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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ MYSTERY

Astride a Pink Horse

Robert Greer
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Doctor, cancer researcher, pathologist, University of Colorado professor, and writer Robert Greer takes a break from his nine-book CJ Floyd mystery series to introduce a new main character (and potential series focus) in a novel set in and around Denver and several Wyoming locations. Elgin “Cozy” Coseia was on his way to a career in major-league baseball when a motorcycle accident forced him to choose another profession. His best friend, Freddy Dames, has started a Web news service, “regional news for the digital age,” and hires Cozy as a reporter.

When the naked body of a retired Air Force master sergeant is found hanging by the ankles in an offline-missile silo’s personnel-access tube, Freddy sends Cozy to Wyoming to get the details. The Air Force sends OSI investigator and former fighter pilot Major Bernadette Cameron to handle the security-breach investigation at the silo. The trio of amateur sleuths follows a trail that snakes through the past and present as they uncover the seamy side of the victim’s life and meet a growing list of suspects who are anything but ordinary. Along the way, nuclear weapons, displaced persons, and US internment camps during World War II add layers of meaning and sometimes misdirection for the characters and the reader alike.

Greer’s writing style is relaxed and redolent of experience, spinning a tale of opportunities lost, delayed revenge, and unexpected life-changing events that breathe life into the characters without overwhelming their personalities. There are no throwaway people, no two-dimensional characters, and the dialogue throughout the novel is equivalent to eavesdropping on intriguing conversations. The twists and turns of the investigation are deftly handled; nothing feels out of place or illogical in the scenes or the transitions from one character’s viewpoint to another.

Lovers of mystery (in particular, the evocation of place that Tony Hillerman achieved in his novels set in the Southwest) will find *Astride a Pink Horse* well worth their time. Greer’s main characters in this novel are people of color and, while they aren’t the first, they’re a welcome addition to a genre that’s been far too pale for far too long. Though this novel is described as a stand-alone book, the likelihood for its becoming a series is certainly present. Here’s hoping Dr. Greer chooses that path.
J.G. STINSON (February 29, 2012)

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