ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

LGBT

Fo's Baby
Ian Douglas Robertson
AuthorHouse
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Childless women who feel their stereotypical biological clock ticking make frequent appearances in fiction, often in a romantic context. Set in Athens, Greece, *Fo's Baby* offers a fresh viewpoint on this somewhat trite theme, yet Ian Douglas Robertson's use of an experimental format serves him well.

At thirty-nine, Fo is destined for disenchantment if she fails to find an appropriate baby daddy. Attached to her partner Dina, she fears her plan for the future may jeopardize a long-term relationship, but realizes she will never find complete fulfillment without giving birth to a child. Accustomed to being the center of Fo's domestic realm, Dina finds the prospect of offspring an intruding threat to their established home life.

A successful actress and director, Fo lacks nothing in professional credentials, but what she desires most has remained out of reach. Backed by her mother and a select group of friends, she forms a bond of friendship with a prospective father. Fo's decision to proceed despite Dina's objections leads to a serious breach of loyalty and trust.

Shifting among multiple characters in a first-person delivery, this unusual novel abruptly changes point of view, presenting each narrative as a separate piece in a continuous work with no chapters. Literary in style and focus, *Fo's Baby* is no ordinary labor of commercial fiction. The reader is allowed to experience Fo's dilemma from alternating positions and to empathize with each character's emotions. Though choppy and disorienting at times, the book satisfies the need to perceive life from every angle, not merely from one person's perspective.

Robertson's novel is a welcome departure from genre restrictions that limit the ability to understand a complex situation due to an overly narrowed approach to characterization. Its primary drawback, however, is the loss of connectivity and flow. This is more a technical issue, rather than a plot weakness. Since the author employs this eccentric technique as an intentional stylistic device, his work is certainly not flawed, but his appeal to the general reader may have been diminished. Snatches of life in poignant vignettes grab attention throughout this

multifaceted novel, jarring away the remnants of complacency from a bygone era content to allow so-called “accepted” standards.

Ian Douglas Robertson grew up in Ireland and studied at Trinity College in Dublin. After graduating, he moved to Greece. With stints as a teacher, writer, translator, and actor, his eclectic background enhances his fiction and nonfiction. *Fo’s Baby* is his first novel and a commendable literary endeavor.

Julia Ann Charpentier