

Partners in Time

David Groflo

Xlibris (Jan 31, 2015)

Softcover \$15.99 (206pp)

978-1-5035-3238-0

Well-drawn characters, settings, and points of view add detail to this interesting tale of two couples separated by 130 years.

Two couples—separated by several states and 130 years—are inexplicably tied to each other when one has an unfortunate shift in family circumstances. Marriages become strained as one wife's instability seemingly affects her counterpart, leaving both husbands to search for answers. Love, overcoming obstacles, and a questioning of the unknown are all encompassed in David Groflo's *Partners in Time*, a slow-moving but loving portrait of two marriages.

Tim and Sara, young newlyweds, live in northeastern Ohio in the current time. Lester and Clara reside in Virginia near the close of the nineteenth century. The chapters go back and forth between these locales, with the story unfolding from Tim, Lester, and Clara's alternating points of view. Unfortunately, Sara's perspective is never fully explored.

The author provides detailed descriptions, but sometimes extraneous words are used when brevity and succinctness might have been a better option. Some words and phrases tend to be overused as well, almost to distraction. Awkward phrasing also pops up occasionally. Tighter editing would most likely fix all these issues.

The characters are very well drawn. Tim is an everyman who goes to work, puts up with his beer-swilling coworker, has a nice house, looks forward to his weekends off, and is enthralled with his wife, Sara, until she gradually begins to change. Lester is a strong family man, forced by circumstances beyond his control to leave his home to find work. He is a sympathetic character, struggling to do right. However Clara is more clearly portrayed than her husband, who has to leave his family to find work elsewhere. Her desolation on the farm is vividly drawn, though the southern accents she and Lester speak in do tend to distract from what they are actually saying. Their dialogue might be enhanced without using this device.

The author spends a good deal of time setting up the background of his couples. While this brings many varied and expressive details to the story, it also slows the pace. When both Tim and Lester dig deeper into their dreams, it seems this part of the story could have been expanded on more. This is the entire reason behind the story, but it seems it got shortchanged in the telling.

This thoughtful, detailed novel by a talented newcomer features couples struggling to find their way back to love and each other, and will appeal to fans of mystery, science fiction, and romance.

ROBIN FARRELL EDMUNDS (April 17, 2015)

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