

# Finding the Missing Peace



By Stephen G Baker

## What will you be remembered for?

When your life is over, what will you be remembered for? It's quite a sobering question.

In a previous career, I read a book called *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Dr Stephen R. Covey. In his book, Dr Covey introduced a habit called 'the habit of Beginning with the End in Mind'. The idea was a wise one. To achieve anything, you need to know what you are aiming for. Having done that, you need to work out how to get there. What are you aiming for?

The following story is told about Alfred Noble. Alfred Noble was a Swedish industrialist, inventor, and armaments manufacturer. Shortly after his brother died, he was reading a newspaper and to his horror found that instead of his brother's obituary, his own had been written. As he pondered what the journalist had written about him, he concluded that his lasting legacy was that of developing dynamite. Alfred died in San Remo, Italy on 10 December 1896. In his last will and testament, he wrote that much of his fortune was to be used to give prizes to those who have done their best for humanity in the field of physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace. Today his name is more often linked with the Nobel Peace Prize than with the forces of destruction.

Billy Graham, the renowned American preacher, recently left this world for heaven. The name Billy Graham is synonymous with Christianity. He was known for preaching from the Bible (his famous strapline was 'the Bible says') and with challenging appeals to everyone (the Bible word 'whosoever'[1] comes to mind) to 'repent and believe the gospel'[2] of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be remembered for his consistency of life and message and for living a dignified, Godly life right to the end of his time on earth. Despite his fame and unblemished record, he made this statement one day: 'I am not the holy, righteous prophet of God that many people think I am. I share with Wesley the constant feeling of my own inadequacy and sinfulness. I am often amazed that God can use me at all'[3].

You might find it unusual that a man like Billy Graham could still see himself as a sinner. The fact is that the nearer a person gets to God, the more aware they become of their sinfulness and God's holiness. Peter, the great apostle, once said to Jesus 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man'[4]. I am glad that rather than reject those who confess they are sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ is 'faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'[5].

[1] The Gospel of John 3. 16

[2] The Gospel of Mark 1. 15

[3] Russ Busby, Billy Graham: God's Ambassador (Nashville: W Publishing Group 1999), 159

[4] The Gospel of Luke 5. 8

[5] 1st John 1. 9

Listen, watch or read more on my webpage,  
[www.findingthemissingpeace.co.uk](http://www.findingthemissingpeace.co.uk)



Award-winning Wirral novelist, **Margaret Murphy**, who pens thrillers as **A.D. Garrett** and **Ashley Dyer**, recommends two books per month, across a range of styles and a mixture of new and old.

### **THE BEAR AND THE NIGHTINGALE**

by Katherine Arden

Ebury Publishing ISBN: 9781785031052



During the cold February nights, I revelled in a tale set in more extreme climes. The village of Lesnaya Zemlya is at the edge of the wilderness of northern Russia. There, a child is born to the 'great lord', Pyotr Vladimirovich, but her mother dies. Vasya, a wild and wilful child, has inherited her mysterious grandmother's extraordinary gifts of second sight.

She sees the house spirits and woodland sprites that others pay their respects to, though they cannot see, and she speaks to animals and learns from them. But during late medieval times, the new religion of Christianity sits uneasily alongside old folkloric traditions, and Vasya is placed in grave peril when a zealot priest is invited into the village and sets about destroying the old religion, tearing apart the community and the bonds that keep them safe in their hostile natural world. Fifteen-year-old Vasya alone can see forces of the dark magic gathering in the forest beyond the village, and she alone has the power to save her people. This atmospheric story draws on Russian fairy tales and while the first chapter is given over too heavily to setting the scene, the story gains pace and depth and is a pleasant fireside read.

### **A PIN TO SEE THE PEEPSHOW**

by F Tennyson Jesse

Virago ISBN: 086068 0843



Julia Almond, born to drab suburban life in Edwardian London, longs for more. Shortsighted and vain, she sees the world in an astigmatic blur, and yearns for the romantic fairy tale she once glimpsed in a toy peepshow. We meet her at sixteen, an incurably romantic child-woman, careless of others, yet with a spirit and charm which is compelling.

The opening chapter reminded me of Katharine Mansfield, capturing the vivacious, joyful, if rather heedless preoccupations of a girl on the threshold of womanhood. Julia is insightful, but lacks empathy; she is energetic and intelligent, but lacks the self-control to apply herself to her studies. Her cleverness and good business mind do, however, allow her to rise in status at the ladies' fashion house where she works, and she dares to aspire to more. But her ambitions are unrealistic for a lower middle-class woman of the time, and she dangerously oversteps the narrow path that her class, sex and education has laid out for her.

A growing, uneasy sense of inevitability overshadows Julia's actions as the story progresses, and ultimately, she pays a terrible price for wanting more than the sexual prejudice and social restrictions of the time would afford to women. First published in 1934, this witty, insightful, seductive novel was considered shocking at the time. It retains that power to shock – and is recognised as a modern classic. I highly commend it.

**SPLINTER IN THE BLOOD**, Margaret's first novel under the pseudonym **Ashley Dyer**, is now out.

Margaret and her forensic collaborator, Helen Pepper, blog regularly on Facebook @AshleyDyerNovels. Follow her on Twitter @AshleyDyer2017