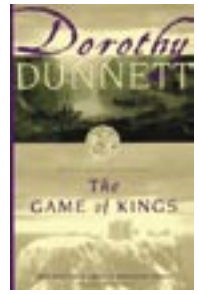
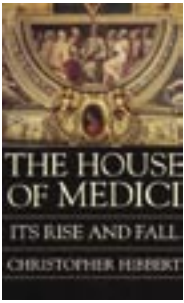


**M**y favorite books are the *Crawford of Lyman* series by Lady Dorothy Dunnett. She is my favorite author because of her integrity to characters, plot and period. Hers is historical fiction at its best. Intricate subplots, mystery and suspense are woven through each novel. Themes of honor, country and family are built with meticulous care. This is a series that challenges my vocabulary. -- Jewel Hansen



**I**would choose *The House of Medici* by C. Hibbert. I am fascinated by this family that dominated Florentine politics for about two-and-a-half centuries and made Florence a cultural center of Europe.

The history of the Medici family includes love and war, and in many ways it could be the script of a soap opera. They made many cultural achievements possible by patronizing artists like Donatello and Fra Angelico, founding the Academy of Design and renewing the University of Pisa. Some family members were even tutored by Galileo, but in the end not even they could protect him from the Inquisition. Most members of this family were strong rulers and made Tuscany flourish. One illegitimate son even became Pope Clement VII. Catherine married the king of France, and her daughters became queens of Spain and England. The history of the Medici family is also connected with Austrian history. -- Uschi Stampfl



**M**y favorite book is *Sironia, Texas* by Madison A. Cooper. It was published in 1952, and it is even longer than my second favorite book, *Gone With the Wind*. It weaves a detailed tapestry of three generations of a small town in Texas during the first four decades of the twentieth century. Perhaps it is my favorite book because it reminded me of the small Texas town where I grew up. It has been over 40 years since I read this book, but the story is just as alive to me today as it was when I first read it.

The main story is the relationship of the last member of the family that founded the town and the young merchant she loved as a girl. Because this merchant was the son of a mere shopkeeper, they could not marry. How this relationship affects the second and even third generations of their families is the spider web that the author spins so well.

I cried when I finished the book, because I felt like I was losing all of my friends. I would like to visit those friends again, but the book is no longer in print. From time to time I have tried to find a copy, but to no avail. -- Reta Kennedy



# ADRIAN ASKS YOU

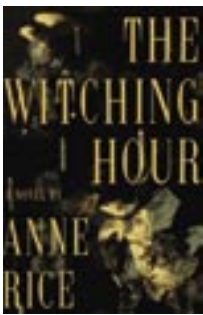


In Issue 33, Adrian posed the question, "What's your favorite book and why?"

**M**y favorite book is *Green Darkness*, by Anya Seton. The two main characters carry the names of me and my first love: Celia (my baptismal name is Cecelia) and Stephen. This alone was enough to keep me reading the novel the first six or seven times. However, it is neither ego nor unrequited love revisited that keeps me intrigued. It is the novel's English setting and atmospheric content, laced with mysticism, tragedy and history.

Some would say that the book is about reincarnation. In the past I have said that it is about a love that transcends time. These days I think the story has more to do with the responsibility that we all share with one another, however minor, and how we are all forever bound by a universal thread. Some call it soul. Some call it karmic roulette. Anya Seton called it *Green Darkness*. -- Cassandra Clarkson Guice

**I**'ve read almost all of Anne Rice's novels, but *The Witching Hour* is my favorite. The novel chronicles the story of the Mayfair family and its involvement with a spirit called Lasher, who dominates their lives in his quest to become human. Their history dates back to the 1600s in the Scottish Highlands, and the book also explores the age-old question of dealing with spirits for personal gain. They find that although every material possession is within their grasp, they become isolated from the outside world. Reading an Anne Rice novel is always an adventure. Her style is rich with detail, and I have to wait until the weekend to start one so I can stay up late and read straight through. -- Lana Panko



**O**ne of my top picks would be the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien. When I first read those books at age twelve, they transported me into a new realm of magic and beauty. While this new world was fraught with danger, tragedy and violence, it also showed the importance of love, friendship and hope. The events and characters were depicted with such detail that they kindled in me a feeling that magic and other worlds really do exist. Sometimes I still get that shivery feeling as I pass through fog or turn a corner that I might actually be stepping into a different dimension. Middle Earth, perhaps? -- Kelly Hancock

