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Clarion Review ★★★★½ HISTORICAL

The Lanzis II: The Age of Consciousness

Giancarlo Gabbrielli
AuthorHouse (Sep 10, 2012)
Softcover $19.95 (329pp)
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This second volume in Giancarlo Gabbrielli's series about an Italian family, the Lanzis, takes place just after the end of World War II, as those who had fled to the countryside seeking shelter from the violence return home to rebuild their shattered lives. The story centers on thirteen-year-old Roberto, the precocious son of Riccardo and Patrizia Lanzi; with his father's failure to return from the front, Roberto is called upon to assume a man's responsibilities and care for his mother and grandmother. The confirmation of Riccardo's death resolves the family's uncertainty even as it brings deep grief. Gabbrielli's tender, yet powerful story of a boy's transition to manhood amidst the destruction and despair of war is a tale of loss, as any war story must be. But *The Lanzis II: The Age of Consciousness* is also a tale of strength, resilience, and hope.

Gabbrielli's strong visual imagery, impeccable sense of timing, and natural dialogue bring his characters to life in a way that will have readers caring about them from the start. Able to convey large amounts of historical and background information concisely and without slowing the pace of the story, the author paints a rich backdrop against which Roberto's growth into manhood is sensitively portrayed.

Gabbrielli puts his descriptive gifts to good use, as evidenced by this colorful, almost poetic passage: "Beyond the fields and the green hills, the first rays of sunlight fanned over the snowy mountain crests. They trickled down their flanks and fashioned bluish and violet shades into depressions and crevices. The sun slowly climbed over the peaks and an explosion of blinding light illuminated the horizon and the valley below." Especially vivid are the scenes of the boy's emerging sexuality, which are both powerful and tender: "He was struck by the beautiful inverted arch, extending between the curve of her hips and the rising line of her shoulders. In that moment, Roberto would have liked to be a sculptor, to carve and preserve into a granite stone the magnificent image which lay before him. She rested her head on one hand, and with the other, she caressed his body, gently journeying with her fingers over his skin. Every touch gave him shivers of pleasure. He could hear a clock ticking somewhere, but time was of no consequence, for the feeling she gave him was made of forever."

This is a story very well told, but it is marred by spelling errors, missing capitalization, and other grammar and punctuation tics. The author's ability to write convincing dialogue that easily conveys each character's educational level, class and social standing, and generational group makes his penchant for italicizing certain colloquialisms unnecessary. While the cover photography is of interest, the photos of the featured buildings are grainy and dark.

Gabbrielli has done more than write a good story. He has brought a message of hope and encouragement to readers who still believe in the importance of acting upon one's convictions, loyalty to one's family, enduring love, and sacrifice for a higher good.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January 13, 2013)

Source: https://www.forewordreviews.com/reviews/the-lanzis-ii/

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