

Prey of the Falcon: An International Thriller

Len Camarda

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Prey of the Falcon is a compelling thriller in which terrorists find a new way to strike at old enemies.

In Len Camarda's thriller *Prey of the Falcon*, a kidnapping advances terrorist plots to a higher level.

Best friends Paz and Frankie are in college in Spain when they are abducted. Blindfolded and drugged, they are flown to an unknown destination. Their abductors don't wish to harm them, though: instead, they conscript the women into educating the children of Middle Eastern rulers, all in the name of progress. This novel plot involves rulers of Middle Eastern countries both bankrolling the plan and acknowledging their skepticism around its potential for success. Meanwhile, Gino and Mercedes, government agents who are dating each other and who have a long history of unraveling terrorist plots, are tasked with solving the women's kidnapping, which fits into a spree of kidnappings over several years.

Paz and Frankie are resilient leads. Frankie is rebellious and spars with her captors, despite the potential consequences. While both cooperate and even come to enjoy teaching, Frankie still yearns for her freedom. Meanwhile, Assad, the brains of the abduction operation, doesn't see his scheme as morally wrong, though kidnappings, and sometimes murders, are involved in its execution. He is made dimensional through references to his previous bravery in service of a sultan, and his ideas are shown to transcend his violence, suggesting ingenuity on the part of the conspirators.

Mercedes and Gino are passionate, dogged investigators who pursue all leads, even subtle clues, to ensure that the conspirators face justice. The compromises that they choose to make, which include not letting suspects get away just to save their victims, lead to conscience-tugging questions. Their previous work is alluded to, but without expansions.

The tense world of geopolitics, and the specter of terrorism, are related in a credible way, garnering interest as law and order operations navigate hazy diplomatic lines. As the drama shifts between Frankie and Paz's predicament and the developing investigation, the book speeds up, its locations shifting to include the bucolic splendor of sultans' kingdoms and the offices of federal agencies, establishing the lines of battle with sparse details. The book's conclusion arrives in a gradual way, resolving the book's various pieces in a satisfying manner.

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PHILIP ZOZZARO (September 23, 2020)

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