

***The General and Julia* by Jon Clinch**

I enjoyed this historical fiction book which introduces the reader to more dimensions of Ulysses Grant through his relationship with his wife and his family. From reading many books about the Civil War, as well as books set in that period, I've gleaned quite a bit of information about Grant as a gifted general, but this novel made him more three-dimensional. Grant has always seemed somewhat weak as a President in my estimation, but he redeems himself somewhat in my eyes through his valiant effort to finish his memoirs so that his family will be provided for comfortably after his death. The famed general is dying of throat cancer, but is determined to win yet this campaign against mortality, perhaps his most important personally.

The book is well researched, giving a good feel for the period after the war and the challenges of putting back together a nation after years of conflict. I would have enjoyed more insight into Julia Grant, but enjoyed the appearance of Mark Twain, whose relationship with the Grants was previously unknown to me. The writer has done a very good job of drawing the reader into this world of the past until it seems to be the world of the present. I look forward to reading more works by Jon Clinch.