

“I love the idea of a fellow barreling down an incredibly long highway listening to Phryne’s adventures.”



▶ According to Kerry Greenwood, “Phryne does exactly what she wishes, and I just try to type fast enough to keep up.” That would be Miss Phryne Fisher, heroine of Greenwood’s witty detective series set in 1920s Australia.

A legal aid lawyer as well as author, Greenwood says that she began her literary career as a child by inventing bedtime stories for her three younger siblings. “Today I hear my characters speaking, and I simply take down what they say. No one is more surprised than I am by how beautifully they always work it out!” On the telephone from her Melbourne home, Greenwood is as high-spirited as her most famous fictional creation.

Her interest in Phryne’s milieu began with the spoken word. Assigned to write a thesis-length essay for a college legal history class, Greenwood decided to examine the national waterfront strike of 1928. “Everyone else was writing about ‘my father the judge,’ but my dad was a ‘wharfie,’ or longshoreman. So I spoke with the old men who were on the docks in 1928. They spent hours and hours talking to me. Such admirable men. Many still spoke a lovely rhyming slang.” Two of her favorite informants became the characters Burt and Cec in the Phryne books. “They just walked into a story,” she says, gratified.

Having discovered Melbourne between the World Wars, Greenwood stayed on. “It was a strange, interesting, revolutionary time,” she explains. “Women could earn their own wages. They could control their fertility—with difficulty, but it could be done. They could breathe because the corset had disappeared from fashion. They could vote. They were finally citizens. It was a time of what Dylan Thomas described as ‘free love and free beer.’”

And Miss Phryne Fisher—smart, gorgeous, rich, heroic, and sybaritic—takes advantage of it all. “I thought Phryne should enjoy everything, including sex!”



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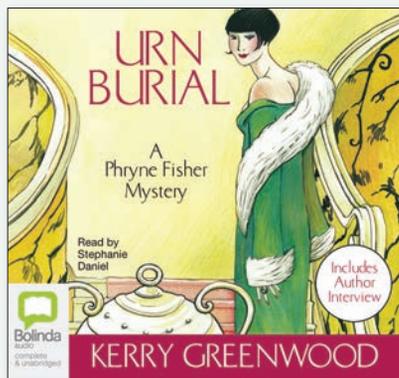
Kerry Greenwood

Read by Stephanie Daniel

Kerry Greenwood continues the successful formula that has made her Phryne Fisher books so accessible. Here she has fun with wordplay and classic mystery devices such as a Miss Marple-type character who knits her way to a solution. As narrator, the wonderful Stephanie Daniel remains faithful to the author's writing style. In Daniel's delivery the weak women simper, the rich are haughty, the gay men give just enough away, and the villains are creepy and convincing. As always, listeners are treated to '20s flapper music, which Daniel delivers to sweet perfection. A chat with Greenwood and Daniel is the perfect dessert for this audio banquet. *S.G.B.*

Bolinda Audio 6.5 hrs. Unabridged

Library Ed.: ISBN 9781742854373 \$77.95 (also)



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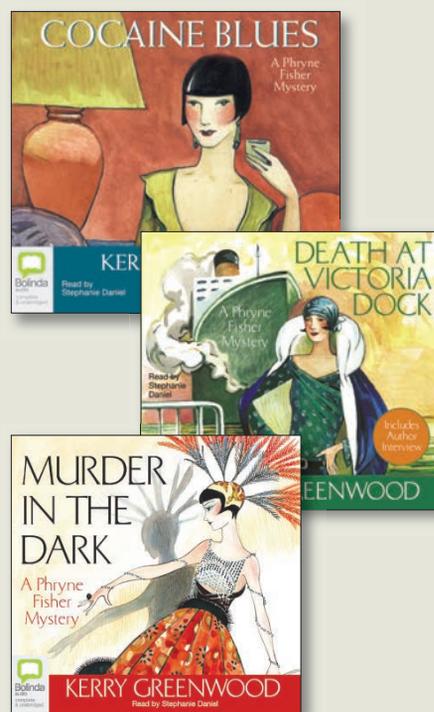
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QUEEN OF THE FLOWERS

Kerry Greenwood, read by Stephanie Daniel

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Greenwood laughs. "Of course, I do receive wounded emails from male fans complaining that Phryne does not properly care for the men in her life. They're right. Phryne won't hurt her men, but she has exactly the views about them that male heroes often do of women."

Greenwood credits narrator Stephanie Daniel for creating a fan base among long-distance truck drivers, most of them men, who listen to audiobooks. "I love the idea of a fellow barreling down an incredibly long highway listening to Phryne's adventures. Stephanie has exactly the right kind of voice to keep them awake and interested." And then there is Daniel's meticulous research. "She wants to get it right, and she does," says Greenwood. "Not only is her voice perfect, but before each book, she'll ring me with questions—how to pronounce things, how to sing a song. I think 98 questions was the largest number so far."

Greenwood the author also loves to listen to audiobooks. "They are perfect for tedious projects such as making curtains, painting a room, weeding a garden. It reminds me of the days when ladies sewed while gentlemen read Sir Walter Scott aloud except that I get to listen to *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* and all the BBC productions of Dorothy L. Sayers."

Phryne Fisher recently leapt from page and audio to her own Australian television series. Greenwood, who retained the right to "meddle with the scripts" and select the actress to play Phryne, watched hours of auditions before, she says, "Essie Davis stalked onto the screen, and I called, 'Stop! That's her!' She reminds me of one of my inspirations, Diana Rigg's Mrs. Peel in 'The Avengers' [1960s British television show]." The series has increased Phryne's many fans, which is fine with Greenwood. "As long as people want to read them, I'll keep writing Phryne books." The seventeenth, *Unnatural Habits*, will appear this autumn. "It concerns runaway girls, nunneries, brothels, white slavery—and Phryne holds up a ship at the end!" What's not to love?—*Aurelia C. Scott*