

Murder in Cairo: Payback Is a Bitch

B. Butler

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Terrifying and brutal, this fast-paced thriller is a riveting beginning for what promises to be a great series.

Four American women, together known as the ACES, attempt to rescue a friend from a deranged man's luxurious compound in Cairo, facing treacherous obstacles along the way. A twenty-first-century version of the popular 1970s television series *Charlie's Angels*, but with a terrifying twist, B. Butler's *Murder in Cairo* sets the stage for unlimited stories—a series concept with high potential for development in the competitive thriller genre.

In the heat of passion, a supermodel marries a wealthy Egyptian general, moves to his palatial residence, and discovers that he is a serial killer with mummified corpses in his basement. Her error in judgment cannot be reversed without the assistance of her friends—two of whom are ex-CIA agents—or before her newborn daughter is killed by her husband, a madman who believes that only a son would be valuable. Heavily guarded and under constant surveillance, the compound is a prison presided over by a tortured soul whom no one dares to defy.

This riveting plot is somewhat tainted by an underlying political agenda that calls attention to sexist attitudes through the depiction of appalling atrocities and elicits feelings of animosity toward hard-line nations ruled by archaic principles. The frightening portrayal of Egypt may be realistic, yet the graphic emphasis on butchery veers into overkill. This is evident in this passage: "On the far side of the marble slab there was a stained white wooden table slightly lower than the one on the pedestal. Dried blood covered the top and part of the legs. Knives of various sizes lay on a white cloth. A six-inch-wide blood-stained wooden trough extended downward."

Murder in Cairo is without question a page-turner, immediately drawing the reader into the story. Butler's gruesome descriptions are like visions of hell. "The rank air nauseated her. She covered her nose and mouth. Reaching the first landing, she leaned over the railing and peered into the room below. She froze. Bodies filled the room. Grotesque forms of decomposing or mummified human bodies lined the walls!"

B. Butler is a motivational speaker and an international traveler. *Murder in Cairo* is her debut novel, the first of an intended series.

Fast-paced and sensationalized for commercial appeal, Butler's well-crafted book will not disappoint those seeking an entertaining trek into the disturbed mind of a brutal murderer as he dredges up ancient traditions in sinister ways. Gritty to the point of gagging, some scenes will overwhelm even a jaded consumer of crime fiction.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (September 11, 2013)

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