

***Swim at Your Own Risk***

Mary Lee Homan

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Reviewed by Richard R. Blake for Reader Views (2/08)

“Swim at Your Own Risk” is Mary Lee Homan’s first novel. She has brilliantly crafted a story exchanging the frenzy of the mundane into a frenetic fantasy that takes her heroine, Marta Mason, on a roller coaster ride of flirtation, intrigue, and terror.

The story is set in Naples, Florida. Homan captures the background, history, and the uniqueness of the town as she describes the locale, the beaches, and the frustrations of the citizens at the changes brought about by tourism population explosion. I particularly enjoyed the well-researched information on sea turtles and the hatching process, and protection of their eggs by park rangers.

After years of self-sacrifice and service to her growing family, Marta recognizes she has allowed herself to lose her personal identity. She decides to secretly take a private vacation to relax, create a new persona, and to enjoy the ocean at her parent’s beach house in Naples, Florida.

The story moves quickly as Homan leads the reader through a series of suspense, fear, mystery, nostalgia, and transcendence. Her characters are believable, her storyline well-plotted, holding the reader to the final climax.

Homan’s love for the sea came through in her writing. Her choice of words and descriptive phrases create a dimension of beauty and integrity as she incorporates the sense of the smell of the sea, the sight of clouds taking new shapes on a clear day, the sound of torrents of rain pounding on the roof of a car, the taste of a gourmet meal, or the feel of walking in bare feet on the hard packed wet sand of a Florida beach.

“Swim at Your Own Risk” is written for anyone facing, or having faced, an identity crisis. The book is ideal for an evening of escape reading, great company for an airplane trip, and easily adaptable for a readers’ discussion group. I am eagerly anticipating more to come from Mary Lee Homan.