Clarion Review

General

Storm of Love
Ora Nissim
978-1-4343-4598-1
One Star (out of Five)

Fast-paced romantic thriller *Storm of Love* offers many delightful moments but is plagued by many unbelievable coincidences. Readers who are interested in sumptuous parties family lore and exotic locales may enjoy hearing about the misadventures of the Holtzman family and the one person who dares to go up against them Liz Chaney. A former model and single mother Liz is an investigative reporter attempting to uncover the truth behind an explosion at a refinery owned by brash Luke Holtzman.

Readers soon learn that Luke a brooding Jewish oil tycoon is hopelessly taken with Liz—a person he despises and the very reporter whose interest in the Gasneft explosion could undo him and his fortune. Nissim's premise—whether anyone can love that which they want to destroy—is interesting but it soon strains under its own weight.

Liz evades Luke's goons and even assumes a disguise when looking for evidence but in the end it becomes difficult for readers to pull for Liz since Nissim gives her little credibility as a journalist. Not only does Liz pay for details about the Gasneft explosion she also never seriously questions the evidence. Furthermore Nissim continuously describes Liz as "na&239;ve" and "innocent" two characteristics incompatible with Liz's job as a reporter.

The character of Luke Holtzman is also only somewhat successfully rendered. His turnaround in the book's conclusion from foul-mouthed playboy to family man defies the imagination. Throughout the novel he calls Liz a "witch" and a "bitch" even after he realizes she is the mother of his child which makes it hard to tell what Liz sees in him apart from his great wealth. Though he's potentially an interesting romantic hero Luke's love for Liz never seems to rise above lust and obsession.

One of the novel's many coincidences involves Liz's failure to realize that Mrs. Rabinowitz an old family friend is related to the Holtzmans. Mrs. Rabinowitz has been a great friend even supplying Mitch Liz's son with Gasneft stock yet Liz is somehow never made aware

that she is Luke's grandmother. The two families interacted with young Elizabeth going to Luke' bar mitzvah a fact that is mysteriously concealed from her.

Most romance novels work because the heroine is gutsy and feisty though flawed. In the end the heroine wins by casting aside her flaws winning the guy while maintaining her independent spirit positive outlook and/or career. In Liz's case she seems to conform to the romantic conventions of the past by giving up and succumbing to a man who will take care of her by surrounding her with worldly possessions. Sadly instead of rooting for the heroine readers end up feeling sorry for Liz which is hardly the fate a romance novelist would want for her protagonist.