

An Honorable Man - Paul Vidich

3 stars

An honourable tale

I had no great expectations of this book. In truth I acquired it from a book swapping website. I had heard the author and title on a book review site I follow and I think that's why I chose it to swap. I was pleasantly surprised when I read it. I found it concise, slow but nevertheless gripping. I thought it was very visual and can see it translating well to maybe the small screen rather than the big. I was reminded both of John Le Carre and Len Deighton as I read. I don't know whether that is a criticism or not! I suspect that those two writers did rather set the benchmark for spy material.

A US, Cold War spy fiction sounds almost clichéd but as Karen Joy Fowler says if we didn't have clichés there would be no need for the word at all! Maybe this is more old-fashioned than clichéd. Or maybe the writer very skilfully recreated that sinister atmosphere of constantly looking over your shoulder during that era in America. That subtle unease of everyday normality exploding into anything but. The constant mistrust of everyone including our, somewhat detached protagonist, George Mueller.

It is somewhat formulaic and characters seemed to be functional and lacked depth but that seemed to work within the intentions of this novel. It's the Cold War, these are spies. Maybe depth of a character is a luxury that cannot be afforded when you're suspicious of everyone.

My understanding is there is an imminent further publication featuring Mueller again. I won't rush to read it but I won't pass the opportunity by should the book pass my way.

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Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review