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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ GENERAL FICTION

Legacy Discovered

Kerry Reis
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Readers searching for a family drama will find comfort in these pages.

Imagine everything you thought you knew about your spouse changed with the ring of a doorbell. Your shared parallel histories are destroyed by one visit, and you have to decide whether to find the strength to stay or simply walk away. In this uplifting Hallmark Channel-style story, it all works out well in the end.

Stylistically, *Legacy Discovered* hits all the standard marks expected in a story about a happy family struck by an unexpected hurdle. That said, this makes for a plot and reading experience that is rather rote and stiff. There isn't much variation to the basic line of storytelling, which creates a very predictable reading experience.

As heir to the wealthy Barnett family fortune, Charles Jr. feels he cannot lead the life he wants or marry the woman of his dreams, Ali. He opts to remove himself from his family in a dramatic way and disappear forever. His hatred of his father's power-hungry ways, however, leads to his discovery, and to an upheaval of his normal family life. Now, with the knowledge that Charles Jr. is still alive, the entire Barnett family must come to terms with what has happened if they are to repair their relationships.

The characters are quite static and somewhat predictable; however, many reach toward their favorite genres for exactly that reason. Author Kerry Reis provides those who appreciate family dramas with the characters they have come to know and love: the hardworking wife and mother, the handsome loving husband hiding a secret, the essentially obedient children, the tough-on-the-outside power broker with a long-suffering wife. The growth the characters experience is predictable but will be reassuring to fans of the genre.

Great care has been taken with copyediting, though there are some bumps in the road when it comes to dialogue, which stumbles with occasional awkward word and phrase choices, particularly for the teen characters. At one point, the outdated term "gal pals" is used to describe the friends of the school's mean girls. On the next page, Sue says, "You saw them diss us." The occasional inconsistency with colloquialisms can be jarring.

Genre readers searching for a standard family drama will find comfort in these pages. The writing is careful, the story is familiar, and everyone lives happily ever after.

LYNN EVARTS (October 11, 2013)

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