ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

GENERAL

Shalimar
Audrey Peyton
Eloquent Books
978-1-60693-853-9
Four Stars (out of Five)

British writer Audrey Peyton, author of three Harlequin romance suspense novels, a biography of a lion and his trainer, and a post-apocalyptic survival novel, weaves together time travel, history, romance, and daring rescues in her latest novel, *Shalimar*.

In 1587, the doomed Mary, Queen of Scots, is about to be beheaded. Ultimately, another is decapitated in the monarch's place as past and present collide. In 2022, Shalimar, a mansion in the English countryside, has become the headquarters of The Group, a mysterious cadre of powerful individuals concerned with world affairs and scientific inquiry. Adult friends Sinclair Singleton and Travis Emerson reside at Shalimar with Sinclair's father, a member of The Group. Sinclair has twin passions: Mary, Queen of Scots, and Travis; she and Travis have perfected a time machine with which they plan to go back through the ages to save Mary from execution. They capture the Queen and set her up in style at Shalimar in 2022. The pair's time travel alters their lives, Mary's life, and the course of history. Sinclair and Travis soon find themselves hopping from era to era, all while trying to maintain their friendship.

Peyton expertly grounds her novel in time—whether the near future of 2022 or the various past ages that the characters visit. 2022 is futuristic but still believable and not totally alien. It is clear that Peyton researched her historical settings, and this research is well-integrated into the story. Her details of Mary fascinate, from the diseases she had prior to her beheading to her feelings toward Elizabeth I. This book is a well-written love letter to Mary and her era. The Queen's adjustment to the twenty-first century happens in believable fits and starts. Furthermore, the author presents a plausible explanation for time travel while simultaneously exploring its pitfalls.

In true Harlequin fashion, Peyton populates her story with beautiful people who possess round personalities. Moreover, they are assertive individuals who can fend for themselves. The author adds to her story by getting the characters into scrapes tinged with humor and daring plans to foil villains. The only thing that detracts slightly from this delicious romp is the number

of editing errors; these mistakes don’t impede understanding of the plot, but their presence is visually irritating. Fortunately, such errors don’t exist on every page. But for this caveat, history buffs, adventure aficionados, and romance lovers will find themselves caught up in the magic of *Shalimar*.

Jill Allen