



Pegasus Down: A Donovan Nash Thriller

Philip Donlay

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Sharp dialogue and capable protagonists make for a compelling espionage novel.

Philip Donlay's *Pegasus Down*, the sixth book in his Donovan Nash series, is an action-packed thrill ride from the opening scene. This enthralling story follows Donovan Nash as he dashes to Eastern Europe to save his wife, the novel's other point-of-view protagonist, Dr. Laura McKenna.

The opening scenes present McKenna on a CIA-led extraction in Europe. The clandestine mission is off the books, which escalates the tension and action when her plane crashes. With McKenna's whereabouts unknown, Nash springs into action for a rescue mission. The full implications of this mission are not known, but eventually Nash learns the seriousness of his wife's mission: a terrorist group has acquired a stealth aircraft with the ability to deliver a nuclear device.

The story, which uses alternating points of view from Nash and McKenna for much of the narrative, is no damsel-in-distress tale. McKenna deftly demonstrates this early in the novel. She's a strong, intuitive, and compelling heroine. She just happens to have a husband who makes a perfect partner in action.

Nash is written as a dynamic and absorbing yet troubled hero. He has a hidden past that only his inner circle knows, and this creates a conflict that drives our hero and carries great emotional beats throughout the story. While there is the overarching conflict of the rescue mission and its fallout, the story really sets its hooks early with Nash's emotional turmoil.

Donlay's writing is crisp and direct. Every sentence serves its purpose, propelling the plot forward while aptly sharing relevant points from previous Nash adventures. The point-of-view characters offer unique perspectives, which combined make for well-developed one-two narrative punch. Furthermore, Donlay writes sharp, natural dialogue. While it's peppered with jargon, the dialogue is neither burdensome nor difficult to grasp. Donlay, a pilot himself, layers context to clarify what might otherwise be arduous language.

Fans who love espionage, action, or thrillers will find great entertainment in this book. Being familiar with previous Donovan Nash novels is not a requirement for enjoying *Pegasus Down*. Donlay weaves important aspects of previous adventures into this tale, helping it stand alone within the Donovan Nash series.

RON WATSON (Spring 2016)

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