Clarion Review

Romance

Tidal Choice
David Bradford
AuthorHouse
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Mesmerizing and meticulous, David Bradford examines the emotional side of intimacy.

In this thoughtful, soul-searching romance, a woman distinguishes between loyalty and love. Committed to her neighborhood sweetheart yet drawn to a man who has touched her spirit as well as her body, she must examine the depths of her heart to make the most difficult choice of her life. Set in 1984 and told in a consistent, unbroken flashback twenty-five years after the events occurred, *Tidal Choice* loses none of the immediacy necessary to sustain interest.

A levelheaded pharmaceutical representative, Annette values a practical angle in making tough decisions. Jake is Annette's longtime companion and friend who anticipates nothing but a faithful, loving wife after he places a ring on her finger. Approved by family, Jake is Annette's so-called destiny, and she has no socially acceptable reason to reject the comfortable life this financially stable entrepreneur offers.

But when Annette meets Grant, a successful attorney, she knows a mere fling in Cape May, New Jersey, will not be enough. Despite this knowledge, she refuses more than a short-lived diversion due to her prior obligation. By the time she realizes her error in judgment, Jake has announced his intent to marry her. Grant relocates, brokenhearted.

The story is Annette's quest to find her lover and resolve conflicting interests inside her troubled psyche. Perceptive and edited with care, this outstanding novel reveals more of the heroine's thoughts and feelings than the stereotypical skin-to-skin intimacy that glosses over the emotional aspects of a relationship.

Realistic and genuine, this meticulous approach will attract those who are tired of multiple shades of gray matter or blow-by-blow physical interaction: "The only light in the room was the reflection from the moon. The pleasure of their looking at each other was not to be

hurried. The weekend of discovering, talking, provoking, motivating, teasing, playing, and anticipating had led them to this moment. They were finally alone, intimate, and free of outside restraints."

Less believable is Annette's lengthy pursuit of Grant, which requires the skill of a private investigator. His sudden move, followed by ever-looming obstacles to acquire leads on his whereabouts, seems convoluted. In the age of information, her difficulty in locating this man goes beyond the realm of credibility.

Slightly stilted dialogue needs a tad more polish in a few scenes, but the problem is minor and nothing that surpasses the awkwardness often seen in books that have passed through editorial rounds. Overall, the content is tight, every page advancing a plot propelled by internal urgency as opposed to external forces.

David Bradford brings his experience as a practicing attorney to his insightful portrayal of Grant. *Tidal Choice* is his debut novel. Fans of Nicholas Sparks will enjoy Bradford's mesmerizing style.

Julia Ann Charpentier