

## *Calamity At The Devil's Door*

W. Thomas Richards

Vantage Press, Inc., New York, New York, hardcover, (348p)

ISBN: 0-533-14518-X

"Calamity at the Devil's Door," a sequel to W. Thomas Richard's "The Amazon Incident," is every bit as pounding and exciting a thriller as its predecessor. Featuring many of the same characters as "The Amazon Incident," this novel too sees the bold Lewine family take on daunting odds and imposing challenges to come out on top.

In a prologue set in Afghanistan, the dangerous drug lord Pedro Fernando breaks free of his captors with the single-minded intent of gaining revenge on the Lewines. "His sole desire," as Senator-turned-President Domingo says of Fernando, "is to make sure that I, along with the entire Lewine family, am obliterated from this planet."

The story then moves on to the United States, where Senator Domingo, a hero in "The Amazon Incident," has just won the Presidential elections. The three Lewine daredevils - Madeline, Jessica and Rhiannon - have enrolled in the ROTC, the Annapolis Naval Academy and the Air Force Academy respectively, and they go on to rise rapidly to assignments of captain, commander and major. Fernando, his hatred transferred to the United States itself, liaises with Osama bin Laden and Fidel Castro to hatch a terrorist plot.

That plot goes into operation at the Olympics in Tasmania, where President Domingo, his lady friend Camie, and the Lewines also happen to be; Camie, a member of the Lewine family, is a contestant in the figure skating event of the Olympics. Bin Laden and Fernando collude to kidnap a clutch of medal winners at the Olympics, near a skiing slope known ominously as the Devil's Door. Ten-year-old Trinity Lewine, who inadvertently stows away on the getaway boat, goes on to display classic Lewine spunk and leadership far beyond her age in helping to rescue the medallists. Meanwhile, enlisting the help of Admiral Samuel Bradley, the rest of the dynamic Lewine family swings into action, even as the prisoners are taken to Coco Island, from where the terrorists plan to launch a grand missile strike against the United States.

Richards invests his plot with multiple twists and turns, keeping the reader riveted to the chain of events and making each page a thrilling read. But he never compromises detail for pace; in fact, what makes "Calamity at the Devil's Door" so riveting is his ability to blend detail and action seamlessly. When Trinity and the medal winners are locked into the cargo hold of the getaway boat, for example, Richards takes care to describe the hold vividly - of how "the smell of the cubicle was so rank that they had all succumbed to motion sickness," and, later, of how "the stench of vomit and fish were overpowering." The details make "Calamity at the Devil's Door" a fascinating read, and as it hurtles toward its climax on Coco Island, few readers will be able to tear their eyes away from the book at all.

*BookWire Review*

*April 12, 2006*