

KIRKUS REVIEWS

TITLE INFORMATION

FOOL'S RETURN

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CreateSpace (190 pp.)

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BOOK REVIEW

A compelling mystery/adventure about past lives and cutting-edge technology, set on the coast of Maine.

Gabrielle's life has plateaued: Her marriage is merely functional, and her career at a venture capital firm is at a standstill, with no promotion in sight. When her boss sends her to Castine, Maine, to see his stepdaughter Reagan's invention, she believes it will be a quick trip. Then Gabrielle meets Fiona, an eccentric woman who startles her with a disturbing tarot card reading. Shaken, she goes to see Reagan's new type of battery, and after watching it fail, she meets Alexander, a handsome man who feels drawn to her energy. They make plans for lunch the next day, and after Gabrielle settles in at a bed-and-breakfast, she dreams of Jullian VanDee, a woman who died in Castine while waiting for her lover to come home. When Fiona suggests that Gabrielle may be carrying around past lives with unfinished business, her connection to Jullian begins to haunt her. Lunch with Alexander confirms their mysterious, magnetic attraction, and, later, car trouble keeps Gabrielle in Castine. Reagan calls Gabrielle to try to convince her that the powerful battery works, and soon the two women begin to wonder if there's foul play keeping the invention from the world. The question of Gabrielle's past lives becomes a subplot as she delves into the mystery of who's been tampering with Reagan's invention. However, her dreams of Jullian VanDee grow stronger, as does her attraction to Alexander, despite the secrets she learns about him. It's deeply refreshing to read about two smart women plotting and scheming about science instead of romance, and the story's conclusion delivers on this empowering premise. Some readers may dislike the technical language regarding Reagan's invention ("The fluid...didn't have the stabilizing additives I developed. Without them, the materials I use in the anodes become too volatile"), but it adds authenticity to the story, even if a few convenient plot twists may raise eyebrows. Gabrielle and Alexander's deep connection is unfortunately two-dimensional, as is Gabrielle's perfunctory marriage, and although the supernatural element of the story is intriguing, it never reaches its full potential. That said, this is a smart adventure with strong messages about altruism, big dreams and the influence of fate.

Readers looking for a heroine with brains and beauty will enjoy following Gabrielle's appealing journey.