Book: Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe

Reviewed by: Lynn Running

Level of Difficulty: Medium

My thoughts about the book and its suitability for my group: Our group finished another Fannie Flagg book, “Can’t Wait to Get to Heaven” which they loved, so we decided to read another Fannie Flagg book. It does contain some challenging regional slang including the “n” word, but we talked about the context of the language. It also includes innuendo about a lesbian relationship between the two lead characters. Nothing graphic, just that they loved each other spent their lives together and raised a child together. Everyone seemed to take that part of the story in stride. They really liked how the story went back and forth in time, which I clarified when we started to read. The history about the Depression in the US was also a good discussion point, as well as the woman’s movement in the 1970’s and 80’s. There are some stories about sex between a married couple, but nothing graphic.

Students’ reaction to the book: The group really liked it and we finished it in two sessions. It has humor as well as a tragedy and the story moves quickly.

Tips for other tutors who may want to use this book:
- I have the DVD of the movie if you’d like to borrow it. We watched the movie with sub titles before and after reading the book, which increased their understanding and enjoyment of the story.
- We skipped the book’s side story of the twins Jasper and Artis Peavey. After reading a couple of chapters of that story, I realized the concept, language and vocabulary was too difficult. The main story is clearer and straightforward. We just skipped those chapters and it really doesn’t impact the understanding of the rest of the book.
- I have some vocabulary lists; a story summary and character list if you’d like to use those.