

The Lawn Job by Chuck Caruso

3 stars

So does the world owe Craig Collins a living?

Craig Collins is an ex-con and earns a sparse living by mowing lawns. He makes the mistake of ogling a client's wife and finds that not only does her husband fire him but so do all the neighbours. He therefore plans his revenge.

Collins is not the brightest of individuals. He mixes with lowlife and gets his sexual kicks from a dubious club and physical sex from a transgender whore (Juana) and fails to see that relationship for what it is – client/whore. Alfonso, one of his gym buddies, persuades him to ride shotgun on a sale of stolen arms to a quasi-military group. The signs are that this will not end well but Collins is unable to recognise this.

The characters are quite well-formed although none of them has any redeeming features at all. The only individual who shows a shred of humanity is the client who fires Collins. At least he did the decent thing by doing so in person and without any feeling of hostility. It is therefore impossible to identify with anyone in the novel and I couldn't help but have the feeling that they all deserved whatever was coming to them and I had no feeling of sympathy or concern which made the story feel very dead and lifeless.

The story ends rather like the Sopranos – with a blank, featureless page – although, unlike The Sopranos, no-one gives a damn. The world would probably be a better place without any of these people.

The cover describes the book as “a wicked, sexy crime thriller”. Wicked it might be. Sexy it is not – nor is it a thriller. It hardly raised any pulses for any reason in this household. Despite which it's a reasonable read and one to take on holiday and, having read it by the pool, leave at the hotel.

mr zorg

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.