

'Across Great Divides' focuses on war, family and human spirit

Roy's self-published novel is now available online

By Rachel Gross Weinstein

The upheavals of war, power of family and resiliency of the human spirit — these are the predominant themes in "Across Great Divides," a new book written by local author Monique Roy. Throughout the novel, Roy highlights her family's experiences in a unique way to tell a powerful story.

Roy self-published the book, which came out in June and hit the Internet last month. It is available as an e-book on amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com and iBooks, and will be available in print next month.

The goal was to make this story unique and hopeful, Roy said. Many Holocaust books are dark, but she wanted readers to see another side of it within this story.

"I wanted to write something that approached the Europe/Nazi era and Apartheid," she said. "This is a hopeful story because the characters fled Europe and started a new life. There are many different ways people survived the Holocaust and I wanted to tell that side of it."

"Across Great Divides" tells the story of 16-year-old Eva and her twin sister, Inge, as they witness their lives in Berlin change. Their

best friend, Trudy, betrays them when she becomes a member of the Hitler Youth and a family heirloom, an emerald and diamond necklace, is confiscated by the Nazis as they continue to harass Jewish families and businesses.

Their younger brother, Max, a member of the underground resistance, sees greater danger ahead. Dad, Oskar, a diamond merchant with a thriving business, refuses to leave Germany and believes Hitler will eventually fail. Their mother, Helene, the elegant matriarch of the family, holds her family together.

The family is conflicted whether they should leave home, but after the devastation of Kristallnacht in 1938, they flee Germany with the help of the underground resistance after hiding diamonds and eventually go to South Africa.

In Cape Town, Eva encounters an impoverished woman, Zoe, in need of work. By hiring her, Eva is able to shield Zoe and her daughter, Zola, from the dangers and horrors of apartheid, which are all too reminiscent of Nazi Germany.

In the end, the family comes to terms with the evils of society, both in South Africa and with their memories in Europe.

Roy imagined the plot for this book after reading notes her grandfather left about fleeing

Germany. Although the book is fiction, some pieces highlight the real history of Roy's family.

"My grandfather's story is really what inspired me to do this and got it moving," Roy said. "I was born in South Africa, so I wanted to incorporate that somehow. The book shows the similarities of Apartheid, the Nazi regime, racism and hatred toward a group of people. A big theme in this book is family resiliency, which I focused on as well."

Roy was born in Cape Town and moved to Dallas in 1980 when she was 4 years old. Her parents fled South Africa to provide a better life for her and her two brothers and have been in Dallas ever since.

That experience had an impact on Roy, she said, and also inspired her book, which took about three years to complete. Her first book, "Once Upon a Time in Venice," came out in 2007.

Roy's passion for writing began as a child, when she would write stories in a journal. She later received a degree in journalism from SMU. A marketing profes-

sional by day, Roy said she writes at night and during the weekend.

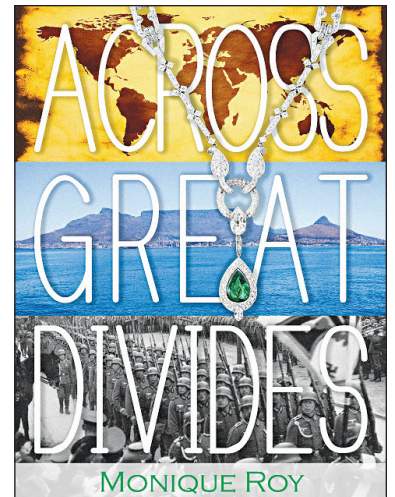
"I always knew I wanted to write books; it takes a lot of time, but I'm proud that I've been able to do it," she said. "There are moments when you are blank, and then there are points when you get ideas randomly. It takes a lot of drive and effort to write a book, but it's very satisfying to write a book and self-publish it."

Roy hopes to write another historical fiction novel within the next five years, but for now, she hopes she can inspire her readers in one way or another. When reading "Across Great Divides," she wants people to take away the idea that there can still be hope even during hard times and that being resilient can help you succeed.

"The book is really about the essence of family and being strong," Roy added. "I wanted this novel to be completely unique and different from what's out there and I believe I did that. The most rewarding part of this whole process was seeing the book come to life from an idea. I'm very proud of it."



Monique Roy



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Monique Roy
Author

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