

Part Eight: Multiple Matching (Page 1, 2)

You are going to read an article containing reviews of recently-published books. For questions 1-10, choose from reviews (A-F). The reviews may be chosen more than once.

Book Corner

A round-up of the latest fiction and non-fiction from Beth Young.

A Reading a new novelist is a bit like asking a stranger out on a date. You never quite know if this is the start of a beautiful relationship. You check the blurbs, the publicity photograph, and flick through the book to look for the two essentials: entertainment and substance. Beginner's Greek by James Collins is certainly big on the latter, weighing in at 400-plus pages. And the quotes on the back cover have the effect of a bunch of friends saying to you, 'Go on, you'll get on brilliantly'. Early indications are that this blind date could lead to a deeper relationship. Beginner's Greek is described by The New York Times as a "great big sunny lemon chiffon pie of a novel" about romantic love amongst the American middle classes. It is indeed delicious.

B In Manil Suri's second outing *The Age of Shiva* we have a broad-sweeping, epic novel with an unforgettable heroine so wilful yet flawed that it calls to mind that other famous leading lady, Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With the Wind*. The story begins at a firework party in Delhi where Meera falls disastrously in love. We follow her journey to Bombay, marriage and obsessive motherhood, with occasional flashbacks to a childhood that was marred by political turmoil. Mathematics professor, Suri, captures the fluidity of the role of women with a beautiful kind of precision.

C Devotees of playwright David Mamet, whose screen work includes *Wag The Dog* and the award-winning *Glengarry Glen Ross* may be less than enamoured of Ira Nadel's new biography, *David Mamet: A Life in the Theatre*. It may seem churlish to question the minutia of incidents that abound in this comprehensive tome, but whilst Nadel is clearly striving for accuracy one feels there ought to have been more sifting, more mining for the gold amongst the biographical trivia. In addition, Nadel's tone is somewhat dry and academic and seems at odds with the brilliance of David Mamet's own writing. That said, the book offers a sound introduction to the life and career of the man hailed as one of America's most outstanding writers.

D *Can any Mother help me?* is the true story of a desperately lonely mother who, in 1935, appealed to other women through the letters page of a women's magazine. Writing under a pseudonym, the woman known as Ubique (meaning 'everywhere') little realised that she would be the trigger for the launch of a new and private magazine that would last for the next fifty years. The Cooperative Correspondence Club was formed to offer comfort and support to wives, often well-educated women, who craved stimulation beyond the drudgery of family life. Jenna Bailey has done a superb job of organising and editing this compendium, adding her own insightful commentary.

E Subtitled, *The Life and Times of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey*, Jessie Child's debut historical biography, *Henry VIII's Last Victim*, was the worthy winner of last year's Elizabeth Longford Prize. Henry Howard's victim status is owing to the fact that he was the final person to be executed by King Henry VIII, a mere nine days before the king himself expired. Although killed ostensibly for treason, the Earl of Surrey's only real crime it seems was leading an unsuccessful army campaign in France. Only 29, he was also a distinguished poet with a fine literary voice, a persona which refutes his reputation as the spoilt son of the Duke of Norfolk.

F This is the 25th outing for T. Keneally but he's lost none of his writing powers. *The Widow and Her Hero* takes real life events during the Second World War as its inspiration and builds a tale of love and intrigue. Grace looks back on her life to recall her courtship with the hero of the title, the handsome Captain Leo Waterhouse. Leo is tragically killed whilst on a secret mission but it is many years before Grace discovers the facts about his

death. Keneally made fans galore when Schindler's Ark was published and later made into the award-winning Steven Spielberg film, Schindler's List. The Widow and Her Hero will bring him even more fans.

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