



Papa's Problem

Patrick Kendrick

Reviewed by Betty Gelean

Let me say first that any awards this book wins are well-deserved (currently the winner of the Discovery Opus Magnum Award for best manuscript from the Hollywood Film Festival). I am also going to comment on the cover art of this issue: original artwork by the author Patrick Kendrick, it so fully encompasses the story in a few vibrant strokes.

The story takes place in Key West but is multi-national in scope. It is written in the time of the Depression and the beginning of what would become WWII. The author has done an amazing job of integrating history, world events, greed, intrigue into an exciting, fast-moving murder mystery centering it around the famous author Ernest (Papa) Hemingway. The action is amazing throughout, with little breathing space between. There is great interplay with Hemingway, his wife Pauline, the Sheriff, and a Scotsman, Emmet MacWain, newly retired inspector from Scotland Yard and now living in Key West. Into this mix are the many Cubans living there and also many Jews fleeing from Germany.

There are actually several stories going at the same time but all come together and all tie themselves to the mysterious death of a young woman and to the investigation into her murder. There is no confusion with the various stories and the book flows along or rather races along smoothly. Excellent writing, theme, and roller-coaster ride. Very descriptive, in parts unpleasant, but representative of the time period in which it is written, a time of brutality boiling in Europe, a time of the poor living in any way they can, a time of civil unrest in Cuba, a time of madness, this work of fiction is as close to reality as you can get.

This novel grabbed me right from the start and I remained buried in the book until I came to the end. I wanted more. I even did some on-line reading on Hemingway as a result. I'm looking forward to more Emmet MacWain adventures if this is to be a series. If not, I'm definitely looking forward to more books by Patrick Kendrick.

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