

Cape Diamond (Frank Yakabuski #2) by Ron Corbett

Date Read – 20190303

Rating –3 Stars

After reading the first book in this series, “Ragged Lake”, which was a 2018 Arthur Ellis entry for best First novel I didn’t really think I would read any more in this series (See my review of “Ragged Lake” . Many of my thoughts there also apply to “Cape Diamond”) However since this book is entered in the 2019 Arthur Ellis awards for Best novel and because I got it at no charge as a loner I gave it a try. Now while this is not a bad book and I didn’t have to force myself to finish it there are some things about it that I, personally, find hard to like in a mystery novel and cause me to downrate it. I will admit that I liked Frank Yakabuski much more in this book than I did in the first book and I really liked how he treated Donna Griffin, enlisted her help in the investigation and credited her for her efforts. The best things about these books are the well written descriptions of the settings and the weather. I know a reader is supposed to suspend most sense of disbelief to enjoy these type of stories but the plot line of this book is so far fetched and over the top that it is very hard to accept that any of the wild action, of which there sure is plenty, could possibly take place anywhere in Canada where this book is supposedly set. That brings to me the problems I have with with this book. The major problem is with place names. It is quite acceptable for a writer to invent fictitious places but it is not acceptable to use the names of real places for them. Buckham’s Bay is a neighbourhood in the City of Ottawa and Cape Diamond is the high ridge of land in Quebec City bordering the St Lawrence river upon which sits the Quebec Citadel. Valerie Tate made the same mistake in her Dunbarton series with the names of Dunbarton and Lancaster. Also a fictitious city must be situated in a geographic location where the topography, weather, distances, industries and people etc. are realistic, possible and probable for that locality and I can not understand how a city the size of Springfield with all it’s amenities could possibly be situated on the Northern Divide. If this book just stopped at the end of Chapter 55 it would have been a fine ending but, oh no, we have to have an epilogue to introduce another of my pet peeves and indicate that Cambino Cortez is returning to Springfield in order to entice the reader to buy the next book which, of course, I will not be doing. I might read it if I can get a freebie.

Kingdom of the Blind (Chief Inspector Armand Gamache #14) by Louise Penny

Date Read – 20181201

Rating – 3 Stars

I have had a hard time rating and reviewing this entry in this fine series by one of my favourite Canadian authors and I originally rated it 4 stars but I am now going to downrate it to 3. As is always the case in these stories the writing, the description of the settings, the weather and especially of the food is superb. All the regular characters are in fine form, especially Ruth and Rosa and the new characters introduced are well developed and likeable or not as the story required. Now I think this may be where I start to have some problems with this book because I don't really like the way Armand behaves and uses people in his investigations and I don't really like Jean Guy too much, either. There are really 3 mysteries which are only very loosely connected and 2 of which ended quite satisfactorily but I really did not like the way Armand and Jean Guy's personal stories ended and I thought the whole abandoned farm and the centuries old family feud thing was a bit far fetched and over the top. I was glad to see the conclusion of the opioid crisis but I thought the whole Armand/Amelia thing was pretty predictable and I had it figured out from the first meeting at the Academy. This is definitely not a bad book but I don't think it is one of the best in the series even taking in the author's personal situation. I know Ms Penny has already said there is another book on the way and I am very curious , given the way this one ended, to see how that will turn out or even if it's possible. Perhaps it's time to retire Armand and start a spin-off Three Pines series with some of the other peripheral characters?