

The Pact

JoAnn Fastoff

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Reviewed by Paige Lovitt for Reader Views (2/08)

Once again, JoAnn Fastoff has written a novel that you will find yourself unable to put down, in her latest continuation of the Howard Watson Intrigue series, “The Pact.” What I loved most about “The Pact” is that when a double homicide occurs, you immediately think you know who did it, you just don’t know why or how complicated matters truly are. Instead of a typical mystery where you try to find out who did it, in this case, you try to figure out how and why the other elements of the plot tie together. I love a book that makes you think, and in “The Pact,” I totally enjoyed discovering the answers as the story unfolded.

Events leading to a modern day double homicide actually begin 1966, in western Africa. As the story unfolds, Ms. Fastoff fills in the history of many of the characters. She shows how deep friendships were established among the main characters, especially four women. Their loyalty to each other is unwavering. I really appreciate the depth of her character development; this adds some great touches to the storyline.

Close female friends who have banded together to help one of their own against her abusive partner, become embroiled in the plot when a crime that they are trying to cover up is intricately tied into one committed by a hit man who has no desire to leave witnesses around to identify him. The FBI also becomes involved with the case. This is where Special Agent Howard Watson steps in. The women have alibis; however, they become very nervous as the evidence starts building against them. They have no clue how much danger they are in. Howard Watson does, and using modern technology, the FBI and Chicago P.D. try to gather their own clues before any more deaths occur.

Spousal abuse, illegal drug sales, illegal arms, murder, betrayal...the list goes on. “The Pact” has it all. It takes talent to put such a complete tale together in a relatively short novel. JoAnn Fastoff obviously has that talent. I read “The Pact” in one sitting and loved all of it. I look forward to Howard Watson’s next adventure.