

The Edge of the Fall

Kate Williams

Pegasus Books (Jun 7, 2016)

Hardcover \$25.95 (400pp)

978-1-68177-138-0

This subtle and moving historical fiction focuses on women's changing roles in postwar periods.

Kate Williams's *The Edge of the Fall* is an able second entry to a trilogy, focusing on the aftermath of the First World War and its effects on one family.

Each member of the DeWitt family is grappling with the war, in very different but equally weighted ways. Celia, the character whose point of view is most prevalent through the book, drove ambulances and witnessed much of the devastation. Now she struggles to find her place in the postwar world. Trying to reenter her old life makes her realize that moving on is not a simple prospect. She suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, making the narrative all the more real. So, too, does the story afford attention to the soldiers who were injured in the war, and their plights.

The Edge of the Fall rings true to its period, and both its language and its setting are consistent and authentic. A shift in perspectives, to Louisa's, is initially jarring, though her point of view sheds light on more of the story. She is not as sympathetic as Celia, particularly having played a part in some of the strife that Celia faces while trying to adjust to her new life, but her portion adds nuance, and it is easy to become immersed in the story again.

The prose is action-driven and engaging, with emotions conveyed through events and setting, rather than much introspection or dialogue. Williams expertly uses subtext and intricate detail to convey feelings, which lend the text an understated effect so that its themes, not explicitly stated, unfold slowly and with complexity.

The Edge of the Fall is subtle and moving historical fiction that focuses on how women redefine their places in postwar periods, when the fighting is over and it seems like they are less needed.

HANNAH HOHMAN (Fall 2016)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.