

A Soul Story – A review of the novel ‘Locker Rooms’

“Seeing death as the end of life is like seeing the horizon as the end of the ocean” - David Searls

Death encompasses us all, death doesn't discriminate, it doesn't care if you are a man or a woman, young or old, rich or poor and more importantly good or bad, everything alive must die one day, but what happens afterwards? A lot of people have theories, about afterlife and souls, various religions too propagate such ideas and the public are free to believe what they want. But what if there were souls and what if our souls couldn't get an automatic entry into either heaven or hell after our death? What if there were middle men, evil middle men with vicious intentions to lock you up in an everlasting purgatory, what would you do then?

Author Patty Lesser's new novel '*Locker Rooms*' narrates the story of *Alida*, a bipolar character leading a quiet life in suburban Canada and who is also the recent winner of a 10 million dollar lottery payout. *Alida* alternates between being impulsive, moody and solitary to being driven, outgoing and courageous. When she purchases an old mansion with her new earnings, little does she realize that her new home has secret tunnels leading up to rooms with even stranger looking lockers in them. *Alida* quickly realizes that these are no ordinary lockers and they are in fact a prison for innocent souls captured by a demon that goes by the name *Shad*. When *Alida* interferes in the demon's work and tries to free the souls, her whole life is turned upside down and she quickly gets involved in a fight between evil and an even bigger evil. Turning up as her allies are a couple of souls she has freed from the lockers who support and help her in this fight against evil.

The centrepiece of Patty Lesser's book isn't that it deals with ghosts, demons and other paranormal elements; it does but it is her main lead that makes this book truly interesting. The character of *Alida* is a non conformist and a closed personality, revealing very little about her and quick to change the subject whenever the topic gets too personal. *Alida's* character is unpredictable but that is also what makes her so exciting to get to know and in terms of use as a narrative tool, having such an unpredictable lead character constantly keeps the reader in check as you are never sure as to what her next move is going to be. *Alida* truly is the heart and soul of *Locker Rooms*.

A sense of mystery envelopes the narrative right from the word go and never lets up until the very last page. A recurring theme of the book seems to be that everything happens for a reason and you have to keep your senses sharp and your mind open to accept changes, whatever form they may come in. And even though there are some farfetched ideas being discussed, you tend to go along with the flow since the writing's good and precise. At first, the experience of conversing with timid and polite spirits are an oddity when the constant image you have of spirits are of the haunting kind but you soon get used to it. There are a lot of pop culture references with regards to many popular films and books which are repeated throughout the book. There are references to biblical passages as well but it has not been overdone. And it also has quite possibly and arguably the greatest sex with a ghost since *Ghost* the movie. There is an epic battle with *Shad* and *Lucifer* towards the end which is very graphic and pretty much how you would imagine when two strong and warring evil forces tee off. It has some very nicely etched out secondary characters as well, the many spirits *Alida* frees are all distinctive personalities and their back stories too are convincing. *Oliver*, the spirit that hangs around the longest and *Alida's* romantic interest is the perfect arm candy and serves his purpose in the book justly.

Patty Lesser's book may be a romance novel with a paranormal edge or a spooky thriller peppered with a love story, whichever way you look at it, is still a good combination of heart-warming and hair raising scenes. The novel very delicately challenges one's ready acceptance of one's fate, beliefs and

ideals and leaves you entertained, informed and inspired. The small town setting with its few but compelling characters and riveting story line make this an easy read for the season.

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