

GENERAL

From My Lips to God's Ears

M.A. Walker

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One Star (out of Five)

M.A. Walker's protagonist, Liz Sulis, narrates her life's story in this disjointed and chaotic melodrama that begins with regret and ends with a testimony to God's love. In between is an unfolding of sexual conflict, encounters, and near misses. What seems to tie most of the novel together is a true love that Liz threw away because she didn't feel that she deserved to be loved.

Most of the book can be deciphered, but it takes effort. The preface begins by explaining, "I had an ideal love..." But the opening chapters seem to belong to another book devoted to telling the history of World War II. They detail the part that Liz's father's played in defeating the Germans in the Pacific. The explanation of Canada's role in World War II is actually quite interesting, but a majority of this information has been lifted verbatim from other sources. Some sources have received attribution, but others have not. The reproduction of borrowed text intermingled with fiction adds to the chaotic feel of the book. These opening chapters become so immersed in backstory that the protagonist totally disappears, and readers never figure out how this opening is important to the remainder of the book.

Near the beginning of the book, Walker writes, "My Dad, Robert, who recently turned 85, in retrospect, spins an engaging personal account of a young man coming out of the depression years with his grandmother, mother, brother, and sisters, and growing up at sea." The ambiguity demonstrated in this sentence appears throughout the book.

From this beginning about Liz's father, the story then shifts to Hitler and a Canadian Naval Radio Station at Albro Lake and its part in the campaign to eradicate U-Boats from the Pacific Ocean. Then off to hear about Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann's discovery of Uranium Fission in 1938. If readers remain with the book to this point, they may have just read the best part.

Time speeds up and by page forty-nine we have followed Liz's parents to the 1970s. The book seems to fast-forward until readers learn that Walker herself "from an early age wasn't into dolls or anything that girls liked."

There the novel jumps to Liz meeting Geoff and her discovery that, even if she didn't like dolls and girly stuff, she did love sex. The thread of lost love wends its way through the remainder of the book until a transformative moment changes the text to scripture verses and testimony of God's unfathomable ways.

Sadly the chaos, the melodrama, and overuse of clichés, stilted dialogue, and the total involvement in "I" will turn off even the hardest of readers.