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Of Little Faith

Carol Hoenig
Steel Cut Press (Oct 22, 2013)
Softcover $14.95 (295pp)
978-1-936380-05-3

A raw yet sensitive portrayal of hypocrisy set against the backdrop of the tumultuous 1960s presents the struggles of a liberal woman in the context of her conservative family and upbringing.

Brutally frank and devastatingly real, this exceptional novel explores the dynamics of a dysfunctional family while calling attention to hypocritical behavior. Dredged memories of clergy pedophilia during the 1950s mingle with suppressed sexuality and feminist perceptions of a biblical world. Narrated from the distinctive viewpoints of four protagonists, the story reveals that interpretation of religious structure is highly personal, not a matter of dogma.

Two sisters, a brother, and a sister-in-law cannot agree on whether to sell their childhood home that is occupied by the sibling with a zealous attitude toward fundamentalist religion. Pitted against this woman are her liberal sister, Laura, who wishes to have a child without the entanglement of marriage during a time when it remains unacceptable, and her brother, who is a married minister who remains childless.

Laura, having been molested by a pastor, maintains a straightforward, carefree lifestyle that showcases the flaws of conservative purists who resist change. Through Laura's eyes, a sincere desire cannot tolerate a "should" or a "must" in a preordained plan; rather, it is the spontaneity of living that enlightens those who seek the guidance of a higher power.

Filled with twists and surprises, this absorbing novel fulfills expectations without giving itself away. The end will astound even the most jaded. Meticulous effort, as well as personal experience, enhances the authenticity of Hoenig's work, bringing to light a captivating though frightening decade. Women's rights, the Vietnam War, and civil-rights protests set the backdrop for this engrossing exploration of human character.

Carol Hoenig is president of her own publishing consultant firm and an award-winning author with a gift for insightful storytelling. Her involvement in fundamentalism and later rejection of the church bring to light this sensitive portrayal of a fascinating cast of characters.

Of Little Faith delivers a punch to old-school beliefs while spotlighting the period when progress for women battled nightmarish condemnation and self-centered ritual.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (November 30, 2013)

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