

Soleil Tangiere

Larry Bonner

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Bonner has written a compelling story about the metamorphosis of a girl that moves forward at a brisk pace.

Soleil Tangiere is the epitome of a dream girl: tall, blond, smart, and sexy. Debut author Larry Bonner has invented a woman that most women want to be and all men want to have. The striking sapphire eyes on the cover alone capture attention. The nineteen-year-old, fresh-yet-tough girl working for her father in rural Montana progresses into a brazen woman jet-setting around the world in this plot of international intrigue.

Soleil is an interesting character, and it's difficult not to turn the pages as she becomes involved with dangerous people in dangerous situations. Her story begins in the Montana mountains, where she works as a Girl Friday for Rapid River Mines. This puts Bonner's career working in the precious metals and commodities industry to good use. But when a suspicious mine explosion kills her father, it sends Soleil on a mission to avenge his death. Her motivation moves the plot along and relocates her to New York City, where she works for an elderly couple at a jewelry booth.

Although Bonner's pacing is effective, the metamorphosis of Soleil's character weakens believability. A girl who originally shunned college suddenly learns perfect German by working for and living with an older Jewish couple, holds her own with every man in a fight, and masters the business of commodities after only a week. Even if all this were plausible, the fact that she murders two people to avenge her father's death makes it challenging to root for her as she battles a devious cast of characters.

What keeps this thriller interesting is the dynamic use of language and the vibrancy of the settings, despite a few clichés. Whether it's Zurich, London, or New York, Bonner creates a sense of place that makes the reader feel as if they are witnessing the story as it unfolds. Bonner utilizes his vocabulary well, from his specific knowledge of mining, precious gems, and the commodities industry to his concise and lively prose that energizes each scene.

The novel's major shortcoming is shifting point of view—from omniscient third person to a close third person to first person. This awkward shift causes confusion and disrupts the development of the main character. A consistent point of view ensures complete control over the story as well as deepening the characters of the novel.

If readers are to continue to follow the adventures of Soleil Tangiere, Bonner will have to delve deeper into the psyche of her character. Still, Bonner's facility with language and setting serve the genre of thriller well.

MONICA CARTER (April 16, 2014)

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