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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ GENERAL FICTION

Methuselah's Pillar

W.G. Griffiths
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Move over, Indiana Jones; there's a new anthropologist/hero in town.

When a simple shepherd in the Afghan mountains literally stumbles upon an ancient relic, he can't imagine the terrible power his discovery may unleash. Meanwhile, half a world away, Dr. Samantha "Sam" Conway, a researcher in the Jones mold—sans fedora and bullwhip—is making a discovery of her own. Sam's work—not to mention her blonde, athletic good looks—keeps her in demand as a telegenic spokesperson for the wonders of science. Before long, the government enlists her help to translate a piece of the eons-old artifact, which could spell unimaginable carnage in the wrong hands. But fall into the wrong hands it does, in the person of Tarik, a terrorist mastermind who makes Osama bin Laden look like a boy scout. Tarik employs a legion of scientists and unfailingly loyal (if misguided) followers to carry out his insane plan of vengeance as he seeks to flip the legends of the Bible in a fresh way. Griffiths describes with haunting detail the havoc that the new and ancient weapon is capable of.

Sam is soon paired up with John Decker, a super spy who has witnessed the horrific effects of Tarik's new weapon. Of course, there are plenty of twists along the way to keep Pillar from turning into a run-off-the-mill espionage thriller—although, to be fair, there are elements of the genre that authors can't help but repeat).

Griffiths, who specializes in "spiritual" thrillers, (*Malchus*, *Driven*, *The Road to Forgiveness*, *Takedown*, and *Stingers*) manages to pull off this tense tale without being too formulaic. He seamlessly combines multiple disciplines, including biology, chemistry, history, Bible study, and international politics. The pacing for the most part is brisk, although it does slow down a bit toward the end, and the "countdown to disaster" seems to go on a bit longer than one would think possible.

It is easy to imagine *Methuselah's Pillar* as a feature film; Sam and Decker have a chemistry that builds believably throughout the adventure. Individually, they are strong characters; together they present just enough sexual chemistry to have readers wondering what lies ahead. Griffiths is already working on a sequel, *Under Eden*.
RON KAPLAN (October 6, 2010)

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