

# Earlsdon Literary Magazine 197

*The newsletter of the AVID Readers Group, based at Earlsdon Library*

**Next meeting:** Thursday 13 July 2017 at 8pm

**Venue:** Earlsdon Library

**Book for discussion:** *The Prison Book Club* — Ann Walmsley

## Revising Opinions

*Our June Book: The Five People You Meet in Heaven* — Mitch Albom

This month, I took on the role of note-taker-who-hadn't-read-the-book – at least not recently. I thought I'd a copy on my bookshelves but, by the time I'd discovered my mistake, they'd all gone from the library. The absence of a book that I know I'd bought and read means that I've given it away. That I parted with it willingly is usually not a good sign and, when I thought back to this one, I remembered that I'd thought it schmaltzy and over-hyped.

However, I was most definitely in the minority. Apart from one person who found 'the war bits' difficult to read, and another thinking a particular coincidence a bit of a stretch, everyone at our June meeting enjoyed the book. It was easy to read and well-written. The characters, particularly Eddie, were likeable and sympathetic. The episodes from his life covered by each of the meetings were discrete enough to allow one to put the book down but circled back nicely to make a coherent whole. Above all, it gave one plenty to think about without ever becoming moralistic or overtly religious.

Some points that struck people, stuck with them, or that the book led them to think about:

- As a child, one doesn't know or understand one's parents – can one even do so as an adult?
- Eddie did a small job well: we don't have to do something spectacular to be important to people.
- We may not realise who the people who have the biggest effect on our lives are – or those whose lives we have touched or changed the most.
- What are our 'Sliding Doors' moments?
- Eddie never got what he wanted from life but, by the end of his encounters, perhaps realises his worth: forgiveness and compassion are strong themes in the book.
- When and where would be the happy place that would be our heaven? Who would we choose to be there with us?
- The idea that one continues to age in heaven is rather disappointing!

It seems that, this month, instead of writing a 'What to read next' for the rest of you, I've been given a fairly resounding recommendation.

**Catherine Fitzsimons**

### Our next book is

*Fiesta: The Sun Also Rises* — Ernest Hemingway  
and we will discuss it on 10 August 2017