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Elisabeth Rees

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Elisabeth Rees : Covert Cargo (Navy SEAL Defenders) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Covert Cargo (Navy SEAL Defenders):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining ReadBy TonyaI enjoyed reading this book, for the most part. The characters were relatively believable. However, I was more than a little aggravated by the sheer stupidity displayed, repeatedly, by the main character.I, like almost every other person alive, have been hurt by loving someone who was less than worthy. But I never went to this extreme.Nevertheless I would still recommend this book.5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Covert CargoBy QueenimariI enjoyed this book and read through it quickly. The end was a little different than most Love Inspired, and for the most part enjoyable. The author did a good job portraying the heroine's isolated lifestyle and how it impacted her. Actually it was depicted so well at some points, that I found the sudden change in her at the end a little surprising, especially since God didn't seem to have been identified as the one to heal her of past hurts (unless I missed that part).From a Christian romance standpoint, I feel a little disappointed. It seemed to me that there were several points at which God's goodness could really have been showcased - there were plenty of opportunities - but then He was left out and the opportunity passed. I kept thinking that maybe the author was building the heroine up for a great life-changing epiphany by having an encounter with God and His Holy Spirit - even by having the isolated heroine do something as simple as attend church and receive inner healing (that would have been a big deal for her character). But it never quite happened.Honestly there were a couple places where I was a bit "put off" and aggravated when I felt that a Bible verse was taken out of context and glory was taken from God and given to a person. Example: Towards the end, one of the lead characters (hero or heroine) makes a reference that the other one has been their refuge and fortress. What??? That is God's place. When a person puts a human in that spot, lookout. Disappointment and hurt lies ahead. But I definitely don't want to see that in a Christian book.Was the book a quick and enjoyable read? Yes. Would I read this author again? Yes. Was this a great book? No. Did the book have the potential to be great? Yes. Unfortunately, there were too many missed opportunities where God was mentioned but not given the opportunity to reveal Himself. Jesus is our close, intimate friend who sticks closer than a brother. His Holy Spirit lives in us and reveals to us the mysteries of the kingdom of God. He captured my heart long ago and holds it precious in His hands, teaching me and loving me along life's journey. And you know what? I have His heart too. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent.By BARBARA B.Really enjoyed the characters and the setting..look forward to another "Navy Seal Defenders" book. This is my first book by Elisabeth Rees. Will surely be reading more.

Covert Cargo by Elisabeth Rees released on Mar 1, 2016 is available now for purchase.

About the Author Elisabeth was raised as one of four sisters in the idyllic Welsh border town of Hay-on-Wye, where her father was the parish Vicar. She developed a love of romantic literature as a young girl and often dreamed of becoming a writer. After a very unfulfilling career in information technology, Elisabeth began to write for Harlequin Mills and Boon, and now writes full time from her home in West Wales. For more information visit www.elisabethrees.com Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

