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INCEPTIO (Roma Nova Thriller Series Book 1)



Synopsis

"A must read for fans of Manda Scott and Kate Mosse" — Lisa Redmond, Madwoman in the Attic blog
INCEPTIO plunges you into a 21st century Roman world. Apart from kidnapping, heartache and a close encounter with Latin grammar, New Yorker Karen Brown must contend with a fascinating Praetorian elite forces officer. Oh, and a crazy killer pursuing her for a very personal reason. Karen flees to her dead mother's homeland, Roma Nova, the last remnant of the Roman Empire. Founded sixteen hundred years ago by Roman exiles and now ruled by women, it gives Karen safety and a ready-made family — but at a price. In this adventure thriller set in an alternative timeline, Karen grows from a girl anybody might know into a strong female character not only intent on staying alive but also on finding out why the killer is hunting her. A coming of age story, where an ordinary girl discovers there is a great deal more lying under her mundane existence, but also lethal danger. At what stage does she stop running from it?"
"The Hunger Games meets Lindsey Davis's Roman detective Falco." — B.R.A.G. Medallion honoree — shortlisted for the 2013 International Rubery Book Award — finalist in 2014 Writing Magazine Self-Published Book of the Year

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Excellent alternative history with an intriguing take on (reimagining of) gender roles. These books are so good that I bought them one after another over a weekend and read them back to back. There are many novels that take as their starting point the assumption that a major historical event turned out differently: The South won the US Civil War, Hitler conquered Europe and kept it, the Spanish bested Drake or Napoleon won at Waterloo. Alison Morton's four Nova Roma books take a different path. Instead of a different outcome, Ms. Morton imagines what happened if a culture survived. The idea: A small corner of the Roman Empire survived, keeping some of the culture and religion of Rome and Latin! Alive into the twentieth century, while the country itself Nova Roma had to change to accommodate technological changes. Like Switzerland, Nova Roma has never been conquered. Morton takes practices that were alive during Roman times, such as Senators having clients, and imagines how those practices morphed in almost 2,000 years. There is a further twist, a twist that makes the books so imaginative. Unlike Switzerland, a patriarchal society, Nova Roma is a matriarchy, albeit a modern one. So what is excellent about the books?

1. Use of history. Ms. Morton has thought out how today would be different if Nova Roma existed for the past 2000 years. BUT, this history is dropped into the plot in frozen blocks; instead, only when relevant is it mentioned.
2. Use of history. As far as I can determine or remember from my history and years of Latin, the little details of society then are accurate. This makes it so easy to accept Ms. Morton's recreation of them in modern form. No "willing suspension of disbelief" is required.
3. Plot. Well thought through. Each book has a natural conclusion (no cliffhangers), while creating the beginnings of events that will form the plots for the next books.
4. Characters. I am a fan of strong women and women with "agency". The women have the ability to make things happen rather than respond to events. It is also the ability to learn from mistakes.
5. Complicated personal relationship(s). There is a romance here, in addition to mystery and suspense. The romance is far from linear.

What didn't I like? I think that the female lead, Carina Mitela, should have made a different romantic choice. However, I am male, and I tend to be harder on male characters than I gather female readers are. My standard disclaimer: I purchase the books, I don't know the author and I

wasn't asked to review them. PS No Latin declensions are required.

Ms Morton has written a well-plotted and intriguing story, set in the fictitious state of Roma Nova. Through tantalising glimpses, the reader builds his/her own vision of this little country, a remnant of the Roman Empire now ruled by women. Personally, I found Roma Nova one of the more interesting aspects of the novel, as was the concept of a civilisation constructed round women rather than men. Likewise, the brief insight into the Eastern United States and its history left me wishing for more. Should Ms Morton publish a companion piece along the lines of "Welcome to Roma Nova", I would be very tempted to buy it! Otherwise, *Inceptio* is very much an adrenaline spiked action/thriller, starring capable and gutsy Karen Brown, soon to be Carina Mitela. The plot is well-constructed and tumbles along at a most satisfying speed - but there are moments when the pace drops, such as when the bad guy resurfaces like for like the fifth time. Personally, I think the novel would have gone from "very good" to "excellent" had more time been spent on developing the non-action aspects of the story, including Carina's relationship with Conrad and Aurelia. Written in first person, *Inceptio* gives plenty of insight into Carina and how she thinks/reacts. Ms Morton provides a good back story, making it easy for the reader to accept just how easily Carina embraces her new life and family in Roma Nova. The novel contains some third person passages, mainly to allow the borderline insane bad guy to explain his behaviour. It would have been interesting to have some of those third person passages dedicated to Conrad, thereby making him more accessible to the reader. Having said that, Ms Morton succeeds in delivering a tight, well-written story with a strong first person narrative and enough action to keep me up and reading well after my bedtime.

A great novel is the story of a worthy character. So it is from the beginning of "*Inceptio*." You will meet Karen Brown and begin to watch her transformation into her natural self. An identity is revealed of which, at the onset, she knows nothing. The revelation arrives accompanied by a deadly danger. Alison Morton's launch of her alternate history series will immerse you in an intriguing realm. The matrilineal state of Roma Nova draws the reader into its divergence built through Morton's excellent visuals. Character and setting development is distinct and effective, and the result for her reader is an engrossing world one may slip into with ease. Karen/Carina herself is a vision of strength, one meant to find her way home. Able to meet challenge after challenge, Carina's heritage, once discovered and embraced, sends her on a journey of service fitting for a warrior and a noble. The story unfolds largely, though not exclusively, from her point of view and highlights her inherent ability to take advantage of a woman's natural resilience. This initial

title&f&ç& ã ã ã very well written, edited and presented&f&ç& ã ã ã will introduce you to a world you may find yourself wishing existed. It will certainly leave you ready to discover what lies ahead.

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