

Book Review - The Unknown Mrs Rosen by Andrew Sanger

Review by Henri Ruff, Wessex Jewish News

If you delight in thrilling espionage à la John Le Carre, or stories of Bletchley Park styled code-breaking à la Robert Harris, or the trials and tribulations of growing old à la Nora Ephron, or tales that switch back and fore in time à la John Fowles, then you are in for a treat as this novel wraps all these delights into one.

Mrs Rosen's life story provides the framework in which Andrew Sanger, a local author, weaves the narrative of her childhood, earlier career, marriage and children, and eventually older age when she starts to lose her faculties. Being 'unknown' is pivotal to the plot. Working in secret during the War necessitated Mrs Rosen to being and remaining unknown. Fast-forward to her dotage, and without giving too much away she becomes 'unknown' to all those around her.

Again, especially as this is something of an espionage thriller no spoilers here but the book takes us to Wartime Germany and post-War France, the culture of which the author knows so well, and through the Cold War era of the second half of the last century.

Finely blended in to the enigmatic themes of this tale are the sensitive human sides of her life, particularly her relationship with her husband and children, and especially the challenges that older age present.

This is Andrew Sanger's 5th. novel. Apart from all the very present-day questions this book raises, the only question that remains for readers who find this novel's 323 pages to be page-turners is when will his next novel appear?

