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# Featured Books

**(Review 9 - by Jenny Ball, Australia, Australasia)**

**FEATURED BOOK : QUIZ SECTION**

***A FICTIONALIZED VERSION OF TRUE EVENTS***



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**[ Interview with Sylvia Tomlinson ] [ Quiz based on *Plucked and Burned* ]**

**Rating : 9/10**
★★★★★★★★★
(9/5)

Plucked and Burned *by* Sylvia Tomlinson. Paperback, 8" x 6".
Redbud Publishing Co., P.O. Box 4402, Victoria, TX 77903-4402, USA. E-mail: info@redbudpublishing.com Publication Date 2003. x + 237 pages. ISBN 0-9720293-2-X. Price $19.95

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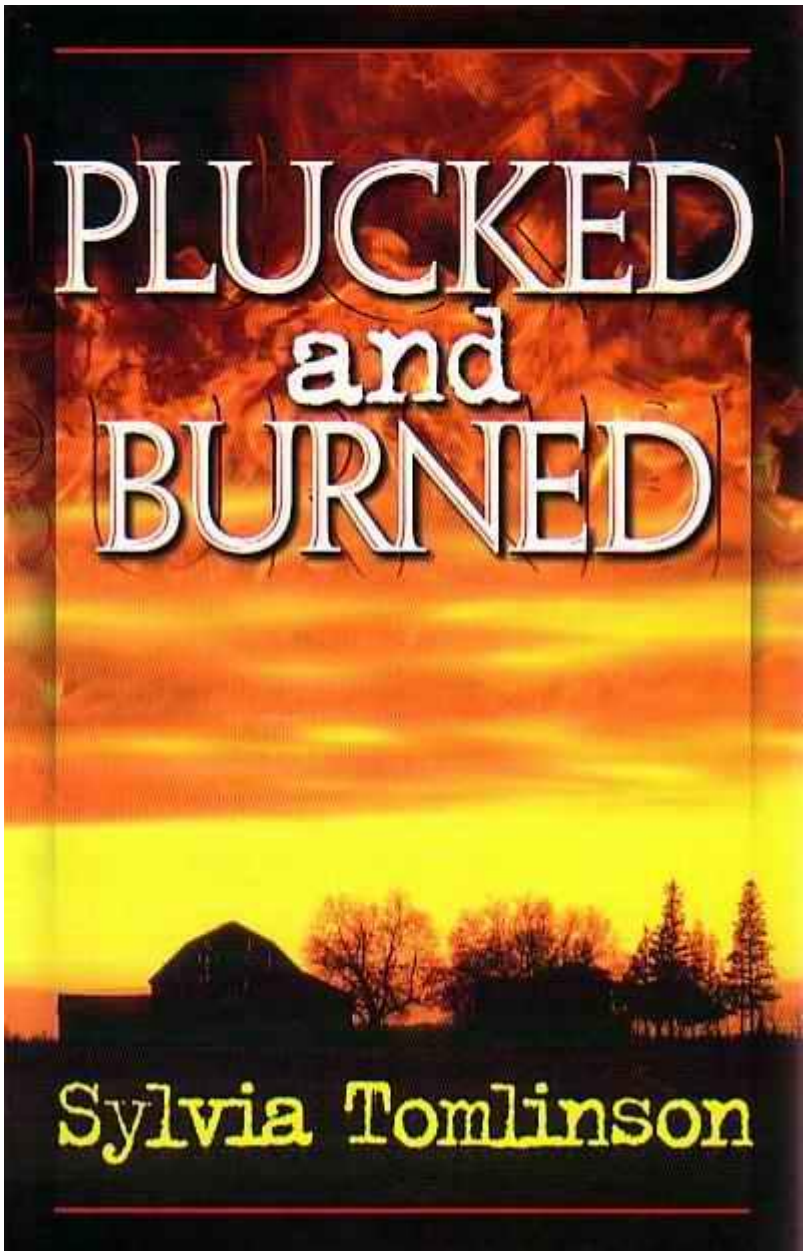


This book is a fictionalized account of a farming community in The United States of America and the plight of the poultry farmer. Up until the 1960's poultry farmers were independent farmers, selling their chickens to the processor. From the 1970's onwards the relationship changed and the processors became the employers of the poultry farmers. In order to standardize the quality and volume of meat all the previous independent now had to meet certain requirements and standards. They are told what sort of chicken house they have to have, how and when to clean it, what sort of chickens to raise and what to feed them on. Both of which are delivered to them when the processor decides. They are pressured into updating their equipment but have to pay for it themselves.

In return the farmer is paid per live weight of the grown chicken at the end of the raising period. If any chicks die over that period then it is considered bad management by the processor despite the fact that the grower is given a bad batch of chicks, and inadequate or mouldy food. If there is a lag in the pick up time and the food runs out then the weight of the chicken goes down. These things are beyond the control of the farmer. The farmers are also responsible for the disposal of the huge amounts of chicken manure.

There is retaliation for any farmer who complains. He may get a bad deliver of young chicks, a reduced number and a late or no delivery of food. In this book people were killed, poisoned, driven suicide, had equipment sabotaged, family members threatened and chicken houses burnt down. There were blind chickens and mouldy food with gases that killed someone.

Sylvia Tomlinson sets the scene for this story beautifully. Her description of the countryside makes you feel; as though you are there both in sight and in sound. The book begins with two deaths on chicken farms and the introduction of the characters. The story is set around two main characters Doug and his wife Dena. Doug is a chicken and cattle farmer. Both are respected members of the community. We get to know the warm farming community members, the town police and the bad guys from Poultry Farming Unlimited (PU). By the end of the book you do get a good feeling for all of these people.

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...This book is a fictionalized version of true events. If you would like to learn more about the politics of the poultry industry in the United States it is a great way to do so. As a murder mystery there is very little mystery to the story and can be considered a very quick read...
The bulk of the book outlines and discusses the politics associated with the poultry farming industry in Oklahoma and Arkanas, as the farmers join forces to form an association against PU. Scattered amongst this are a few deaths from cancer and poisoning associated with poultry farming, a community fund raising event, and a 19 year old pregnant girl who works at the processing plant. Towards the end of the book good things occur. The final chapter has most of the good characters gathered in Doug and Dena's kitchen preparing a Thanksgiving meal. As the preparation and meal proceeds everyone's problems seem to appear to have been resolved as they are all entering a new period in their lives.

This book is a fictionalized version of true events. If you would like to learn more about the politics of the poultry industry in the United States it is a great way to do so. As a murder mystery there is very little mystery to the story and can be considered a very quick read.

*-Dr Jenny Ball, BDSc(WA) BA(WA) FICD*



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