interestingly, Flagg had a part in the movie *Grease* and is also dyslexic.

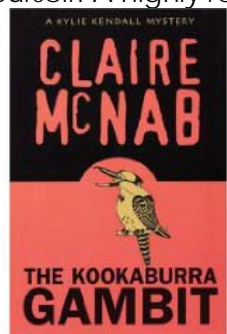
Flagg is openly lesbian and was once the partner of author Rita Mae Brown, who outed her. She removed a substantial portion of the lesbian content in this 1987 book in order to make the 1991 film version more commercially viable.

**Our Opinion...** Set in the American South between the 1920s and 1980s, this heart-warming tale swings through history telling the story of Idgie and her family, using first hand narrative, the Weems Weekly news-sheet and the memories of Ninny, Idgie's now elderly sister. Covering issues such as racial segregation, poverty, domestic violence and murder, Flagg's humorous style makes this an unforgettable story, which the whole group enjoyed.

This book also observes the deep friendship that can grow between women, especially as they develop their own identity away from men - as Evelyn befriends Ninny in the nursing home she finds a life for herself that she never imaged she could (hilariously portrayed in the film).

It is true to say, however, that the lesbian relationship between Idgie and Ruth is never blatantly acknowledged - they could be nothing more than "just good friends".

There are also some recipes included at the end if you fancy cooking fried green tomatoes for yourself! A highly recommended read.



### What Next? Whodunnit?

This month, the group decided to look at the genre of Lesbian crime writing. Authors include Claire McNab, Jenny Roberts, Mabel Maney and Gerri Hill.

Next month we will each review our read and discuss the genre of crime generally.



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