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BOOK REVIEW



Trendy Reading – “Paper Children” by Marcia Fine

By Jenna Lee Dillon

A few chapters into Marcia Fine's novel “Paper Children,” and you will feel like a part of her family; halfway through the book you'll be glad you aren't. By the end, you'll have a compassionate understanding of the ordeals of Jews who

escaped Europe before World War II.

“Paper Children” is cleverly divided into three parts, each of them told from a different woman's perspective. The first and most in-depth story follows Paulina in her journey from the young daughter of an affluent Jewish couple in Warsaw to the wife of a struggling entrepreneur in America. It describes the devastating consequences of her family's refusal to move to America as the war intensified.

The second book is written from the viewpoint of Paulina's daughter, Sarah. Sarah travels to Europe to photograph and document the destruction left by World War II. With each discovery, Sarah struggles to hold onto her faith.

The third book is written from the perspective of Sarah's daughter Mimi as she unravels the story of her family's past and realizes the suffering previous generations have experienced.

All three stories are written in distinctly different styles, each indicative of the generational differences and changes brought on by

American culture. Sarah and Mimi's readiness to fight for their rights is a refreshing contrast to Paulina's non-confrontational and dependent demeanor. Each of the books' characters deals differently with the bond of family, which is appreciated by some and ignored by others. The relationships between the three main characters are realistic, emotional and beautifully articulated.

Two main concepts explored in “Paper Children” include the passing of time and loss of life. Fine discusses these in a brutally honest yet sympathetic manner. She writes with enough detail to make “Paper Children” a deeply emotional story while still condensing more than 50 years of history into a fairly quick read.

Fine's evocative metaphors and 360-degree descriptions allow the reader to see, smell, hear and feel each scene just as the main character does. Every page is filled with vivid descriptions of the setting and those involved, as well as historical references. Fine has clearly done her homework related to events surrounding World War II and succeeding decades, but certain parts of Mimi's story do feel over-researched as she and her mother's habits tend to reflect the commercialized vision of the 1960s.

Overall, Fine is an excellent writer, and “Paper Children” is a must-read, especially for those interested in the Holocaust and its aftermath.