

The Rule of Equity

Jonathan Neville

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Neville captures character motivations through engaging dialogue and a roller-coaster plot.

An intelligent, fast-paced thriller and mystery novel, *The Rule of Equity*, by Jonathan Neville, is sure to grab readers and take them for an exciting ride that includes art, economics, and politics. This high-quality book has a superb plot and first-class writing, and it is sure to delight.

Main character Tom Madison is supposed to meet Kim, a high-level employee of the Federal Reserve and a former classmate, in New York City, though he wasn't told why. When she doesn't show up, he discovers she was murdered, and before he can even think about returning to California and his son, he receives a call asking him to fly to Washington, DC. Instead of Hyrum, his ex-wife's uncle and the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, he is met by the director of the FBI, who asks about Kim. He receives a coded voice message from Hyrum, asking Tom to work with his ex-wife to break the code. This is just the beginning of a journey that involves an art exhibit, American history, ancient Indian burial grounds, dirty government officials, and the plan for a better future.

Neville, an economist, lawyer, and college professor, has crafted a twisting, roller-coaster ride of a plot. He gives each of his characters a history, which adds to the depth of his well-developed protagonists and antagonists. Some of the backstory is revealed in a quick sentence or paragraph, such as dialogue: "Does the name Xi Lin sound familiar?' ... 'Should it?' 'He was another of your classmates.'" Some of the characters' history is displayed through chapter-long flashbacks.

Neville excels at foreshadowing, which keeps the momentum going. For example, he writes the following at the end of a chapter, and then doesn't join back up with these characters until later: "Tom felt his jaw drop and the blood drain from his face. He hoped Porter didn't notice." The author can also capture strong feelings in just a few words: "They sat there, millions of volts of electricity passing between them, too much to let go of and too much to hold onto."

The book cover has an eye-catching background of water, the Washington Monument, and the Capitol building, depicting the book's political basis. Crisp and clear, the cover portrays the genre well. The back-cover text could have been shortened. There is also an image of a painting on the back cover, though it is dark and a little difficult to read.

An exciting thriller, *The Rule of Equity* traverses through history and mystery, with a side of economics and politics, and it is sure to please.

BETH VANHOUTEN (March 7, 2014)

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