

***The Peat Dead* by Allan Martin**

Notes for Book Groups

Getting together with other people to read the same book and then talk about it is a great way of getting more out of a book. Others will see things you didn't and perhaps interpret what's going on in the book differently. Here are some things to think about respecting *The Peat Dead*. It would be better to cover each of the six main headings than to exhaust all the topics within each one.

1. Think about the *plot*. Could you see a structure in it, in other words a progression from the beginning to the end? Was the story plausible? Was it gripping – did you want to keep turning pages to find out what would happen next? What techniques do you think the author uses to maintain the tension? Which parts of the story offer light relief from the main action? Did the ending leave you satisfied? What would you say were the most memorable incidents in the story. Were there any parts of the story you think should have turned out differently?
2. Think about the *characters*. Were they realistic? How does the author use different characters, minor as well as major, to help move the story forward. Which characters did you find most interesting, or relate to most? What was it about them that aroused your interest? Which of the characters would you like to see in another Angus Blue story? How would you develop them further? Take one of the characters and try to say more about them than is in the book. Think of a possible back story for them.
3. Think of the *setting*. Was the portrayal of Islay and Glasgow realistic? Did it make you want to visit those places? How does setting a story on an island limit or influence the plot or the characters? How did the author create a wartime setting that was realistic, and also different from the present day? What problems arise in trying to portray a time different from our own? Does it get worse the further back in time you get?
4. Think about the *writing style*. What adjectives would you use to describe the writing style? Does it make for easy reading? Does the writing style affect the pace of the story? There is a lot of dialogue in the book; what are the advantages and disadvantages of lots of dialogue? Would you have preferred more flashbacks?
5. Think of the *genre*. What genre do you think *The Peat Dead* belongs to? Which other authors does it remind you of?
6. What are the main themes of *The Peat Dead*? What would your overall assessment of the book be? Think of one (polite) sentence that sums up your view. Be prepared to justify it by giving examples from the book. Would you look forward to reading the next book in the Angus Blue series?