ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

THRILLER

Within: A Medical Suspense Novel
Ben Scott Craig
CreateSpace
978-0-615-64328-1
Four Stars (out of Five)

Andy Stone is overwhelmed. His career as a reporter is in jeopardy, he is on the cusp of a new relationship, and he learns that his much-loved mother, Sarah, is once again struggling with cancer. Everything else in Andy's life is necessarily put on the back burner as he works together with his father and brother to try to save his mother's life.

Sarah Stone went through chemotherapy and radiation when she fought cancer in the past, so she and her family know that traditional treatment is not the answer. They become cautiously hopeful when they find their way to the secretive Blake Cancer Treatment Center, where they are amazed at the innovative and unorthodox approach to dealing with the disease. Not everyone is ready to embrace groundbreaking new treatments, however. Andy soon becomes wrapped up in an increasingly dangerous quest to bring a hopeful new cure to those who need it, despite the attempts of a powerful pharmaceutical company to stop it from coming to light.

Author Ben Scott Craig crafts an intriguing and thoughtful tale addressing the current approaches to cancer treatment. The resistance of drug companies in this scenario is easy to imagine, and the corporate one-size-fits-all mentality, as well as the humanity of some of the players in the pharmaceutical industry, is skillfully conveyed. It is clear that Craig has done his homework in researching cancer treatments, and readers are sure to be intrigued by the possibilities raised in the novel.

The beginning of *Within* introduces Andy and his family and explores the intricacies of their lives. The plot is well-paced, building suspense and anticipation as the stakes grow higher for everyone involved. Readers will be drawn into the compelling story line and will easily connect with the realistic characters as the tension mounts. Characterization is thorough and effective. Andy's brother, Jamie, is an artist specializing in complex glass sculptures, and the author capably draws parallels between Jamie's struggles as an artist and the struggles of others to overcome their own challenges.

Craig has a tendency to refer to characters by both first and last names, which can prove slightly distracting. The novel is mostly free of grammatical errors, although there are a few instances of incorrect word choices, such as "heard" for "herd" and "shuttered" for "shuddered." However, the strength of the story is such that most readers are unlikely to be bothered by the infrequent errors.

Ben Scott Craig has crafted a thought-provoking and suspenseful novel with engaging characters. Readers will be intrigued by the unique and innovative ideas the book explores and invested in the fates of the main players. Moving and compelling, *Within* is an impressive debut by a talented writer.

Jeannine Chartier Hanscom