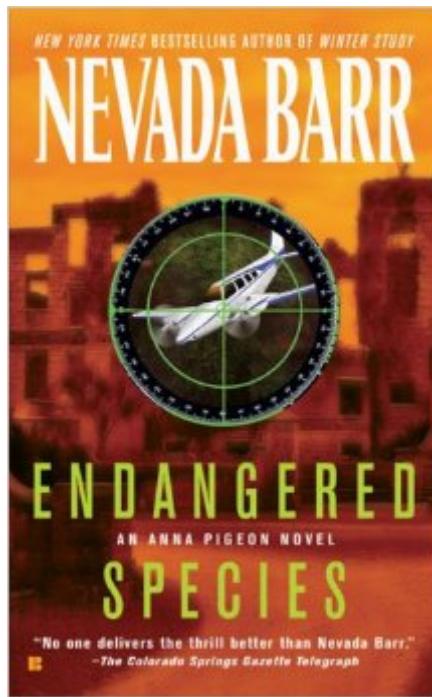


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Endangered Species (Anna Pigeon)



Synopsis

Cumberland Island, off the coast of Georgia, is a breathtaking setting for tedious fire suppression duty. But Anna's boring routine is shattered when two men die in a plane crash, victims of sabotage.

Book Information

Series: Anna Pigeon (Book 5)

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Best Sellers Rank: #399,103 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #94 in Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Endangered Species #10061 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Mystery > Women Sleuths #16154 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Suspense

Customer Reviews

Nevada Barr is not above a bit of sly humor now and then, and in "Endangered Species," she indulged herself a bit, to our benefit. In this adventure, ranger extraordinaire Anna Pigeon is on temporary fire-prevention duty at Cumberland Island National Seashore Park, off the Georgia Coast. Wilderness-lover that she is, Anna is having some trouble with the habitat: ticks, chiggers, huge golden orb spiders, a mythically gigantic alligator who is not above taking a bite of a human, and all sorts of other creepy crawlies are part of the venue. And the people aren't much better. There's an equally creepy crawly and very surly biologist whose mission in life is to Save the Turtles (by helping them lay their eggs and get back to the sea safely), an impossibly pregnant and very weepy wife who may or may not be involved in nefarious deeds, two vintage WWII ladies who take no nonsense, and an adorable pet fawn named Flicka who thinks he's a dog. It was only with Flicka that I took issue. Where was Barr's heretofore wonderful editor? This fawn is very much a boy--"Flicka," as anyone who read the book in childhood can tell you, is Swedish for "Little Girl." But enough trivia. When a small plane crashes in the heavily forested part of the island, Anna and crew

suspect sabotage. Is there a drug ring operating in this turtles' paradise? And if so, who is involved enough to want to murder the pilot and passenger? Anna sets off to solve the mystery--and winds up inhaling an entire huge cash crop of marijuana, truly one of the funniest predicaments in any mystery book I can remember in recent years. Our intrepid ranger is in grave danger, either from the criminals or from a terminal high, one isn't sure. As for Anna's sometime swain, the FBI Agent once known in an earlier book as "Fred the Fed," we see another, less attractive side of this previously likeable guy. Can you say....Midlife Crisis? His sudden adolescent crush on Anna's sister Molly (whom we finally meet in person) is just...well, too too. Anna deserves better. But I digress. This is a fast, fun entry in the Anna Barr series. Read and enjoy

As always, Nevada Barr, a former park ranger, delivers wonderfully vivid descriptions of the great outdoors; an abundance of colorful, well-drawn characters; a thoughtful and courageous female sleuth; an inside look at the National Park Service; and an intricate and suspenseful mystery. However, the most mysterious thing about "Endangered Species," set on an island off the coast of Georgia and involving the investigation of a plane crash caused by sabotage, is that the paperback has been extensively revised from the hardcover. Namely, a major character, an exceedingly unpleasant, repulsive person, has undergone a sex change! In the hardcover, Marty is a woman in her 50s; in the paperback, Marty is a man in his 30s. It's not just a matter of changing pronouns; dialogue and descriptions are altered too. For example, in the original version, Marty's long hair is "worn in pigtails like an aging Pippi Longstocking's"; in the revision, it's "worn in pigtails like Willie Nelson in his heyday." There must have been a compelling reason for such changes, since ordinarily paperback publishers don't even bother to fix obvious errors, such as referring to someone by the wrong name. I think the character works somewhat better as a woman, but whichever version you read, you'll likely find it a good, absorbing, entertaining whodunit.

This story's a bit of a mess. There are too many characters to keep straight, none of the great set pieces such as the motorboat chase in "A Superior Death," and a distinctly "who cares" attitude about the eventual unmasking of the villain. Just as Cumberland Island is a backwater in the National Park System, this book is a backwater in the Anna Pigeon series. Anna spends the story trying to figure out what to do about a difficult personal relationship, and Barr spends it as a combination of revisiting old ground (fire fighting) and gearing up for a serious foray into the southern parks. Read "Firestorm" for a better story of fire fighting, and skip to "Deep South" for a better-developed take on the southern parks. Still, even a ho-hum Anna Pigeon mystery is good

enough to keep the pages turning.

Anna is in the south again - but this time on one of the islands off the coast of Georgia. And she's not 'wrastlin' gators this time, it's turtles instead. There's a plane crash, Bambi (real name, Flicka), cannibus (marijuana), and more. She's still contemplating moving to Chicago to be with the distant Frederick, but that possibility seems to always be on the backburner. As usual, Nevada fights the good fight, goes skinny dipping, gets her hair cut, and is finally free of her ex-husband (in a hilarious manner), while discovering the the secrets of Cumberland Island's murders.

Ms. Barr has an area pretty much all of her own in the mystery genre. She was a park ranger for the National Park system, and so not only can she concoct mysteries in an area that no one else has been able to do (the parks are never the same twice) but she knows all about the people who work for the system and unfortunately, some of the idiots who visit the parks and don't obey the rules put up for their own safety. She writes with a great sense of humor. I am not squeamish, but running into an area where ticks drop off the trees is not my idea of heaven either, and the picture she drew of one of the male rangers gyrating to remove any ticks on him made me laugh. It's nice to be reminded that women aren't the only ones allergic to those things! Her plots are well though out and the books read quickly. They don't require a lot of thought from the readers. My only wish is that the character development was more involved, but for some people this isn't important. I always find it enjoyable to read about parks where I haven't been and make plans with my husband to visit them someday. She does do a good job giving some background of the park and the history of the area.

Karen Sadler, Science Education, University of Pittsburgh

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