Clarion Review

General

Web of Spies, Book II: Company of Spies
Margaret Emanuelson
978-1-4343-5862-2
Three Stars (out of Five)

Dr. Margaret Emanuelson's epic new series Company of Spies presents the events of World War II in an entirely different perspective that of its female O.S.S. operatives. Calling on her own experiences as a covert operative working for the first incarnation of the Central Intelligence Agency as well her lengthy experience as a clinical forensic psychologist Emanuelson draws readers into a fictional world that is more realistic than many may expect. Spanning a short period of time in the midst of the war—literally just a few weeks—the book manages to put forth a stunning amount of detail while never straying from its interesting story.

A small cast of protagonists trot across the globe with all the ease of runway models on the catwalk. Think of it as an espionage-filled "Sex and the City" during the Second World War though the author clearly demonstrates her wide-ranging knowledge of recent history and her ability to recreate remarkable events with tremendous detail.

The story begins on New Year's Eve 1942 at the Pentagon where the reader is introduced to Miranda St. Giles a woman who gets what she wants but fears for her daughter Abby who is currently undercover in Liverpool. Because of a connection between the two Miranda begins to worry at the same moment that things go awry for Abby. It's an interesting perspective that is rarely touched in modern fiction be it literary or commercial but the results are truly interesting.

Unfortunately Emanuelson tries to offer up new and interesting characters with every turn of the page covering for clichéd action and other predicaments. In one incident Abby struggles to find evidence to free imprisoned fellow operative Suzanne whom she knows is innocent but of course can't prove it.

As the story unfolds Emanuelson becomes adept as posing plenty of questions but she never really offers readers a strong climax. There is the sense that something is falling flat here or perhaps that Emanuelson has so many ideas about the series as a whole that she doesn't know

what to give away nor when to give it. Nevertheless the characters are each interesting and captivating in their own right and they will keep readers coming back for more.

Ultimately the story is a breath of fresh air in a genre that had otherwise nearly exhausted itself years ago. Never before has an author attempted to recreate the role of females in the war with such an intense passion and flare for fiction. Emanuelson passes the test with this novel transporting readers back to early 1943. The twists and turns of a classic spy novel are all there some better than others nonetheless. Overall the stories are captivating and the series is sure to be a success in the future when more answers are provided and some closure is at hand.