

“Ominous buildup” . . . “apocalyptic climax.”

“Terrorists descend on Arizona in search of a holy relic in an overambitious thriller that traverses its way through the centuries.

When swarthy men case her family’s home, [and] attempt to set off a Pespi-can bomb . . . , Tucson teen Madeline Anthony-Pratt wonders why Could it have something to do with simultaneous Islamist uprisings in Iraq and Saudi Arabia? Or with her sister Brittany’s efforts to get her Muslim boyfriend released from Guantanamo Bay? Or, perhaps, with a mysterious pendant that has been in the family for generations, which . . . contains a black stone[.] . . . Cargill (*To Follow the Goddess*, 1991, etc.) fills in centuries of the titular rock’s back story, replete with . . . details of the Arab assassins sent to retrieve it and the clued-in alarmists who vainly attempt to key in the authorities to the menace they pose. One of the book’s . . . bright spots is Cargill’s portrait of a bluff, rational Julius Caesar cheerfully tuning out his aide’s nagging about the black stone. . . . Cargill’s depiction of the age-old Arab menace . . . lead[s] to an . . . argument against American withdrawal from Iraq . . . developed with briefs declaring congressional attempts to withhold war funding as unconstitutional. Thinly disguised caricatures of Hillary Clinton and Al Gore are ridiculed, while a John McCain-esque Arizona senator saves the day. . . .”

Kirkus Discoveries

There is a plot to eradicate the United States of America, a plot so devastating it makes 9/11 seem like a lab experiment. The plot is orchestrated by the mastermind behind it all, Osama Bin Laden, and it just happens to be two thousand years in the making. . . . Meticulously constructed.

Fore Word Clarion Review

On August 5, 1973, two gunmen from the Palestinian terrorist group Black September attacked passengers bound for New York on a TWA flight at the Athens Airport, using machine guns and grenades. Three Americans died and 55 were wounded. The gunmen held 35 passengers hostage for more than two hours before surrendering to police.

Little more than three months earlier, author Linda Cargill had visited with a group of seniors from her suburban Pittsburgh high school, using the same airport. Cargill, the author of *The Black Stone*, a thriller about the next 9/11 appearing this Spring, recalls, “It could have been me. One of the Americans who died was a teenage girl. She was only sixteen years old. I was eighteen at the time. I immediately identified with her. That was one of the reasons I wrote the novel.”

Cargill uses this near brush with terrorists to good effect in *The Black Stone*. In scenes reminiscent of Alfred Hitcock, she weaves a masterfully suspenseful tale that spans two thousand years and moves from Arizona to Athens to Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Michael Hempstead, *book-forum.com*