FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

General

Pillars of Gold
Alice Thomas Ellis
Moyer Bell
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If there is such a thing as every day life, Ellis captures it perfectly. She captures the inane obsessions, the subtle paranoia, the pains of raising children, the modern day stepfamily nightmares and the complexities of sexual tensions. Pillars of Gold is a story about life. It is often silly, occasionally mundane and extraordinarily charming.

The plot of the book focuses mostly on a small London neighborhood filled with friends and associates who tend to simultaneously dislike and befriend one another. At issue is Barbs, the obnoxious American do-gooder who suddenly has turned up missing.

This sparks a jealous rage in Constance who sees her boyfriend's hat inside the house, the children to throw a dinner party in the vacant house and a drunken boyfriend to dream he murdered her. No one really knows for sure, though, what has happened to annoying Barbs, not even the reader. While everyone has worried theories, life just basically goes on as usual.

Scarlet continues to believe she is going insane. Her daughter, Camille, leaves home every morning although she never goes to class and worries she and her friends are growing up, growing older and growing boring. Sam successfully conspires against her stepfather.

The characters created here are selfish, irrational and some of the most realistic available in novels today. They are our neighbors, our mothers, our friends, maybe even ourselves. The characters become real to readers through the words they speak. Ellis creates elaborate conversations born of the simplest ideas, just like the best of friends do. In this example, Sam is infatuated with the boy at the bistro. Camille suggests somewhat sardonically to pray for her dream man. "It can't do any harm to pray, can it?" "It might," said Sam. "Like taking antibiotics when you don't need them. They say you shouldn't do that. Besides, I don't think you're supposed to pray for people to leave their girlfriends and fall in love with you."

Ellis blends her deep insight into the human spirit and conversational tone with brilliant descriptions, such as this one when Camille struggles with the thought of going to school: "She

wore the expression of a catechumen, raw and as yet uninitiated, who dimly sees the advantages of the otherwise disagreeable course before her."

This book is not one for true mystery lovers eager for a juicy who-done-it. Instead, Pillars of Gold delivers an amusing, lighthearted tale of every day life with a twist that keeps readers guessing and shaking their heads.

Marjory Raymer