

Book Review

Sacramento

September 2013

This Little Piggy

By M.G. Crisci

Orca Publishing Company, \$ 15.95, 381 pages



This is the compelling tale of Victor Martini, a New York ad man who falls victim to the promise of easy money that so often characterizes the shady side of Wall Street. At the beginning of the story, Victor is a devoted family man who is well respected by colleagues and clients alike. He has worked his way up from a kid on the streets to a major player in an advertising agency. He is living the American dream, but having it all isn't enough.

When a former employee invites him to join a new business proposal, Victor is reluctant – at first. Eventually, the idea of being a millionaire practically overnight lures him to ignore certain moral quandaries and jump aboard. From there, he becomes a snowball rolling down a hill, picking up speed and baggage as he descends lower and lower.

The changes start gradually: a little lie here, a misrepresentation there. Soon, however, the reader can only watch in horror as Victor's whole life unravels.

As you might expect, this book is not exactly fun to read, but it is fascinating. Crisci masterfully shows Victor's principles crumble bit by bit, so each step down is simply the logical follow-up to the previous one. The allure of money is shown to be so powerful that it clouds even the most levelheaded characters' judgment. No one is immune to its influence, or its consequences. Crisci's prose perfectly compliments the story; he describes everything in stark, realistic terms, making it impossible to misunderstand the ensuing downfall.

This Little Piggy offers an intimate portrayal of a good man's unraveling. As Victor slowly changes from upstanding to abhorrent, it is impossible to look away. Some of the scenes, such as Victor lying to Sandra or middle-aged men openly lusting after too-eager women, are cringe inducing, but they also perfectly document the dark side of the Street. This is no light-hearted read, but it is full of intense warnings and delicious schadenfreude. This is a tragedy in the classic sense, and it is exquisite.

