

White Monsoon

Scott Nelson

CreateSpace (Dec 25, 2011)

\$15.99 (444pp)

978-1-4681-4285-3

Scott Nelson uses the power of the drug trade to fuel *White Monsoon*. The volume contains two installments of his White Monsoon Trilogy: *Morphine Base* and *Pure Heroin*. The books are intertwined and denoted by headers on each page. The duplication of chapter numbers can be confusing to readers until they figure out *White Monsoon*'s structure.

The prologue, rich in conspiracy and danger, introduces readers to the heart of the drama and to some of the trilogy's key players: staff from the US Drug Enforcement Agency and drug company employees. It is here readers learn that a tracer, iodine-129, is put in opium crops in India. The clipped, cryptic dialogue of the prologue is meant to intrigue, but it may mystify some readers.

The trilogy's title is based on a code name used in the early 1990s by Libyan terrorists for their plot to flood the United States with strong, cheap heroin. *Morphine Base* follows the legal and illegal sides of the opium trade on a global scale. *Pure Heroin* follows the harrowing kidnapping of a computer programmer's daughter and son. Heroin itself weaves a path of destruction through the stories. It is almost as if the powerful chemical forces of opium and heroin are characters unto themselves.

Beginning with *Pure Heroin*, the second book, makes the reader feel off-kilter, but perhaps that's the author's plan. The list of characters in the prologue helps the reader sort out the action. The chapter headers, which give place, date, and time, also help orient readers. All the while, Nelson cleverly incorporates chemical formulas into the page headers.

The entangled and complex story lines are intriguing and the background information is deeply researched. Though the individual endings do complete their respective stories, they leave readers wanting an overall connection and resolution. Ideally, this will be supplied by the third book.

The foreword is written by former Nevada governor and Vietnam veteran Jim Gibbons, who helped Nelson with his research for *White Monsoon*.

This broad work will leave dedicated, action-loving readers longing for more.

MELISSA WUSKE (July 16, 2012)

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