ForeWord Reviews

JUVENILE FICTION

The Raging Dragon
Len Lamensdorf
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"In other parts of the world, the dragon is respected as a sign of prosperity and well-being-a force for good. I think the DragonSlayers hate what is good and want to destroy it." That's exactly what one discovers has been happening in William Montreaux's world since his first exploits in his hometown of Bonville, France, led him to national fame (The Crouching Dragon, 1999).

Now, though, a much more ominous danger has appeared, and it threatens to tear the political fabric of France apart at the seams. Continuing in his father Antoine's evil ways, Tony Bersault and his group of thugs, the DragonSlayers, believe that Algeria's independence from France must never be allowed to happen and plan to overthrow President De Gaulle's regime. It takes until William and his friends from home, Louise and Roger, are immersed in events in Paris before they realize what the DragonSlayers are up to-and that the earlier attempts on their own lives weren't just motivated by Tony Bersault trying to avenge his father.

This second book of the "Will to Conquer" series wraps fictional intrigue and adventure around historical events that occurred in France from 1958 to 1961; from De Gaulle's first year in power and the beginnings of Algeria's move toward independence through the state dinner for the Kennedys in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles. Although at times too heavily detailed, Lamensdorf does an admirable job of taking his readers through an informed tour of Paris' historical monuments and history as the story unfolds; including descriptions of the Metro, the Catacombs, and the Château of Versailles.

Lamensdorf, aiming his story at those who are twelve to eighteen, has brilliantly mastered the subtle yet appealing way of teaching real history as a backdrop to the escapades of William and his friends. Also, his way of portraying teen attractions in respectable courtships is a refreshing bonus not often found in today's sexually explicit world.