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Romance

Ring Go Round
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When Marieke, a successful woman working at World Bank Tower in Washington, D.C., decides not to board her plane home from a business trip in Brussels but instead quite spontaneously travels on to vacation briefly in Amsterdam, an adventure, and a new romance, begins.

Marieke's life is in contrast to the story told of an English girl, Marlene, living in nineteenth-century Europe. Marlene is full of excitement when she marries a Dutch man, Paul van der Mehr, at fifteen, but when she moves to Holland with him, their relationship becomes tumultuous.

The stories of the two women are told side-by-side in alternating sections, with the author blending elements of both historical and contemporary romance. It also becomes apparent early on that the lives of these two women may be directly intertwined.

An overarching theme is one of overcoming adversity, particularly displayed by the character of Marlene, who is confined by nineteenth-century gender expectations. Yet her story will be compelling to fans of contemporary romance as well. Part of Marlene's story is told through her own journals, and these first-person accounts provide insight into the character that strongly connects readers to her triumphs and challenges, and makes her struggles relatable.

Fate and destiny are themes explored primarily through the contemporary character of Marieke, who instantly feels a strong connection to Clemens, a man she meets in Amsterdam while browsing through his antique jewelry store. She is compelled to buy a particular multi-stoned ring, and to get to know Clemens better. As Marieke pursues a relationship with Clemens, and leaves behind her American boyfriend of four years, a mystery unfolds about Clemens's Dutch family, the van der Mehrs, as well as the source of the antique ring. Throughout the narrative the author maintains a level of suspense about a possible connection between Marieke's own family and the van der Mehrs that will keep the reader engaged until the

end.

It is a complex narrative, with a mix of history, action, and mystery combined with an exploration of the emotional aspects of abusive and difficult relationships. But the author has seamlessly woven together all of these elements.

This thoroughly detailed and realistic novel will transport readers in time and in place, across two continents.

Maria Siano