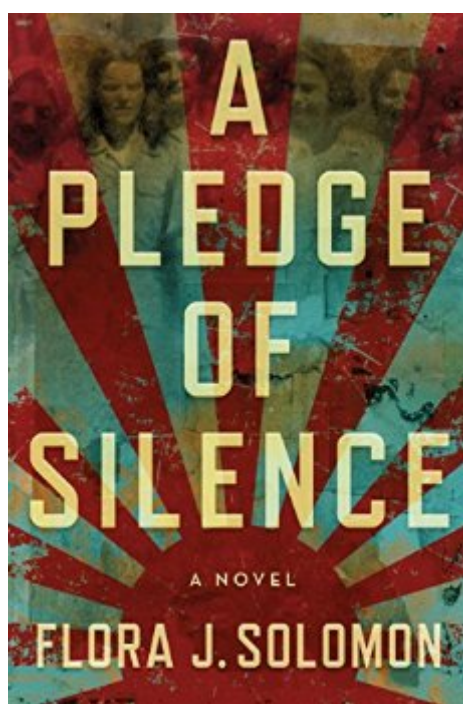


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A Pledge Of Silence



Synopsis

2014 Winner of Breakthrough Novel Award General Fiction

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Flora Solomon's "A Pledge of Silence" is a very captivating book. It is obvious that the author spent an incredible amount of time and research to make the book not only pleasurable to read but true to history. The characters are engaging and you are drawn into their lives and plight. For those of us that never realized the role nurses played in World War II, not only for their medical contribution in caring for the wounded, but for the horrible suffering they endured, "A Pledge of Silence" is a shocking eye opener. If I am not mistaken, this is Ms. Solomon's first book, but you would think her an experienced and seasoned writer. You find yourself being artfully transported into the interment camps where you experience the pain, suffering, and despair of the nurses who gave so unselfishly, many making the ultimate sacrifice. I applaud the author for recognizing the contribution these nurses made to the war effort while providing the reader with an engaging, captivating and highly recommendable read.

The five stars represent my affinity for this book. It is a great historical novel showing diligent research and patient, natural building of a story in the framework of the beginning, middle, end and aftermath of World War II. I am probably 10 years younger than Margie, the heroine, but I was aware of the worry before the war, the many concerns of families with those serving "overseas" during the war, the hardships the rationing cost the civilian population at home, the Fireside chats, the dimes saved in booklets for war bonds everyone bought, and the endless long years it seemed to take for the war to end. I remember the cover of Life magazine with the sailor kissing the nurse, the atomic bombs on Japan, Truman taking over after Roosevelt died, and the fighters coming home after the war. I remember the little flags with service stars in almost every window. It really was a world at war and it took unbelievable effort to win it and deal with it later. When the service men and women came home, there wasn't enough employment to go around and the men took over in the factories as the women went home (like it or not). The author added so much more to what I knew, and described what a young woman and her family went through during these long years. Margie was a very appealing character, and the author portrayed her growth as she was schooled as a nurse-anesthetist, joined the service, had several loves, saw the South Pacific and the invasion of the Japanese into the Philippines, and was brought into the worst of the war. She was badly needed with her skills, was part of a cadre of other nurses left on the island, and held in a Japanese war camp. The book is a page-turner in the very best sense of the words. Come take a very real walk in our history!

This is a detail-driven saga of a WWII nurse caught up in the war in the Pacific, enduring what cannot be endured and coping with her survival. The author shows a researcher's love of the subject, paces the story well, and keeps the reader's attention throughout. Before sitting down to write this review I thought of the words to best describe this book. It has romantic elements as the men in nurse Margie's life love her, leave her, hurt her, and help her, but is certainly more than a historical romance. It is a saga in that it is a rich story that moves across Margie's lifespan. It is nearly a memoir, although it is fiction, of the Pacific war. The book is all that and more; a rich, engrossing story to shock you, pull at your heartstrings, and recommend to all. The writing is direct and clean and the book, although heavy on description, moves along smoothly. The main character, Margie, is likable as she grows from innocent school girl to student, to restless adult, to army nurse, and at last a mother. Overall, the character development is excellent and her situation resonates at every plot milestone. Underscoring the excellence of the research that went into this book, the author includes a note regarding resources on the topic of nurses in the Pacific during WWII.

A Pledge of Silence is a well written novel about the horrors of war from the perspective of a working nurse in the field. Flora Solomn's exceptional writing skills makes the reader feel and see events as if they are currently happening. The author did her homework too, historically and emotionally the plot, while fictional, could be the retelling of any nurse's real life story - especially from those who served in WWII and were caught in the suffering and horrors of war to included imprisonment in battle before the liberation of the Philippines. The story also gives the reader an accurate picture of how suffering, abuse and pain changes people. While the author doesn't specifically mention PTSD, she describes the actions, thoughts and behavior of those traumatized by war - detachment, alcohol abuse, anger and nightmares - all forms of PTSD. The book is tough to read at times, especially if one suffers from PTSD, because it is so graphic. But when retelling the savage truth of battle, it is impossible to describe it without such details. Ultimately, the book is a tribute to all those who served, suffered and sacrificed. It's a salute to the medics, to the wounded and to those not often remembered for their heroic contributions - such as WOMEN. It's also a hard look at our humanness and a reminder that lives are fragile. In learning such lessons perhaps we can ultimately accept and forgive one another.

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