ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

THRILLER

I Am American.
Hani Al Hadidi
AuthorHouse
978-1-4772-3131-9
Two Stars (out of Five)

Hani Al Hadidi wants Americans to know that people in other parts of the world do not always appreciate the behavior of the United States government, American businesses, or even individual Americans abroad. Actions have consequences, particularly in the Islamic world, warns a character in Al Hadidi's novel, *I am American*. "They are Muslims, true…but they also know the American way of responding to an enemy." That way is a violent one; a way of "squashing" whatever stands in their way. This new generation has given rise to "a different" and "most dangerous kind" of Muslim, as one of his characters explains, Muslims who "have grown up in the American way."

The book's protagonist, John Madison, is not a sympathetic character. He is painted as the quintessential ugly American, an incautious and selfish womanizer who, even when he is dating a beautiful woman, is "constantly seeking for an upgrade." Madison is neither a villain nor a hero; he is a flawed "everyman" who eventually comes to understand his own failings, and those of his country, in dealing with the Muslim world.

It takes Al Hadidi a long time to get to the point of this short book, and when he does it is delivered not through action but mostly in the form of a lecture. The author uses a gathering of senior oil workers at Madison's hotel room in Saudi Arabia to explain Islamic views on war and women; he explains how even educated, professionals in the Arab world feel that their people have become the target of the "United Countries of Slaughtering Muslims."

English does not appear to be Al Hadidi's native language, which, unfortunately, undermines the message and the story he is trying to deliver. While he does demonstrate a good knowledge of modern American life, the awkward structure of his sentences and the pacing of his prose are at times disruptive to the flow of the story.

Errors of style, language, and grammar, evident from the start, multiply in both frequency and gravity as the author begins to pick up the pace of the book. Some can be attributed to word confusion ("bars and planks that were dwindling from the men's hands," for

example), while others are more likely mistakes in proofreading (for example, “airporxing”). The number of typos, dropped words, and spelling mistakes increases.

Al Hadidi has a story he needs to tell and a point he wants to make and with the basic framework in place, collaboration with an editing professional would prove beneficial.

Mark McLaughlin