

## Beneath the Stone Reviews

Tolstoy's observation that 'Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way' is most apt for the families in *Beneath the Stone* by Margaret M. Ford. Meticulously planned, well-researched, tightly constructed and with action spanning a twenty-year period, the intriguing and fast-paced plot revolves around the enigma at the heart of the Montfort family.

The Monteforts are burdened by the aftermath of an atrocity which took place in Italy during World War 2, their ongoing interactions strained by sadness and unrelieved tension. The complex story of the Monteforts unfolds through the eyes of twelve-year-old David Montfort. David discovers his close connection to the wealthy Montfort family only through his own family's loss, and while at first regarded as interlopers the family bonds adjust to include the newcomers. David grows to understand the complex dynamics of his extended family, the dark cloud of the past which hangs over them all and the imminent dangers they are exposed to. Ultimately it is as he stands on the threshold of adulthood that he is poised to help solve the mystery that threatens the security of his family.

In addition to David's perspective, the plot of *Beneath the Stone* is skilfully developed through the use of third person narrative to complete the pieces of the puzzle. The flawed characters and human frailties portrayed in the families parallel to the central plot present a poignant portrayal of Tolstoy's maxim, further exploring the ties which bind or shatter relationships. Ford's sophisticated use of language and engaging characters immerse the reader into a bygone era which is familiar yet remote. The author paints vivid word images, producing a compelling narrative which is cinematic in quality and memorable for the lasting impression of places and people which remain long after the mystery has been solved and all the ends tied together neatly. The mystery which unfolds in *Beneath the Stone* is sophisticated, stimulating, and satisfying to read.

— **Chris McGuigan Kensington Review**

Readers of *Beneath the Stone* will find a story they do not want to put down and, when they do, they will look forward to picking it up again. They will seek to discover the solution to the mystery Margaret M. Ford created. In timely fashion, they will learn who was the boy the Nazis questioned and they will search, along with David who grows into a young man as the story progresses, for the former SS officer and war criminal, Rannulf Nagel. The family dynamics are believable and the idiosyncrasies of its individual members (most particularly Alma, who is a bit simple-minded) are well drawn and realistic. Readers will turn the pages more quickly as time goes on, finding a growing desire to learn the fate of David's grandfather and perhaps, in due course, to find justice served to a former Nazi.

— **Patricia Reding for Readers' Favorite awarded 5-star emblem**



I have already had the pleasure of reading Margaret M Ford's "Lament for the Dead" and enjoyed it immensely. Now she has cemented my admiration of her work with this novel. Her writing skills once again immerse you easily and quickly into her story and her characters' strengths and flaws make for fine reading. "The Montfort family history, told through the eyes of newcomer, David, is immensely readable. As he discovers old secrets

and mysteries, David manages to uncover what circumstances have led to the family warring amongst themselves.”

— **John Morrow Pick of the Week**

‘Beneath the Stone’ is an intriguing and exciting plot, set against the background of a wartime Nazi atrocity in an Italian village. The story centres around a strong-willed, outspoken but highly endearing young man who becomes the glue that binds a once dysfunctional English family. A family that he must protect against the formidable ex-Nazi assailant who ruthlessly manipulates or murders his victims, in the relentless pursuit of a stolen fortune. A thoroughly engaging, increasingly exciting and satisfying read, full of surprises.

— **Dr Martin Cole Author**

Beneath the Stone/Margaret M Ford

I thoroughly enjoyed this novel from start to finish and would recommend it to others who enjoy thriller novels.

— **Robert Gregory J.P.**

Beneath the Stone: The vengeful actions of a Waffen SS Officer during the battle for Italy in 1943 are not forgotten and result in a lifelong quest for truth and retribution. A riveting good read.

— **Norman L Price Manuscript Appraisals UK**