ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

HISTORICAL

...Nor Shall My Sword...
Aldreg Welles
AuthorHouse UK
978-1-4567-7032-7
Three Stars (out of Five)

…*Nor Shall My Sword*… by Aldreg Welles has the feel of a nineteenth-century British novel. The author's project, a modern imitation of an old beloved English novel, is successful but flawed.

Welles tells the story of an English engineer deeply entrenched in the world of industry and transportation during the second half of the twentieth century. As Alexander Strang juggles his successful business life with the demands of his wife, family, children, and society, the reader is drawn into a tale that seems larger than life.

The summary on the back cover provides an enticing introduction, and readers will not be disappointed by this preview. Welles builds the plot well through clear, frequent dialogue, fast-paced action, and changing scenes that drive the story forward. For example, the author ties a description of Alex's application to Manchester University together with a brief reference to Alex's relationship with Prudence, one of his girlfriends, and a scene in which Alex interacts with his Aunt Agnes, thereby pushing distinct layers of the plot forward simultaneously.

The plot is skillfully woven into historical events, firmly grounding the story into the time and place in which it is set. For instance, Welles relates details of one of the British national elections and the change in political leadership in between a description of Alex and his wife's move to Mousehole. At another place, he writes, "The summer of 1978 turned into autumn." Lines like this tie the story to reality.

In addition, Welles builds interesting characters through their actions and dialogue with each other. Alex's womanizing behavior early in the book contrasts with his likability and prepares the reader to accept him as a multidimensional hero even while observing his questionable business practices later in the story. Welles writes, "Alex … found his contempories likeable and good companions. He formed a friendship with the third mate." His ability to form fast friendships demonstrates his likability to the readers.

Unfortunately, the book's adult content is severely overdone. It seems to be provided as

senseless entertainment that mostly serves to lengthen story. This undermines the potential of the narrative, turing it into a romance driven by scandalous scenes rather than by a well-constructed story line. Additionally, frequent typos and editorial flaws (most obviously, the typo in “apprentice ship” on the jacket copy) also muddy an otherwise well-written tale.

That said, the language, tone, and pace of the book help Welles achieve the feel of a British novel written in a past era. Moments like, “Alex was now well into the routine of watch keeping at sea,” serve to enhance the appeal of the work.

Overall, …*Nor Shall My Sword*… is entertaining and will provide readers with lively material, but it falls short of being a classic.

Emily Adams