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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ THRILLER

The Cyclops Conspiracy

David Perry
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What begins as a mystery revolving around a pharmacist's death turns into an adventure of international proportions in this fast-paced thriller by new author David Perry.

Jason Rodgers shows up at the funeral of Thomas Pettigrew, his former mentor and the father of Christine Pettigrew, the love of Jason's life—whom he left mysteriously thirteen years before. When Jason discovers the circumstances of Thomas Pettigrew's death, he becomes suspicious. Soon after, he begins to investigate the lack of corroborative evidence, wondering how and why Pettigrew changed from an intensely organized, clear-minded thinker to someone obsessed with conspiracies and surveillance devices. What Jason discovers appears to be a straightforward case of insurance fraud regarding pharmaceuticals. However, when Jason and Christine, along with Jason's brother and a private investigator friend of Pettigrew's try to discover proof of the fraud, they uncover something much bigger than any of them anticipate—a conspiracy that extends all the way from the local Colonial Pharmacy to an international scheme of revenge.

The Cyclops Conspiracy features a well-crafted plot, skillfully written action scenes, and credible characters. Perry unravels the storyline with increasing speed as he introduces characters and effectively reveals what motivates them to reach their goals. Perry's descriptions are detailed and evocative, as evidenced by Jason's observation of the pharmacy: "On a high, thin ledge in front of frosted glass, an assortment of antique pharmacy paraphernalia was displayed. There were mortars and pestles of polished ceramic, marble, and brass. Short, stout porcelain apothecary jars were labeled with Latin words like Lactu-carium, Paeonia Albiflora, and Pro Dolore. Thick copies of yellow-paged tomes silently attested to bygone days of tinctures, elixirs, and compounds."

In the beginning of the story, there are a couple awkward instances where Perry repeats facts unnecessarily. For example, several characters comment on the prior relationship between Christine and Jason when it has already been made quite clear that the two have had a relationship. Later, Christine and Jason realize someone has broken into her father's study and they repeat "someone has been here." Another distracting point is that Perry refers to some characters that appear in the action scenes merely by their appearance, such as, "Uniform," "Tattoo Man," or "Hooded Man." It is unclear whether this was intentional on the author's part, and it is a bit of a disappointment that the real identities of those characters are never disclosed.

However, despite these few detractors which can simply be chalked up to the author's style, his plot, characters, and descriptions, as well as his choreography of action scenes are intricate, strong, and clear. Perry quickly builds—and deftly sustains—a momentum that will have readers engrossed in this page-turner.
MAYA FLEISCHMANN (November 7, 2011)

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