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Frantz's "An uncommon woman" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Frantz, L. (2020). *An uncommon woman*. Grand Rapids, MI: Revell. 384pp. \$15.99. ISBN 9781493421138.

This novel is a historical romance, written by Laura Frantz, who is a Christy Award winning author of 11 other novels. The story begins when Keturah Braam, the daughter of Dutch settlers who was taken by the Lenape at age 12 and is now in her twenties has been returned. She is brought back from Fort Pitt, to her former home escorted by Commander Tygart and his party. They find that Keturah's family has abandoned their homestead along the Buckhannon River. The nearest settlers are the Swans, including Tessa, Keturah's close childhood friend, her mother and five brothers. It is decided that Keturah will stay with them until her family can be found.

Tessa Swan is an unmarried, plain-spoken, frontier woman, but wants more someday, including a safer life. Commander Clay Tygart was also taken by the Lenape and brought back by the Quakers. His one brown and one blue eye seem to symbolize his experience in two worlds. He would like to use his command to make the Native tribes and the settlers coexist more peacefully, but he sees that it will not be possible, as Europeans keep settling on Native lands. Most of the characters behave in realistic ways. It is important to note that this is not written from the Native American perspective. The story takes place in 1770, from Western Pennsylvania (Fort Pitt), to what are now West Virginia and Ohio. Offensive terms like "savages," are used to describe Native Americans, which reflects the European view of the time. An important theme of the story, is the blessing of friendship, based on Proverbs 17:17, "A friend loveth at all times and a brother is born for adversity."

Frantz studied historical accounts including many captivity narratives and *The Diary of David Zeisbecker: A Moravian Missionary Among the Indians of Ohio*, to add realism to her novel. This book has appeal for readers who are interested in eighteenth-century America and westerns, as well as historical romance.

Reviewer

Cynthia Hammell