



Miranda James

Cat in the Stacks mysteries

Cozy Guy in a Cozy Chick World

“What do you mean, you’re writing a cozy series with a guy as the main character? Don’t you know that a cozy series has a female amateur sleuth as the protagonist?”

Well, yeah, most cozy series these days do feature female leads, but that’s no reason to discriminate against a guy who isn’t a hard-boiled private eye. I don’t walk the mean streets, and I don’t see any reason why my hero, just because of the chromosomal difference, has to walk them either.

There have been other cozy male characters in mysteries. Anybody remember Lord Peter Wimsey? And he of the “little grey cells,” M. Hercule Poirot? For all that he was a professional detective, one can’t get much cozier than the Grande Dame, Agatha Christie herself. There’s also Margery Allingham’s Albert Campion (my personal favorite) and Ngaio Marsh’s Roderick Alleyn (who, even though a Scotland Yard ‘tec, is pretty dang cozy, too).

So I didn’t see any reason why the main character in my “Cat in the Stacks” series shouldn’t be a guy. After all, the cat in the series, a Maine Coon named Diesel, is also male. Plus, after having written a couple of series (as Jimmie Ruth Evans and Honor Hartman) from the female point of view, I wanted a change. Don’t get me wrong, I loved the female characters in those other series, but I thought it would be an interesting challenge, to write a male amateur detective in a genre that’s currently dominated by “cozy chicks.”

Reader response so far has been gratifying, although I must admit that the character that everyone likes best is Diesel, but Charlie gets a lot of favorable comments for being a nice, caring, family-oriented guy. One of the reasons I write cozy mysteries is that I like writing about decent people who sometimes find themselves mixed up in murder and mayhem. People who

aren't paid to deal with crime, like professional crime solvers. I've loved amateur detectives ever since I first discovered Nancy Drew longer ago than I care to admit these days.

Why shouldn't an ordinary guy have fun solving crimes? And if his cat is along for the adventure, so much the better.

www.CatInTheStacks.com