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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ THRILLER

Sleeper's Run

Henry Mosquera
Oddity Media (Jul 27, 2011)
Softcover $9.99 (350pp)
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Eric Caine sleepwalks through life. His aimless road to nowhere is punctuated by violent bouts of drunkenness and excruciating flashbacks from his service in the War on Terror. Caine loses his humdrum job after a nasty bar fight, and a chance encounter with the mysterious Tony Montenegro sees him whisked off to Venezuela, where he puts his computer savvy to use working in information security. Little by little, Caine learns that nothing is as secure as it seems. Soon he is on the run. He calls upon his technical prowess, military training, and fighting skills to outwit his pursuers and discover their identities.

With its fast pace, exotic locales, gadgetry, and convoluted double-crosses, Venezuelan native Henry Mosquera's debut novel, *Sleeper's Run,* rivals a James Bond thriller. Like Bond, Caine is a larger-than-life figure, and he repels multiple stalkers with surprising ease. When the odds are against him, his fluency in a broad range of technologies and his unbelievably fast wits are what usually save him, although a convenience in the plot sometimes does the trick. Such Bond-style conventions can be overlooked, though, because readers learn that Caine is human at his core. And because Mosquera takes the time to plumb his hero's human qualities and describe the crippling horror of Caine's war-related flashbacks, the action is slow to get moving.

Of course, in stories like this there is often a love interest. The antics Caine employs with the people who are chasing him mirror the game of cat and mouse he plays with his potential ladylove. Indeed, it is not clear until the book's end if Caine will end up with her, or even if he will identify the bad guys.

Mosquera pulls readers in with intoxicating descriptions of his country, capturing Venezuela's allure even as he portrays its violence and poverty. He also includes shrewd commentary about the nature of the Venezuelan government and its relations with that of the United States. He weaves these points deftly into the story line without bogging down the plot. Indeed, the novel keeps one guessing until the very end, with enough layers to satisfy even the most staunch conspiracy theorists. *Sleeper's Run* will be of interest to anyone who enjoys international intrigue.
JILL ALLEN (March 9, 2012)

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