



“...an inspiring saga of history, adventure, religion, politics, suspense, mystery and romance, all neatly wrapped up in a compelling conspiracy of which Michael Crichton would have been proud...”

“Finding Emmaus”

By Pamela S.K. Glasner

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The promotional blurb for *Finding Emmaus* touts it as being a ‘dark fantasy,’ but this, in my opinion, does it a disservice, for it is much, much more. It is an inspiring saga of history, adventure, religion, politics, suspense, mystery and romance, all neatly wrapped up in a compelling conspiracy of which Michael Crichton would have been proud to have conceived. Admittedly, the plotline does touch upon certain aspects that could be considered paranormal in substance, but the overall effect of the book does not leave the reader with an aftertaste of ‘fantasy,’ but rather of having been introduced to a disturbing reality that will generate a slight sense of inadequacy for not having been aware of the problem before.

*Finding Emmaus* is a story about empaths; people who are naturally gifted — or cursed — with the ability to feel the emotions of others as acutely as if they were experiencing them themselves. Although encased within a single volume, the reader is in fact treated to two separate tales that evolve three and a half centuries apart, but which are intricately woven together with a common thread that is empathy. The plot examines the lives of two people — Francis (Frank) Nettleton and Katherine Spencer — who have both been troubled since birth by the gift/curse of empathy, albeit in different ways. Frank is a product of the seventeenth century, during which any form of eccentricity was diagnosed as madness or devil-worship and dealt with severely. Katherine, on the other hand, is a product of the more enlightened twentieth century, yet the lack of any clinical method to diagnose empathy has resulted in her being treated as a manic depressive and poisoned with expensive drugs that have no hope of providing her with solace or a cure. The tragedy of the empaths induces Frank to do something about it, and in order to complete his life’s work, he reaches across the centuries and recruits Katherine to his cause.

Ms. Glasner is an exceedingly capable writer who has managed to consistently incorporate two distinct styles of writing within the same book; a feat that would be beyond the reach of most authors. Frank’s story is written in the first person, and when this is put together with Katherine’s story, which is written in the third person, the reader is left with the impression that the book has been co-authored by Ms. Glasner and Frank himself. The historical atmosphere of the early settler days of Connecticut rings especially true, and the warmth that the prose exudes speaks volumes about the author’s love of her subject.

One point that I found particularly impressive — and of which I write with envy — is the way in which the book starts. Ms. Glasner has attained the Holy Grail of fiction by writing an opening that is so compelling that I defy anybody to read it and then put the book aside; as follows:

*The year is 2008. I am, as I have been for the past two hundred and fifty-one years, ninety-eight years old.*

If pressed to criticize the book, I would have to say that I was a tad disappointed that the conspiracy concerning pharmaceutical companies was not developed further as the book drew to a conclusion, but if I were to be honest with myself, I would probably put this down to the fact that I just didn’t want the book to end. It was a great read and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

*Finding Emmaus* is Ms. Glasner’s first novel, yet it contains all of the elements that could be expected of a much more experienced author. I am sure that I will not be the sole reader who is deeply thankful that it represents only the first book in the *Lodestarre* series.