

The Tanzania Conspiracy by Mario Bolduc

3 stars

A Tale of Two Continents

Max O'Brien is an unlikely hero as he is a con man. This is the third novel by Mario Bolduc featuring O'Brien. All were originally written in French, and this novel was translated by Jacob Homel. Translators often do not get a mention, but without them we would be restricted to English only books, thus missing the variety currently on offer to us.

The two continents referred to in the header are Africa and America – specifically Tanzania and North America (the USA and Canada). We follow O'Brien's exploits in Tanzania and in parallel get to know the family of the Huntsville prison executioner in the USA. How on earth can these two storylines come together?

O'Brien is basking in the glow of his latest successful con when he receives dreadful news about a former lover Valeria Michieka and her daughter Sophie. The two women are the driving force behind a charity devoted to the assistance of albinos who are persecuted and sought out by witchdoctors for their body parts which are said to protect their new owners. At around the same time the retired executioner, Albert Karensky, disappears from his accommodation where he was living, having walked out on his wife, Roselyn, sometime previously. The hunt is on in each place.

The purpose of a novel is principally to entertain. Frankly, this publication is not only a tale of two continents but is also a tale of two halves. The first half jumped around chronologically to the point where it was a distraction. The author also showed off his impeccable research into African political history. His knowledge would have been breathtaking had it not bored me senseless. This was not 5-star material, and I would not have persevered had I not been reviewing it. However, it was worth continuing as the second half was certainly a massive improvement once the two storylines converged and the timeline was stabilised. It was just a shame that a consistent quality was not maintained throughout.

mr zorg

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review