

A Short Time to Stay Here

Terry Roberts

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War changes everything that should have been the summer of 1917. The U.S. enters WWI and Stephen Robbins' beloved Mountain Park Hotel is pressed into service as an internment camp for German nationals, including Hans Ruser and his men. Feisty Anna Ulmann, seeking independence in a male-dominated world, flees south from New York to devote her life to documentary photography in beautiful Hot Springs, North Carolina. Haunted by demons past and present, they face heartbreaking tragedy. Yet together discover the true meaning of imprisonment and escape. Winner: Willie Morris Award for Southern Fiction, Sir Walter Raleigh Award, Clark Cox Award for Fiction from CSH, James Still Award Finalist 2012, Reviews: Roberts' novel, an inside-the-camp, character-filled historical drama, draws on the parallel between the fenced-in predicament of the Germans and the psychology of his protagonist and narrator, Stephen Roberts, a man bound by his desperate legacy, despite his education. ... Roberts lets his characters come out in fearless, individualistic ways ... The joyfulness in reading Roberts' novel comes first of all from identification with his appealing hero. Who doesn't love a recovering drunk with a heroic core and the capacity to tap a Dirty Harry demon? And ... from a plot that continues to get more complex as it boils. The historical details Sentiment is great, and Roberts plays this instrument splendidly, too. Within the context of Stephen's ambiguous feelings about his crude, harsh background, Roberts puts forward heroes who have mountaineer super-skills. Stephen takes his lover to the place where Spring Creek meets the French Broad River, so that if you stand in one spot, you can hear a flute and bass symphony. I'd trade a bad guy blow-up for those ... details any day. -Rob Neufeld, Asheville Citizen Times "We have forgotten that in 1917 thousands of German sailors were our prisoners in the North Carolina mountains, but in this novel Roberts brings to life the historical circumstance and much more. ... He reveals how hatred—national or local—can lead to murder, but also how a man and woman can fall in love anywhere, anytime." —Doris Betts, author of Souls Raised from the Dead and The Sharp Teeth of Love "There's so much to like about this novel: the village itself, stretched out alongside the French Broad River, its famous hotel now used to house German civilians during wartime; the man in charge with his many decisions to be made; the woman he meets and how—page by page, month by month, they fall in love." —John Ehle, author of The Winter People and The Journey of August King "Fiction in the mountain regions of North Carolina and in the mountain culture of the state have formed a significant part of southern literature from Thomas Wolfe through more recent novelists such as John Ehle, Robert Morgan, Fred Chappell, Charles Frazier, Wayne Caldwell and Ron Rash, to name only a few. With A Short Time to Stay Here, Terry Roberts joins this distinguished company. His story of love on the fringes of a distant yet oddly intrusive war, is brilliantly plotted and rendered in a style both lyrical and concretely realistic, flawless in characterization and with an authoritative command of the history that enfolds it. One suspects, and hopes, that there is much more to follow from this gifted writer." —Jerry Leath Mills, Editor Emeritus of The Southern Literary Review "In A Short Time to Stay Here Terry Roberts shines a narrative light into a little known corner of modern history, German POWs in World War One in the Hot Springs resort in the mountains of North Carolina. This is a thrilling story of the clash of cultures, of mystery, espionage, revenge, and love. It is a riveting story you will not be able to put down or forget, bringing to life a particular Appalachian time and place, by one of the exciting new voices of Southern fiction." —Robert Morgan, author of Gap Creek and Brave Enemies

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