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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ GENERAL FICTION

Treasure Too Far

Richard W. Holmes
Susan B. Trimble
AuthorHouse (Oct 5, 2012)
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Using real events as the basis of a novel can help create a more believable fictional story, but *Treasure Too Far*, which is based on the real-life experience of a geologist who discovers a large body of phosphate ore in the Mexican waters of the Pacific Ocean, falls somewhat short.

Coauthors Richard Holmes and Susan Trimble weave a story around those real-life events with a plot that starts out by following the activities of geologist, Bob, who befriends Eric, captain of the ship engaged in the phosphate exploration. However, the story quickly shifts to the friendship that develops between Eric and Clara, another geologist assigned to the ship by the company in charge of the exploration project. It is Clara, in fact, who is the main character of the story. After leaving the ship, she and Eric embark on separate journeys, pursuing goals and meeting other people along the way, only to renew and intensify their relationship years later. Bob seems to play a secondary role until the book's conclusion, when he re-enlists Clara and Eric in his lifelong quest.

While Bob pursues the phosphate project for many years, his story is far less intriguing than the twists and turns that take place in Clara's life. The coauthors do a good job of showing Clara's evolution over a period of about fifteen years, as she progresses in her career, endures the passing of her father, and becomes involved with a character named Tom, who, despite first appearances, turns out to be Mr. Wrong. Predictably, Eric gets his chance to convince Clara that he, not Tom, is Mr. Right.

The story is mildly interesting, but some plot elements are just too coincidental and others stretch believability. For example, the unpolished Eric's ability to raise four-million dollars to start a ferry service is unrealistic, and Tom's escapades with other women border on the ridiculous.

While the characters are fairly well developed, their interactions are sometimes clumsy, a situation made worse by amateurish dialogue that, at times, impedes the action. In addition, copy editing is sorely needed. The book suffers from an abundance of typographical errors, including misspellings, sentence fragments, missing quotation marks, and unnecessary repetition.

Still, Clara is a likable character with whom the reader can connect. She grows older, wiser, and happier. Her character and the sense of adventure in *Treasure Too Far* are the novel's strongest assets.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (December 19, 2012)

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