Clarion Review

Thriller

Savior's Day
Alan A. Winter
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Four Stars (out of Five)

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Assassins train their eyes on the pope while other religious leaders secretly scour the planet for missing pieces of a historical document that could change Israel—and the world—forever in *Savior's Day*. Author Alan A. Winter brings both his ear for dialogue and insight into human motivation to this high-tension thriller.

Savior's Day begins with the assassination of Pope Lazarus II in a near future where religious strife mirrors today's conflicts. The assassins—Jericho Glassman, who is Jewish, and Zakkarhia ibn Mohammed, who is Muslim—are unaware of one another's presence, but are fighting for the same thing—albeit with contradistinguished motives. Flash to an undetermined time near this event: embedded in the narrative of the murder of a Jewish man who possessed a missing page of an old religious document are flashbacks, told by Detective LeShana Thompkins to murder witness Cardinal Arnold Ford, that provide the history of both the characters and the document, the Codex of Aleppo.

The story flips through time in nearly every chapter, adding to the mystery without disrupting the reading experience. However, the chapter titles offer the location, but often not the date of the action, which would help piece together a time line for the narrative. Winter's excellent development of a story-within-a-story (within another story) creates suspense and unfurls the history of the characters at just the right pace. Each of the main characters—Ford, LeShana, Jericho, and Zakkarhia—has a rich and nuanced backstory that informs their decisions and reactions to events. Much of the narrative is dialogue, and each character has a distinct and realistic voice.

The language is suspenseful, almost to the point of melodrama: “In a few short minutes, the world would discover who both [men] were. In a few short minutes, the world would discover their truths, truths they would all have to face. Consequences they would have to live with.” This overwrought tension can occasionally distract, but overall, the gripping storyline makes the melodrama forgivable.

Winter has crafted a fast-paced and fascinating tale of religious and political conflict in which human motives are revealed and examined. Those who enjoyed *The Da Vinci Code* and books like it will find in *Savior’s Day* a worthy addition to the canon of anthropological thrillers.

Aimee Jodoin