

Book Review: *A World I Never Made* by James LePore/Pew Reviews

April 22, 2009

A World I Never Made by James LePore

Pat Nolan is summoned to Paris to claim his estranged daughter's body. When he arrives, he is greeted by a suicide note in his daughter Megan's own handwriting, but something isn't quite right. His suspicions are confirmed when he goes to the morgue to claim the body. It's not Megan, although Pat tells the French detective assigned to the case that it is.

And so begins Pat Nolan's adventures in Europe in James LePore's debut novel, *A World I Never Made*. Nolan eventually comes clean to the detective, Catherine Laurence, and the two begin an investigation of their own, even though Laurence is officially on a leave of absence from the police force, and is disobeying her superiors in helping Nolan. What starts as an investigation into the disappearance and staged suicide of Megan Nolan turns into an international thriller involving Arabs, gypsies, the FBI, the Saudi Secret Police, the French DST, and international terrorists led by the enigmatic Falcon of Andalus, Rahman al-Zahra. *A World I Never Made* is an outstanding first novel, and a wonderful thriller. The story moves very quickly, almost to the point that the reader feels as if they'll miss something if

they put the book down even for a moment. The plot is believable; the story of a man trying to find his estranged daughter after being told she had committed suicide is perfectly reasonable, if a little extreme. The love affair between Pat and Catherine was obvious to me by page 21, but it works - especially when you learn more about both of them.

The characters are a bit cliched - detective Catherine Laurence is the loner detective who doesn't play by the books, working against a corrupt system to uncover the truth and help the man she loves. Pat Nolan is the father who was too busy for his kids, who blamed himself for his wife's death in childbirth, but who now wants to make amends and have a relationship with his daughter, who he knows hates him. Megan Nolan is the daughter who is doing everything she can to get her father to pay attention to her. She's also the fluff writer who decides to do more important things with her work, and the inquisitive reporter who puts herself in danger just to get the story. But thrillers often work quite well with characters that are less than deep, and this one works quite well.

I haven't mentioned the minor characters here — just don't get attached to any of them, because LePore certainly isn't. Most are there to do one specific task, and then are dead. This is actually a good thing in thrillers; the author establishes that he's willing to kill off characters that seem

like solid supporting characters, so the reader is in fear for the lives of all the characters in the book. It helps add to the suspense, and certainly kept me turning pages. I'm looking forward to James LePore's next work; this one was a gripping read that I would recommend to anyone.