Clarion Review

General

Madison's Avenue
Mike Brogan
Lighthouse Publishing
978-0-692-00634-4
Four Stars (out of Five)

This novel has all the elements of a thrilling beach read: an attractive, competent executive; her manly but sensitive love interest; a series of suspicious deaths; a CIA-trained assassin with a personal agenda and astonishing abilities; a corporate conspiracy; and exotic settings.

Madison McKean is the book's intrepid heroine. Her adventure begins after an alarming phone call from her father, the head of a huge advertising company, who's been accused of misappropriating millions. Madison hurries to his side and finds instead a suicide note and evidence that he has drowned. Certain that her father would never have stolen money or killed himself, Madison takes over his company and sets out to clear his name, despite threats from a mysterious tall man who's always one step ahead. She also must supervise the company's regular business and wrangle with its executive vice presidents, some of whom are determined to close a billion-dollar merger that her father had opposed. One unnamed VP is so intent on the deal that threats and blackmail ensue.

Madison finds an ally in Kevin Jordan, the company's handsome young creative director, who helps her pursue every lead and defend herself against the shadowy tall man. It's delightful to encounter a heroine who doesn't need a shining knight to fight for her. Although Kevin assists Madison, it is always her battle.

The author knows the world of which he writes: he has worked in cut-throat global business. His previous novels include *Business to Kill For*, which won an award from Writer's Digest, and *Dead Air*. Here, he provides an engaging plot, a credible heroine who holds her own, an intriguing cast, and chilling suspense. Some of the altercations are unrealistic, and many plot developments are predictable, yet this narrative trundles along, maintaining enough mystery to keep readers hooked.

Brogan is capable of properly using words like "complected," yet his sentences don't

challenge, and his book doesn’t tax the reader’s intellect. One of his strengths as a writer is creating memorable minor characters, like “the receptionist with a Halle Berry smile” and the nervous, pudgy banker with knowledge of secret accounts, who “hoisted his three hundred pounds onto surprisingly tiny feet encased in gray tasseled loafers, and scurried down the hall.”

The adventures of Madison McKean will provide a fun distraction for readers spending an afternoon at the beach or passing time in an airport.

Carol Lynn Stewart