THREE FEMALE FRIENDS FACE MIDLIFE CRISES IN A NO-HOLDS-BARRED EXPLORATION OF SEX, MARRIAGE, AND THE FRAGILITY OF LIFE. Holly: Filled with regret for being a stay-at-home mom, she sheds sixty pounds and loses herself in the world of extramarital sex. Will it bring the fulfillment she is searching for? Andrea: A single mom and avowed celibate, she watches her friend Holly’s meltdown with a mixture of concern and contempt. Holly is throwing away what Andrea has spent her whole life searching for—a committed relationship with a decent guy. So what if Andrea picks up Holly’s castaway husband? Marissa: She has more than her fair share of challenges—a gay, rebellious teenage son, a terminally ill daughter, and a husband who buries himself in his work rather than face the facts. As one woman’s marriage unravels, another’s rekindles. As one woman’s family comes apart at the seams, another’s reconfigures into something bigger and better. In this story of connections and disconnections, one woman’s up is another one’s down, and all of them will learn the meaning of friendship, betrayal, and forgiveness. Unflinchingly honest, emotionally powerful, surprisingly erotic, Triangles is the ultimate page-turner. Hopkins’s gorgeous, expertly honed poetic verse perfectly captures the inner lives of her characters. Sometimes it happens like that. Sometimes you just get lost. Get lost in the world of Triangles, where the lives of three unforgettable women intersect, and where there are no easy answers.

My Personal Review:
Triangles: A Novel is a tale that is on the one hand psychologically disturbing, and on the other hand a story quite beautifully written. I say disturbing because the three main women in this tale all have very troubled marital and familial relationships that appear to be the product of troubled, misguided pasts and/or learned prejudice. The alleged impetus for such disturbing affairs is implied, if not stated as female mid-life crises.

As she turns forty, there is, Holly, who longs to be different, even though her marriage to a successful attorney has brought her the luxury of being a
stay-at-home mother. Now, she seeks direction--she wants to explore her own ambitions--she wants to be noticed as more than a mere mother. She wants to be a provocative woman sought by men. In exploiting her sexuality, she loses sight of the very family she had raised. Her love and that of her husband grow increasingly distant.

In Triangles, there is single-mother, Andrea, who has lived what she feels is a high quality, yet lonely, life caring for an only child. She abhors the life of her voluptuous friend, Holly, yet at the same time, much like her friend, Andrea also seeks the admiration and closeness of a male sex partner. Unfortunately, in her loneliness, Andrea crawls into the vacant spot in Holly's sensual bed.

And finally, because she is so devoted to a daughter with a terminally debilitating condition, Marissa becomes a slave to her child's care. Marissa's husband shucks off his responsibility toward the sure-to-die child. He spends more and more evenings in his office and in Triangles, he too, establishes a long adulterous affair. In addition, he cannot warm to his maturing gay son who claims to be in love with another gay youth, possibly HIV positive.

Although I thoroughly enjoyed the prose-like way Author Ellen Hopkins penned her book, following the dismal lives of three unsettled women, reminded me too much of a plod through The Valley of Tears. Am I the one missing the reality of women in mid-life crisis? Are there really that many married women who, at forty, discover their lives so deplete that they and their husbands seek extra-marital affairs?

What will happen to Holly, Andrea, and Marissa? Will their lives change? Triangles will offer some hope that once again, its characters become adjusted--contented. How? The answers to these questions I will leave to the reader of Triangles. I have no doubt that there will be readers who praise this tale because it shadows the plight of their own lives.

But I would hope there are far more women who are happy to be alive; women who are proud to have raised normally adjusted children; women who, after raising their family, decide that now is the time to begin a promising career and they seek a second rewarding life without desecrating their first one. On page 351 of Triangles, Author Ellen Hopkins alludes to this hope with her poem: A STAR RISES.

______A star rises.
______Pale. Frail, A stitch
______Of embroidered light
______Upon the dark forever
______Fabric of space
I would recommend Triangles to readers who like tales crammed with emotion, betrayal, angst, and hope. It is a moving tale; more because of the beauty of its prose, than its distressing story.

This review was written by Regis Schilken, author of TEARS OF DECEIT.

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