

The Liberty Group

Eric Myerholtz

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“‘Tis one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall,” says Angelo, a powerful lord in William Shakespeare’s play *Measure for Measure*. The play shows how temptation abounds throughout life, and though some enticements are easy to avoid, others seem innocuous but end up ensnaring us in a web of deception. It is a theme that is shared in Eric Myerholtz’s novel, *The Liberty Group*.

The story opens on Mitch, a conservative columnist for the *Arizona Republic*, living a quiet life with his wife and kids. However, his quiet life is interrupted when he is offered the opportunity of a lifetime—providing commentary for a high-profile website led by the Liberty Group, a conservative political group. Even though the website is a success, Mitch begins to notice strange things happening. Propositions from extra-friendly young women and bribes for articles written on a particular topic begin to dog him. Topics from private conversations Mitch had with his family creep suspiciously into meetings with his employer. As he begins to unravel the mystery, Mitch discovers that there is more to the Liberty Group than meets the eye.

Myerholtz writes a crafty tale of an honest man wound in a web of intrigue and deception. Part of the author’s success is that he has created a realistic and likable main character. Mitch sounds like an everyday, honest Joe, a guy who loves his country, has a penchant for Buffalo wings, and is centered around his family and friends. But sometimes Mitch can seem a little too perfect. For example, when Mitch discovers the first bribe on his desk, there’s not a flicker of temptation or conflict, particularly when he has talked about sending a child to college or vacationing in the Greek Isles. Instead, Mitch reports it immediately to his editor and the newspaper’s lawyer.

Nonetheless, Myerholtz more than makes up for this by giving his character the knowledge to talk about little historical facts, such as why the elephant represents the GOP or what having a presidential czar really means. Sometimes, we even get to read his character’s columns or hear his conservative debates with others. While you may not agree with Mitch’s political beliefs, he frames his arguments in such a non-abrasive way that you wish there were more high-level conservative columnists like him.

Like John Grisham’s *The Firm*, Myerholtz’s *The Liberty Group* mixes action with a niche profession, namely, conservative commentary. It is an interesting, refreshing mix to what is sure to tempt fans of the thriller genre and leave them begging for more.

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