

Inside V

Paula Priamos

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For Grant and Ava, married life is electric—right up until the moment a young girl accuses Grant of sexual assault. Paula Priamos's *Inside V* tests the limits of marital trust, sanity, and lawfulness in a narrative that is both shocking and gripping.

Ava is a former prosecutor—smart, capable, and only internally undone by her husband's trial and the distance that rises between them as a result. As the date of his incarceration approaches, she finds herself buckling under new pressures and doubts—including the newly dangerous presence of a stalker ex-boyfriend, the certainty that her life will never be flush with easy joys again, the possible reappearance of her once-committed mother, and the ever-nagging possibility that Grant is, indeed, guilty.

Priamos's characters are a complex mixture of vices and virtues, with their actions often dipping between extremes. Ava's father takes the role of the too-forgiving, and all too capable, voice of reason, while ex-lovers and nemeses haunt the pair as they struggle to clear Grant's name.

Ava details her relationship with Grant, which takes center stage even midtrial, bluntly: their near-dangerous attraction to one another; the outside forces that tear at them; and concerns about what life will be like once Grant is again free, if saddled with his presence on the sex offender registry. She keeps the terror of an obsessed judge at arm's length, and deals with the childhood trauma of her mother's violence only intermittently. Those around her are filtered through her somewhat-too-forgiving lens, resulting in second chances with possibly deadly consequences.

The narrative challenges notions of sanity and fidelity, justice and loyalty, with regularity and to fascinating ends. Innocence becomes almost secondary to the preservation of Ava's relationship as the story hurtles toward its shocking conclusion. Comparisons to recent bestsellers with psychological twists are warranted, but Priamos adds elements of devotion taken to the extreme that set this thrilling book apart.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (March/April 2017)

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