The Return to Grace Lighthouse was under familiar attack. A wailing wind whipped around the tower and rattled the windows of the cozy keeper's cottage. Beth Forrester put another log on the fire of her unique home and pulled her dog, Ted, away from the front door, where he whined and scratched, seemingly eager to go out into the wild, dark night. Ted reluctantly walked toward the hearth, stopping to sniff the cracked remains of an old rowboat that were drying next to the warmth of the flames. The wreck had washed up on the beach a couple of weeks back, broken into two pieces but with the hull intact. After establishing that no one had claimed it, Beth had asked a local fisherman to help her bring the bulky hull inside, where it now lay, ridding itself of the salt water that had seeped into its wooden bones. Beth was in the process of turning the wreck into a bed frame; sanding it down, repairing it, lovingly turning the broken wood into something new and beautiful. Then it would be sold for enough money to keep her going for another couple of months. The pieces of driftwood that washed up on the shore were treasures to her, and she turned them into cabinets, tables, chairs, beds and works of art. Her profession suited her reclusive lifestyle perfectly. This remote lighthouse, standing at the edge of the town of Bracelet Bay in Northern California, had become her sanctuary, her hideaway from the world. She needed nobody and nobody needed her. A noise outside caught her attention; a high-pitched wailing sound being carried in waves on the wind. Her dog instantly ran back to the door to resume scraping the wood with his paws. The wailing on the other side of the door grew louder. Beth shook her head, almost disbelieving what she was hearing. "No," she said to herself. "Can that really be what I think it is?" She looked at Ted. "Is there a child out there?" Almost as if he understood her question, Ted barked and ran in circles, clearly agitated. Beth rushed to the closet and pulled on her raincoat, tucking her long brown hair into the hood and drawing it tight around her face. Then she took a flashlight from the shelf and sank her feet into the rain boots she always kept on the mat. The wind snatched the breath right from Beth's mouth when she opened the front door, and she shone the flashlight into a sheet of rain hammering onto the long stretch of grass that grew on the cliff overlooking the bay. The beam of light picked out a tiny figure emerging from the gloom, arms flailing, bare-skinned and soaking wet. It was a child of probably no more than seven or eight, wearing just shorts and a T-shirt, running barefoot. And there was a look of absolute terror on his face. Ted raced past Beth's legs, almost knocking her off balance, and she steadied herself on the frame of the door. Then she took off running, following Ted's white paws streaking across the grass. Her dog reached the child in just a few seconds and the boy fell on his behind, obviously startled by the appearance of a big, shaggy dog looming out of the dark night. When Beth caught up with him, she put the flashlight on the ground and reached out to pick up the child, but he scrambled away, crying out in a language that she didn't understand. "It's okay," she said, taking hold of Ted's collar to keep him back. "We won't hurt you." She looked at the boy's strange appearance, dressed for a summer's day rather than a stormy November night. Squatting to the wet grass and holding a hand out to him, she said, "Where did you come from, sweetheart?" Another voice floated through the rain-soaked air. This one was deeper, older and louder, belonging to a man shouting words in a foreign language. He sounded angry. When the child heard the voice, he leaped to his feet and took her hand, suddenly eager to go with her. "Vamos," he said, pointing to her lighthouse. "Faro." She recognized the words as Spanish. When Beth hesitated, the child let go of her hand to start running to her lighthouse, his bare feet splashing on the sodden grass. The older man then appeared from the darkness, dressed in black, agitated and aggressive, waving a knife through the air. "Leave the boy alone," he shouted in heavily accented English. "He is mine." The boy called out as he ran, "El es un hombre malo," and Beth delved into the recesses of her mind to dig up her high school Spanish. She realized with horror the translation of these words: he is a bad man. The child was warning her. She turned on her heel and started running, calling for Ted to follow. She concentrated on heading for the light shining from the window of her cottage. "Please, Lord," she prayed out loud. "Help us." The boy reached her front door and pushed it open, going inside with Ted. He left the door open behind him, and a shaft of light flowed out onto the grass, giving her a path to follow. She picked up her pace and threw herself into her home, trying to slam the door shut behind her, but she was too late. The man's fingers curled around the door frame and gripped tight. Beth pushed with all her strength, as the child stood shivering on her Oriental rug, droplets of rain falling from his black hair. Beth was tall and strong, but she sensed that her power would not be enough to hold back the danger. "Give me the child," the man yelled. Then the door was shoved with such force that Beth was knocked clean off her feet and sent crashing to the floor. The door burst wide-open, and the man stood over her, breathing hard, his big hulking frame dripping wet. The boy screamed and ran to the edge of the living room, shouting in Spanish. Beth jumped to her feet and raced to the child while Ted began growling, standing between her and the danger. The man swiped his blade at Ted, but her dog dodged out of the way. Then the attacker suddenly stopped and turned his head to the old rowboat drying next to the fire. "Where did you get this?" he shouted. "This boat is not yours." He walked to the broken vessel and jabbed the blade of his knife into the wood of the hull and twisted. The wood seemed to almost squeal, and splinters flew into the air. The child clung to the hem of Beth's raincoat, cowering behind her.

