

# KIRKUS REVIEWS

## TITLE INFORMATION

### **THE KURDISH WOMAN**

Luis Rousset

AuthorHouse (326 pp.)

\$34.99 hardcover, \$20.99 paperback, \$2.99 e-book

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## BOOK REVIEW

Rousset presents a modern-day tale of star-crossed lovers that features mystery, action, and espionage.

Readers first meet 24-year-old West Point graduate John Davenport in 2004 on a flight to Ankara, Turkey, to visit his parents alongside his sister, Abby. He comes from a long line of military men and now works as an infantry officer at North Carolina's Fort Bragg. While in Ankara, John meets Arya Sintesi, the daughter of a Turkish politician; she says that her friends call her Alice, and John soon nicknames her Lisa. Despite Arya's engagement to Turkish diplomat Homer Barsani, she and John embark on a torrid love affair. After he returns to America, Arya discovers she's pregnant but agrees to marry Homer after he vows to raise the baby as his own. Years pass as Arya becomes an agent for the Turkish secret service and embarks on dangerous missions, while John's military career blossoms as he's tasked with increasingly important roles, including diplomatic security service for the U.S. Secretary of State and going undercover in Jordan. Their separate lives intertwine once again when John discovers that Arya has disappeared during an operation in Syria, and he goes on a daring rescue mission to find her. Rousset's tale offers readers compelling military and political machinations. However, stilted dialogue and a tendency to state characters' feelings instead of showing them through action are problematic; at one point, for example, John's father awkwardly explains why a relationship between John and Arya would be difficult: "First, the differences between you are enormous. We are Christians, and they are Muslims. Aside from that, their customs, habits, and values are so different from ours." Some dialogue is offensive, as well, as when John refuses to objectify a woman's body and his fellow soldier asks, in a moment played for laughs, "What's the matter with you, John? You are not gay, I expect." These instances stand in stark contrast, however, to the book's nuanced, sensitive portrayal of Arya's PTSD and its knowledgeable take on Middle Eastern politics.

An action-packed, if unevenly executed, political thriller.