

## dogs and names and books

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I woke up to rain this morning...not unwelcome because we need it, and currently the pump in the old well that waters my gardens is not working properly. But I hope it clears by tomorrow, because tomorrow Alfie is entertaining a guest, his friend corgi Charlotte. Charlotte was born into a litter that were all named for children's book characters... I don't know the names of the others but will ask Charlotte's mom.

Once I knew a golden retriever who was named Henry, each of that litter having been named for Shakespeare characters: a rich source; I can picture Falstaff and Prospero.

Alfie's litter was not named thematically...they were not named at all, actually, until owners took over (and I do know that he has a brother and sister somewhere now named Elvis and April) but if they had been named for British movies, as Alfie was, they could have been ... what? Maurice? Iris?

Best news bookwise in a while is the announcement of a sequel to "The Pillars of the Earth" by Ken Follett. The new one, due out in October, will be called "World Without End." I remember when 'Pillars' was published: quite a long time ago, maybe early 1990's\*, and although I had not before been a lover of historical novels, that one so captivated and fascinated me that I recommended it to countless people, and every one of them was hooked the way I had been. Just the other day I got an email from my brother, whose wife had recently had surgery, telling me that he had whiled away the hours sitting at the hospital by re-reading "The Pillars of the Earth"... His wife is doing fine now, and one hopes he doesn't have to sit in a hospital ever again, but I was pleased to be able to tell him about "World Without End."

\* I just googled it to check. 1990.

Of course sequels are often a disappointment. (Does anyone remember that there was a

sequel to "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn"? Of course not). So writers are probably often hesitant to write them, even though—like readers—we are eager, sometimes, to re-visit greatly-loved characters. I hedged, in writing the books that became "The Giver" trilogy, by focussing on *other* characters and letting Jonas recede into an important but not central role. (Of those three books, incidentally, I like the second one best. But I suspect that's because the main character is female, and most like me).

And speaking of books that I unexpectedly loved, and then recommended: "Goodbye, Darkness" by William Manchester. Who would have guessed that I would even pick up a book about WW II in the Pacific? But I not only picked it up...I couldn't put it down.

Tags: Untagged