**Clarion Review**

General

**The Terrorist**
Glen Aaron
Harun
BookSurge
978-1-4392-5938-2
Two Stars (out of Five)

In *The Terrorist*, author Harun explores the timely topic of Islamic jihad and terrorism from the viewpoint of young Middle Eastern men who have been approached to join a terrorist sleeper cell. The author, Harun (not to be confused with the prolific Harun Yahya) begins his story as the two young friends, students at King Abdullah University, are on holiday. They decide to check out a secret training camp that recruits boys from the nearby refugee camp. Their curiosity turns their little sightseeing trip into a life and death adventure.

Naively, they enter the training camp and are immediately taken captive and forced to participate in a rigorous indoctrination program. Yazid, an academic rather than an athlete, fails to perform, is tortured repeatedly, and realizes that the terrorists will kill him. Ahmad succeeds in the training process long enough to find a way for both boys to escape. In a surprising twist, Ahmad becomes a terrorist warrior against the United States, while Yazid, after his recovery from torture and beatings, goes to America and begins classes at Columbia University in New York. There he meets a blacklisted CIA agent, the beautiful and feisty Cyra. When Ahmad shows up on his doorstep, Yazid is once again pulled into the terrorist group.

The potential for an exciting and enlightening read quickly evaporates due to amateur mistakes, spell check errors, and an omniscient narrator who tells everything (even what the dog thinks) rather than allowing the story to develop itself. This voice drones in a passive, banal monotone that delves only superficially into the stereotypical characters and their motivations. Out-of-character behavior fosters disbelief. For example, a friend in a bar gives a CIA agent buddy a round trip, all-expenses paid vacation to Dubai simply because the agent was bored. Sadly even exotic settings get short shrift. When describing the Atlantis in Dubai, one of the world’s most opulent and awe-inspiring architectural wonders, the author fails utterly. He

writes, “The water formation was of Chihuly glass. It jutted upward from beneath the floor and erupted into a mighty spout at its zenith, its height and weight defying physics, its color and light defying brilliance.”

Fortunately, the uneven writing becomes more animated when the CIA agent takes center stage. Some discussion of politics in the Middle East and the West may briefly catch a reader’s interest. But the lack of depth, details, facts, and crafting will disappoint even the most ardent lover of adventure fiction.