FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

General

Unknown Book
3987

In this debut novel, Mary Malloy illuminates the fact the history is not only replete with answers, but with questions as well. Lizzie Manning couldn't be more excited when she receives an invitation to visit the home of George Hatton who is a descendent of Lieutenant Francis Hatton, an officer in the British Royal Navy. Being a professor of history who specializes in the voyages of Captain Cook, this invitation to leave Massachu-setts for a month and visit the sprawling English estate of Hengemont to view artifacts and an unpublished ac-count of Francis Hatton's maritime excursion with Captain Cook provides the perfect opportunity for Lizzie to indulge her passion for naval history as well as help her career.

As charmed as she is by the idyllic setting of and George's hospitality, Lizzie finds herself dis-covering a nested doll of questions that open mysteries within mysteries of the Hatton family. There are the generations of Hatton women, dating back to the Crusades, whose lives ended in suicide before the age of thirty. There are the poems that each of them wrote, with the line "Where is his heart?" appearing in every one. There are missing pages from a diary, obviously cut out, a secret panel in a cabinet that hides an antique triptych, and the missing blanket and bones of an unintentional grave robbing. Finally, there is the mystery that appears to link Professor Manning to this fabled yet cursed family.

Despite her enchantment with the Hattons, her curiosity leads her into danger and deceit and ends up threatening her life and her marriage. George Hatton's two sons become involved in Lizzie's work and are painted as a modern day Cain and Abel. Edmund is handsome and caring; Richard is greedy and cold. She flirts but never betrays her husband who waits for her in Boston. The longer she stays at Hengemont, the more she begins to question her own sanity.

Throughout the book, Malloy's use of medieval tales, the Knights Templar history, ancient artifacts, and naval history deftly guide the reader deeper into the character and her motivations. As she solves one mystery, another one looms larger and more terrifying, eradicating any chance of reprieve from the tension. This novel itself reads like a seafaring voyage—full of swift turns, unknown frontiers and the desire to answer the big questions we all ask ourselves.

Monica Carter