

***And Fire Came Down* by Emma Viskic**

Having read *Resurrection Bay* by Emma Viskic I was looking forward to her second novel in the Caleb Zelic crime series, *And Fire Came Down*. Her first novel won many awards, so a lot was expected.

Although it is a very good read I don't think it is as good as her first. This may be because the surprise of a profoundly deaf protagonist is no longer there. I also feel Viskic spends a lot of time telling us about Caleb's mental anguish and not quite enough showing us. It does, however, expand on the types of hurdles faced and overcome by a deaf private investigator. Sometimes a little too much. The first book had such a light touch.

And Fire Came Down re-introduces characters from the first book – Kat, Caleb's indigenous wife; Ant, his drug addicted brother; Frankie, his ex-cop, late 50s, alcoholic offsider and Sgt Ramsden who proved himself an honest cop and helped Caleb in the first book. In *And Fire Came Down* Sgt Ramsden plays only a minor role. After a major shock in *Resurrection Bay* I was pleased to see Frankie reappear even if it is tantalisingly brief and is obviously setting up a thread that will continue into the third book. We get to know Kat and Ant in much more detail and the difficulties in their relationships with Caleb. I liked the way these characters were portrayed and woven into the story. I never quite understood why Kat was leaving Caleb, but now I know a little more. Ant is strongly portrayed and the tragedy of his drug addiction is believable.

Caleb has been compared with Cliff Hardy and Jack Irish. I think he is better compared to Murray Whelan in the Shane Maloney series of crime novels. Both aren't all that good at being investigators and both have chaotic and often humorous adventures.

The indigenous population and white-supremacists are painted in detail, as is the country town of Resurrection Bay. Unlike *The Dry* by Jane Harper where the town and its surrounds form a character, in this book they are static background.

There are some series where you can happily pick up one novel, read it and know what is going on. This isn't the case with the Caleb Zelig books. I think you need to read the first before the second. This means that Viskic doesn't spend too much time plotting out the background from the previous book. Also there are plot lines that must continue into the next book for them to be fully realised.

The ending reminded me of an Agatha Christie novel where all the threads are pulled together and tied in a neat and unlikely bow. I just didn't believe it!

But, even with these faults I would recommend it to a friend.