

Wet Work: A Dominick Candiotti Suspense Novel

Les Roberts

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Suspense and a series of flashbacks ups the excitement of this thriller.

Themes of confronting past demons and searching for identity exist at the heart of prolific writer Les Roberts's second thriller starring Dominick Candiotti, *Wet Work*. Recently out of the Vietnam War, Dominick finds little use for his skills as a paid sniper until he ends up as an assassin for the Brownstone Agency. After fourteen jobs, he feels a growing unease. Why has he been sent to kill certain targets? Can he leave the profession safely? From the moment he begins asking these questions, it becomes clear that the answers in this high-octane page-turner may cost him his life.

The author expertly builds suspense and keeps the ball rolling until the very end. The thrills work on two levels: the game of cat and mouse Dominick plays with his pursuers, and the way his past comes back to pursue him. The flashbacks throughout the book up the ante because they might be about Dominick's time in Vietnam, or one of his past kills. Either way, these violent scenes expertly show how past events have shaped his personality. As the protagonist ponders whether to leave the business, his melancholy and exhaustion make him seem more human than the other seemingly impervious hit men who populate such novels. The narrative trucks along, racking up blood and bodies at a fast clip.

Amongst the moments of mayhem exists a relationship between Dominick and Annette, a woman initially sent to dispatch him. From the beginning, when he meets her under a pseudonym while on vacation, all the way up to the end, their rapport takes unexpected directions. The author deftly keeps Annette in the story, even when she is not physically present, because Dominick carries her gun.

In this post-Vietnam world, where the character rents video tapes and plays cassettes, the mention of DVDs and cell phones is slightly confusing. Also, people refer to the main character by a code name, not his real name, until page seventy. Still, the minor technology and naming hiccups do not detract from the book's fast-paced suspense.

JILL ALLEN (Spring 2015)

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