ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

GENERAL

Genevieve
Lynmar Brock Jr.
CreateSpace
978-1-4536-9859-4
Four Stars (out of Five)

The novel *Geneviève* has more action than most movies. Lynmar Brock Jr. tells the story of United States Navy officer Thorp Karnin's military experiences on the *USS Spencer*, his blossoming love affair with a stunning French woman named Geneviève, and Geneviève's own experiences as she grapples with life apart from her love. Though it is a thick volume, the book will entrance readers. The quick-action plot alternates between scenes and perspectives, and touches upon love won and lost, the military, and life at sea.

The novel is enriched by settings that shift from Italy and Capri to France and beyond. The dialogue is appropriately lively. It would have been easy for the author to either over-dramatize or rush the romance at the heart of this story. Instead, he takes his time with it. The conversations that set the stage are realistic and smooth, and through them the lives of the characters become known to each other and to the reader.

Thorp Karnin is both suave and courteous. When he offers to entertain Geneviève while his compatriot talks shop, Karnin slips his hands around her waist and the story becomes something timeless and classy: a navy-themed *Casablanca.* Brock is a pro at creating scenes. He never dwells on a conversation or situation longer than he should, and this keeps the action moving.

Although the book's ending is emotionally stirring, it seems rushed, especially in the last few sections. Geneviève calls her relationship with Karnin—and her pregnancy—into question when she spots a photograph of her beloved smiling at another woman. Suddenly the future does not seem so certain. From here on out, Geneviève's decisions, Karnin's reactions, and the full weight of the final events are not thoroughly explored by the author. He seems to understand how to create tension and suspense, but he does not always delve into the emotional ramifications resulting from them. It also seems a bit odd that the novel would be named after the main female character when so much of the story is not about her at all, but about life at sea and the worlds that unite or separate humanity.

Geneviève and Thorp are indeed a good match for one another, but their romance does have its share of peaks and valleys. The lovers are fully created; their hopes and dreams, as well as their personalities, seem to burst with life. In the novel's final moments, the tension and suspense are pushed to a high level. The loud crash of the *Spencer's* collision, Genevieve's heartbreak and tough choice—and the story's conclusion—all echo far beyond the last page.

Lisa Bower