

The Brutus Conspiracy

Garry Richard Lane

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The Brutus Conspiracy will surprise readers with its deft combination of fast-paced action, sympathetic characters, and an endlessly intriguing plot.

Garry Richard Lane files an adventurous flight plan in his debut novel, a fast-paced mystery thriller. Like a riveting action movie, *The Brutus Conspiracy* generates edge-of-the-seat suspense while its characters navigate the not-so-friendly skies in an intense and intelligent effort to solve a pair of mysterious plane crashes. This tension-filled novel also delves directly into the lives of the characters and keeps readers rooting for them the whole way.

The cover image, a simple silhouette of an airplane in a dawn sky, does little to foreshadow the complex and exciting story Lane weaves. He jumps right into the cockpit of a doomed plane, and inside the mind of pilot Robert Langevin, who is starting to believe it's more than just bad luck that has forced him and his top-secret passengers into the worst ice storm he's ever encountered. Langevin soon realizes that the plane's malfunctioning controls and spotty communications capabilities are more than mere coincidence. The opening scene has the intensity of a 3-D movie, and it instantly engages the audience in the event that drives the rest of the narrative.

Fourteen years later, air-crash investigator Becky Langevin—daughter of the ill-fated Captain Langevin—is still on the trail, trying to prove that her father's death wasn't suicide, but sabotage. Lane makes each layer of the growing conspiracy theory plausible by grounding it in realistic characters like Becky. Conversations are convincing, whether it's the shouted plane-side exchanges between colleagues on the tarmac, or emotionally loaded meetings like Becky's first fraught interactions with lawyer Will Oakwood, son of the senator who died when her father's plane went down.

Lane is himself a pilot and a lawyer, and while he includes the jargon of his trades in much of his dialogue—readers will learn a lot about the mechanics of an airplane, along with what happens in judges' chambers—he doesn't let the details overrun the story, and he instead uses them effectively to add depth and realism.

Each layer of the conspiracy is revealed carefully, with a gradual uncovering of the vast network of ruthless people behind the plane crash and their grandiose political plans. Lane keeps the plot engaging with his skillful use of red herrings and a ready supply of fresh developments. Just when it seems the mystery is solved, Lane allows a new clue to surface, effectively turning earlier conclusions on their heads. Courtroom dramas, precarious romances, wild-goose chases, and a heart-stopping showdown at gunpoint keep the pages turning as Becky and her growing gang of unlikely allies forge ahead in search of the truth.

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SHEILA M. TRASK (December 12, 2013)

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