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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★★ THRILLER

The Network Convergence

Elisabeth Hesse
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September 11, 2001, changed the United States forever. Terrorism became a much larger and more realistic fear, and many people began to look to the government for reassurance and protection. From this tragedy came the Department of Homeland Security, and the idea that the government needs to engage in “black ops” to protect its citizens.

This is the climate in which Dr. Elisabeth Hesse has set *The Network: Convergence*. The story follows two female secret agents, Anya Factor and Charlotte Lawson. Early in the book, the two are sent to India to assassinate a member of the British parliament named Alastair Lane, who has been selling secrets to the enemy. At some point during the operation, their cover is blown and they end up fleeing the country, Anya with a serious gunshot wound. When they reach the safety of a military hospital in DC, they run into another major snafu. The surgical intern on staff is Jeremias Geist, who was once in love with Anya Factor (albeit, when she was known by a different name). He unknowingly blows her cover by providing the hospital with her real identity, Ariadne Jin. As Ariadne fights first for her life, and then to reconcile with Jeremias, Charlotte tries to figure out how their cover was blown, and who was purchasing information from Lane.

Convergence is a fast-paced, well-constructed, highly-entertaining story. The author does an excellent job of weaving together many strands in a complex plot, offering the reader a little bit of everything: action, intrigue, politics, betrayal, and romance.

Much of the book takes place in the hospital where Ariadne is recovering. The author’s background, as an MD, is clearly visible in passages filled with medical jargon. For example, when Ariadne arrives at the hospital, Hesse writes, “She has a tension pneumo, and that alone could kill her if we don’t move on it. While they’re getting the needle ready, can we get a chest x-ray? And I want two units of O neg hung stat, and get a type and cross.” Though some of the terminology may be difficult for readers to navigate, it lends a great deal of credibility to the writing.

Hesse has created a very intriguing world in *The Network*. The “convergence” is ultimately about Ariadne and Jeremias, and the reader will be completely satisfied with the conclusion of their story. The author clearly intends to share other stories about the network in future books, and the reader will no doubt read the last page of *Convergence*, looking forward to whatever the author shares next.

CATHERINE REED-THURESON (November 28, 2012)

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