ForeWord Reviews

HISTORICAL

Stealing Trinity
Ward Larsen
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The sinking of the USS Indianapolis in the waning days of World War II, just after the ship delivered the components for the bomb that would later be dropped on Hiroshima, resulted in the loss of almost 900 sailors. The event has raised questions and speculation ever since. Some have suggested a connection between the sinking and Little Boy, the codename for the atomic cargo that had been dropped off just four days earlier. Many argue that it had to be more than luck that a Japanese submarine could find the Indy in its sights that fateful night, that it must have been tipped off.

With this, his second novel, Ward Larsen deftly fills in the historical blanks. An airline pilot who flew combat missions for the Air Force in Operation Desert Storm, Larsen combines history with spy-fi in a compelling World War II thriller that supposes the Nazis infiltrated the Manhattan Project. As the novel opens, they send an American-born agent, Alex Braun, from Berlin to New Mexico to rendezvous with Die Wespe (the Wasp), a German scientist who has accumulated a suitcase full of information on the new weapon. Alex is an intriguing character, as resourceful and capable as a Navy Seal and as ruthless and soulless as his SS comrades in the concentration camps at Treblinka or Auschwitz. Five years earlier, Alex's German-born father had pulled the young architecture student from his last year at Harvard to join the Nazi cause. Now that the Reich is crumbling, Alex knows that the bomb will be worth millions to vying postwar superpowers.

But *Stealing Trinity* is not only Alex's story. As he reaches the Eastern seaboard, soon to leapfrog west toward Santa Fe, a workaholic British interrogator, Major Michael Thatcher, enters the narrative. Thatcher gets a tip from a captured German clerk that leads him to America to track down Alex. Thatcher, a slightly built widower with an artificial leg, is later joined by Lydia, Alex's ex-sweetheart, whose new husband has become yet another victim of Alex's mission. The two pursuers, widow and widower, eventually come to understand the importance of the Manhattan Project and the enormity of the threat posed by Alex. Larsen takes the pursuers and the pursued all the way to Guam, where the USS Indianapolis stopped after delivering Little

Boy. The Indy would be torpedoed two days later, but *Stealing Trinity* gives that tragic event a plausible and honorable context.

Joe Taylor