The door leading into the lighthouse tower was just to her right. The tower had been decommissioned many years ago, and she rarely went inside, but she knew that the lantern room had heavy-duty bolts to secure the door from the inside. They would be safe there. With one hand, she made a grab for the child's fingers, and with the other, she snatched her cell from the table. Then she darted to the door, flung it open and plunged into the cool darkness of the tower's circular base. She heard Ted snapping and growling in the cottage, preventing the man from following, but she knew it would be temporary. Ted was a giant schnauzer, large and imposing, but he was old and his teeth were worn. She hated leaving her dog to fend for himself, but the child had to come first. Beth looked up at the winding, spiral staircase, gripped the boy's hand in her own and began climbing for her life. Dillon Randall scanned the sea from the Bracelet Bay Coast Guard Station with binoculars, trying to seek out any vessels that might be in need of assistance. The storm had not been forecast, so any boats caught in the swell would be in serious trouble. As a Navy SEAL, Dillon had welcomed the opportunity to serve a mission for the US Department of Homeland Security, and he had been placed in Bracelet Bay's small coast guard station as the new captain. Nobody in the base had any reason to suspect he was working undercover, trying to crack the largest people-trafficking cartel that the state had ever known. Somewhere along this beautiful stretch of Californian coastline, hundreds of people from South America were continually being crammed into small boats and illegally smuggled into the US. And they had the coast guard chasing their tails trying to capture them. A young seaman by the name of Carl Holden entered the room, carrying a notepad. "Sir," he said with a note of urgency in his voice. "The police have asked us to respond to a 9-1-1 call they just received from Beth Forrester, who lives at the old Return to Grace Lighthouse. She says she found a child wandering by her home and is now protecting him from a man who's threatening them. The child only speaks Spanish, so I'm thinking he could be one of the trafficked migrants. The police station is more than twenty minutes away, but we can be there in five." Dillon put down his binoculars. He picked up the keys for the coast guard truck and tossed them to Carl. "Let's go. You drive." In no time, the men were racing toward the lighthouse, siren blaring. They splashed through the streets, lined with touristy, trinket shops. The summer trade in Bracelet Bay had died away and the town was shutting up for winter. Only the restaurants remained open, bright and inviting on this wild night. "You really should check out the Salty Dog," Carl said as they passed a large wooden building, painted bright red. The sign hanging above the door swung on its hinges, showing a fisherman casting a line from a boat. Carl flashed a smile. "They got the best seafood in town." Dillon nodded in response. He didn't much feel like talking. He wanted to reach the lighthouse quickly and assess the situation. Could this child be one of the many people who were being trafficked along the Californian coastline from South America? People who were sold a dream of a better life only to find themselves working illegally for a pittance, kept hidden under the radar, denied access to education or health care services. The smuggling cartel always seemed to be one step ahead of the coast guard, almost as if they had insider knowledge. When it became apparent that somebody at the station might be providing the traffickers with safe passage, Dillon was drafted in to take charge of the operation. With a staff of just ten, he couldn't afford to trust anybody, not even Carl. "You don't say much, do you, Captain?" Carl said, leaving the lights of the town behind them and heading along the curved coastal road, which came to a dead end at the lighthouse. The tower was now clearly visible, perched atop a cliff that hung over the bay; a cliff that looked to have been gradually eroded away by the relentless crashing waves. "I don't need to say much," Dillon replied, glancing in Carl's direction, "when you're here to do all the talking." Carl laughed. "I've been told I talk a lot," he said. "But I'm trying to rein it in." Dillon focused on watching the lighthouse. Its distinctive red and white stripes had the appearance of a candy cane, while the stone cottage was pure white. It had stood overlooking the town for well over a hundred years and would probably stand for another hundred more. But it was a remote and unforgiving place to live, and Dillon began to wonder about the woman who inhabited the old place. What would cause someone to embrace such a solitary life? Carl seemed to read his mind. "Miss Forrester is a reclusive lady," he said, pulling into a graveled lot next to the cottage where a small Volkswagen was parked. "She got jilted at the altar a few years back. She never got over it." Dillon pulled out his gun. "As long as she and the child are safe, that's all that matters." The red and blue flashes from the roof of the truck bounced all the way up the tower and reflected off the Fresnel lenses in the lantern room. Dillon exited the truck and looked up at the tower. The wind immediately yanked down the hood on his waterproof coat, and the rain soaked into his thick, curly hair, snaking down his scalp and into his collar. "There's a woman in the lantern room," he said to Carl, seeing the silhouette of a female highlighted against the dark sky. "Stay behind me and keep close." Carl took out his gun and together they approached the front door of the keeper's cottage. There was a driftwood sign above the door with Return to Grace carved upon it, smooth and weather-worn from years of exposure to the elements. As Dillon turned the handle, he felt a shiver of trepidation. It had been many years since he was on an active mission, and the last assignment he had accomplished left a bittersweet taste in his mouth. Along with his SEAL comrades, Dillon had successfully eliminated a terrorist group in Afghanistan four years previously, but he had failed to protect a group of teachers desperately seeking a way of escape from their besieged town. Local insurgents had been targeting schools that dared to provide an education to young girls, and the SEALs had come across a building that had been destroyed by militants. Those teachers who survived the attack were living on borrowed time, having heard that more militants from the feared group were preparing to come back and finish the job. Dillon had promised to return and help them escape to Pakistan.

as soon as the SEAL mission was complete. But that was before he met Aziza. On his return journey to the town, he met a young woman who was fleeing a death sentence handed down by a sharia court. Finding Aziza wandering on a desert plain forced him to make a choice: protect her or protect the teachers. He made the only choice he could. It took him three days to deliver Aziza to a women's refuge in Kabul, and by the time he made it back to the town, the teachers had vanished. He never knew what happened to them. That one distraction had probably cost them their lives. While he saved Aziza's life, he sacrificed theirs. This mission was his chance to make amends. This time, he could save everyone. The door of the cottage opened straight into the living room, and a large black dog stood in front of them barking furiously. Dillon was unfazed. He held one hand down to the dog's nose and let him sniff, talking softly all the while. The animal responded well, licking Dillon's hand and calming down quickly.

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