Homeland: A Novel by Barbara Hambly

One Of The Best Books I've Read...

Those who loved Cold Mountain or Geraldine Brooks’s March will embrace and long remember this spellbinding novel of two remarkable women torn apart by conflict, sustained by literature and art, united by friendship and hope.

As brother turns against brother in the bloodbath of the Civil War, two young women sacrifice everything but their friendship. Susanna Ashford is the Southerner, living on a plantation surrounded by scarred and blood-soaked battlefields. Cora Poole is the Northerner, on an isolated Maine island, her beloved husband fighting for the Confederacy. Through the letters the two women exchange, they speak of the ordeal of a familiar world torn apart by tragedy. And yet their unique friendship will help mend the fabric of a ravaged nation.

The two women write about books and art, about loss and longing, about their future and the future of their country. About love. About being a woman in nineteenth-century America. About the triumphant resilience of the human spirit.

Their voices and their stories are delineated in indomitable prose by an award-winning writer who captures in intimate detail a singular moment in time. In Homeland, Barbara Hambly takes readers on a unique odyssey across a landscape treacherous with hardship and hatred. She paints a passionate masterpiece of a friendship that not only transforms our understanding of the most heart-wrenching era of American history but celebrates the power of women to change their world.
My Personal Review:
I got the book because I know Barbara Hambly's work and enjoy her writing. Little did I know how good this book is. It is outstanding, and one I will recommend to all of my reading friends.

Hambly tells the story in letters between two women, one a Southerner, the other a Northerner, at the beginning of and through the Civil War. Neither woman quite "fits" into her culture and community, and each sustains the other's right to be different. They write of their lives, their frustrations, happinesses and unhappinesses. They tell of their everyday lives, with all of the tragedies that took place during that War, and how each struggles to be faithful to her own principles and beliefs. Their letters speak not only of the commonplace and extraordinary tragedies of the Civil War, but, to me, of all wars, of what happens to the women and children who are not fighting but are deeply and personally affected by this war and all wars.

I am going to buy another copy just to lend to close friends, because this is a story worth reading. I know it will haunt me forever, and I will probably re-read it at least once a year.

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