ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

GENERAL

Peace Corpse
Charles B. Neff
iUniverse
978-0-595-47825-5
Three Stars (out of Five)

Four intelligent youths from very different background arrive in the city of Stockholm for the annual Youth For Peace demonstrations in hopes of changing their lives and the unique worlds in which they live. But a fight for peace becomes a fight for survival when a Syrian member of the group is murdered.

Charles B. Neff's latest novel is a thrilling international murder mystery that draws on his experience as an administrator with various American universities as well as his time working with international development projects. Neff demonstrates his knowledge of the global community in this novel offering original well-rounded characters who each have their own detailed story to tell.

Neff relates the dramatic events of the conference through the various perspectives of his four protagonists. Luckily for his audience Neff has a solid ear for dialect and each character has a distinct voice including Israeli Binyamin Dayan the Nicaraguan Mariela Fuentes and the fascinating Swedish detective Magnus Torval who works to uncover the truth about the murder. With such a vast set of characters to keep track of Neff does a splendid job of keeping everyone involved in the story.

The downside to having such an array of characters is that the chapters tend to be on the short side. This could be a device employed by the author to heighten the tension but it seems to have the reverse effect here. Each time things begin to heat up and Neff demonstrates some of his expansive knowledge of international affairs he cuts the chapter short and moves on to the next installment. Thus the book fails to deliver any edge-of-your-seat action for more than a few minutes at a time which may hurt the book's chances with its target audience.

Regardless of how the chapters are structured Neff demonstrates his inherent storytelling abilities with this story and the action is always realistic and believable. The characters' interactions are well-written and honest and their respective dialogues with Torval are reminiscent of some of the best mystery writers on the market today.

Finally the list of characters at the beginning of the novel takes away some of the surprise and spontaneity that mystery readers so enjoy.

Nevertheless *Peace Corpse* is a solid effort by a talented writer.

Liam Brennan