



The Camerons

Robert Crichton

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The Camerons is the story of the indomitable Maggie Drum, who washes the grime of coal-mining Pitmungo town from her beautiful face and sets out to find a man worthy of fathering her family. It is the story of the big, poor-but-proud Highlander who marries her, gives her seven children, and challenges her with an unyielding spirit of his own.

The Camerons Details

Date : Published January 1st 1972 by Alfred A. Knopf

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Author : Robert Crichton

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From Reader Review The Camerons for online ebook

Karla says

Well-written, but very VERY depressing. All the pages fell out, so even they were trying to escape from the gloomz and doomz.

Nicole Good says

I have no idea why I like this book or to whom I would recommend it in particular. I just know that I love it and will likely read it again.

After passing it on to a friend, with no explanation, she reported back, "I have no idea why I couldn't put it down, but I couldn't... and I have no idea how to explain it to someone else."

Allen Thomas says

Powerful novel brought to life through the complex lives of several characters, especially mother Cameron who we see mature from a sixteen year old who boldly leaves her bleak coal mining town and travel to the Scottish highlands to find her husband. Maggie Drum Cameron and her husband are almost opposites in personality but they share an iron resolve that supports their drive to rise above the dismal town devoted to 'hawking' coal and, and in doing so, they play a role in establishing the first miner's union in Scotland. The reader is carried beyond the superficial facts of the story by sharing the senses of the characters: their hopes and fears and loves and frustrations - all the fragile and proud feelings of the family.

Shan says

I read this as child, and it awakened in me an awareness of other places and ways of being.

Cynthia Heinrichs says

I read this book again after almost 20 years and loved it as much the second time. Crichton's examination of human nature and the interplay between those with power and those without is masterful. The only thing that disappointed me was that, in his changing focus from Maggie to Gillon to the family, I lost sight of Maggie too much. She was too far in the background, in my opinion. She was too strong a presence at the beginning to be pushed so far outside the main play. What I liked best was how immediate I found various scenes to be: Gillon going for the salmon, him preparing for and going to the lord's house, Maggie stealing off in the night on an errand that had me terrified for what she might do. The story is gripping and the

backdrop of a Fife coalmine and the desperation of the people there too me to a world I never thought I might want to visit. Again.

Dorcas says

So I'm pretty disappointed. The writing here is very good and the plot is excellent. Scotland, coal mines, illegal salmon fishing and kelp soup. What's not to love, right? But after reading about 200 something pages, I found I just wasn't enjoying the story anymore because of the strong profanity. "Pit talk". I was warned, (Thanks Diane!) but I was hoping it wouldn't be quite so excessive.

Be prepared for all the usual cuss words, religious and otherwise as well as F bombs aplenty.

If profanity doesn't bother you, the story itself is fascinating, and any sex is fade to black.

And by the way, if you're purchasing this book used, go for the hardback over the soft cover. The binding of the paperback cracks and falls apart. (I bought mine twice and it was the same with both of them, others here on GR have had the same issue).

Katie says

Oh, Robert Crichton, why did you only write two novels? And why are they both so achingly perfect and so tragically out of print?

Philip says

As I've often said, the good thing about re-reading a book after many years is that one often remembers nothing about the book other than that they enjoyed it and thus are drawn to read it again. That's the case with THE CAMERONS and myself. And exactly 40 years later I'm enjoying it all over again.

Peter says

i read the um...reader's digest version...and loved it so much that when i saw it in the boy scout op shop i grabbed it to read in the "not-quite-so-well-edited" version. looking forward to it.

Paula says

I read this when I was in high school and really liked it. I'm not sure I would rate it as highly now. I can't remember if it was a good period fiction novel, or bordering on pulp fiction, and not sure whether I'd have known the difference at that age. I like to think it was the former.

Diane Lynn says

First lines:

She was awake. Sound asleep one moment, her eyes wide open the next, staring up into the blackness of the ceiling. She didn't like the night, but she had forced her mind to wake her in the deepest part of it. In control, that was the main thing. It pleased her.

Maggie Drum wants an early start to the day as it's her 16th birthday and she is leaving home to find a husband. This is a very well written book with a lot of ups and downs. Lots here about the early days of coal mining in Scotland. That is coal mining in all of its dirty ugliness. I recommend this to people interested in historical fiction of Scotland.

Stuart Bramhall says

A carefully plotted, brilliantly crafted work of historical fiction set in the desperate poverty of a Scottish coal mining village. Like Denise Giardina's *Storming Heaven*, which also portrays the struggle of bitterly poor miners against the mine owner, Crichton has no difficulty making the romance of collective struggle come alive. Unlike the miners in *Storming Heaven*, Crichton's miners have no union support and must organize themselves to improve their starvation wages and incredibly dangerous working conditions. Crichton centers his plot around the strike organizer's strong willed indomitable wife Maggie, who has social ambitions and opposes the strike. The result is a fascinating clash of wills, in which Gillon ultimately prevails and Maggie finances the strike from housekeeping money she has scrimped and saved over more than 20 years. Crichton's second and last novel. I prefer it to the *Secret of Santa Vittoria* (Crichton's first novel which became a movie), as I feel the characters are stronger and better developed.

By Dr Stuart Jeanne Bramhall, author of **THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY ACT: MEMOIR OF AN AMERICAN REFUGEE**

Deb Stokes says

I was a teenager when I read it. It sticks in my mind. Life isn't always fair and even during hardship there is still love of family to help you through. I want to read it again as a "grown up."

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Rosina Lippi says

Historical fiction set in a mining village in Scotland. Maggie, born into a family that has been digging coal for generations, wants more. The first step, she believes, is to find the right husband, and that means going elsewhere. On her sixteenth birthday she sets off for a resort town where she finds and beguiles an impoverished highlander who lives on kelpie soup and seaweed, but he's tall and blond and strong, and he can work. His name is Gillon Cameron.

She exacts a promise from him, that he'll come back home with her and take up coal mining until they've saved enough money to move on. Twenty years later, their five boys are now working in the mines along side Gillon.

Gillon is the most intriguing character here. He makes a life for himself, reads books about coal, comes to understand the geology, stumbles across a tiny and unvisited library and begins to read more widely. He gains the respect of the town and the miners, and he acts quickly and courageously to save the life of a young man caught underneath a slab of coal.

Little by little he comes to a place where he understands he has to challenge to mine owners, which puts him in direct opposition to Maggie, who is so focused on saving money that she can't bear the thought of any disruption. This is the heart of the story, and the resolution is not the one you might expect.

This is a first class historical novel, closely observed, excellent detail, but most of all, a story that works in all its parts.
