



The Loyal Servant

Eva Hudson

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Imagine for a moment: you're a mother of three and conscientious government employee, keeping your head down, trying to avoid the latest round of lay-offs, when you discover the schools minister slumped over his desk. Whiskey bottle and scattered pills lying next to his lifeless body tell their own story.

But you know for a fact the minister wouldn't take his own life. What do you do? Kick up a stink and risk losing your job? Or pretend nothing is wrong?

For loyal servant Caroline Barber, there is only one option. When her awkward questions result in the disappearance of crucial evidence from the minister's office, she is compelled to dig deeper.

The corruption she uncovers is scandalous enough to topple the government. But now she's raised her head above the parapet she has attracted the attention of powerful adversaries.

Way out of her depth and risking the safety of her family, will Caroline get the chance to blow the whistle? Or will her enemies silence her for good?

The Loyal Servant Details

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Author : Eva Hudson

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From Reader Review The Loyal Servant for online ebook

Leslie says

I guess I entirely missed the boat on this. I thought the plot dragged on endlessly. Could not bring myself to finish it and I read everything. The plot lines were very good but I could not stay with it.

Judith Stewart says

Lost interest within the first 3 chapters. Maybe I will go back to it once I've read through the rest of my books.

Beth says

Ugh.

Northern Light says

When Caroline, a civil servant in the Department of Education, finds the minister dead in his office it starts her on a quest to find the truth. The official verdict is suicide which is confirmed by the note left but Caroline isn't convinced.

She manages to get a reporter interested and together they attempt to uncover what really is happening in the Academies division. Caroline's home life is disintegrating around her and at times her worlds collide.

I really enjoyed this book which is very topical with the current controversy over Academies so reads as very believable in places. I really liked the character of her mother who at every chance is taking a very public stance.

There were also a few side issues which didn't always add to the story and the problems with her teenage son didn't really fit in well.

On the whole though a well written story which keeps you guessing right to the end and makes you think whether you really ever know someone else.

Lynda Kelly says

Oh dear.....she lost me at 15% in when it turned into slapstick.....it just got daft and was enough for me,

I'm afraid.

I was shocked to see this, too-"I'm so glad your home"...that's a big ouch. A sedan was mentioned at one point too which I thought strange as we're not in America. Then at one point it got silly with her offering WAY too much information to her boss (although speechmarks were dropped there as well). It continued to where we were at a protest and there's where the comedic element came in with a walking stick knocking off a policeman's helmet and I just glazed over.

As other reviewers had pointed out it was quite confusing as well. I was struggling in places and really wasn't enjoying it very much at all.

Mikkel Libby says

Good reading.

The story involved a lot of dirty politics and Angela's search to bring the truth to light. Larson and King would use any means to get the power to control their dirty tactics. Caring little, who was killed or harmed. Caroline, with Angela's help, put a stop to it all.

Diana Hockley says

It's been awhile since I read a British political crime novel and I was not disappointed in this Lucy Cavendish Award winner. Americans may find this plot slow and maybe a little unexciting compared to the accelerated action in most of their own, but I enjoyed it.

Caroline is an ordinary public servant who stumbles across the suspected murder of a hitherto unassuming colleague. Just how hidden his depths are she is about to discover, to her and her family's cost.

Joining up with an older, hard-boiled journalist who is fighting to keep her job, Caroline is whipped into a rapidly changing work environment - to say the least of it. The women are determined to discover why everything in Caroline's department is being wiped, people are being transferred out of the office or disappearing and even police officers she trusts are deployed to other stations. Are these things co-incidental or is a massive cover-up being perpetrated?

I liked the pace of this story - as an Australian, I am used to the English way of writing - and can understand and enjoy the nuances contained in the script. Ordinary the characters are not, from Caroline's mum, Jean - a professional geriatric demonstrator - Caroline's husband, Pete, who is far more involved than he wants to be - and obviously to Caroline herself, who is in fact, no ordinary woman.

There is a lot more to this novel than meets the eye and a discerning reader should be well able to keep up with the twists in the plot.

Jack says

Surprisingly enjoyable political thriller featuring a civil servant and a journalist trying to win against the

most powerful forces in the country.

Marie says

Lots of twists

Too many chapters - it could have been sharper too much chat for me. But if you like political intrigue and lots of characters with different needs and wants it would be for u.

Julie says

I am not a reader of political thrillers in general and it took me a while to get into the story. In fact, it felt like nothing much was happening for the first third or so. Then the pace ramped up and I could hardly put the book down. I won't go through the plot, but I'll concentrate on what I liked and didn't enjoy.

Firstly, I liked the characters of Caroline and Angela. They are both strong women and I felt I was really with them.

The male characters of the book tended to come across as weaker - Freddie Larson, Pete, Martin Fox are all good examples. I'm not sure what Eva Hudson intends us to read anything into this or not. In reality, I like to see positive and negative attributes across the sexes and I have marked the book down as a 4 to take this into account, along with the slow start.

The plot was good though and the dialogue and writing kept the story sharp and interesting after the first 80 pages or so. I recommend this as an entertaining read and will be reading More from Eva Hudson. Another good British find through the Kindle English Mystery Book Club at Goodreads.

Free says

And I am still caught up in reading thrillers...

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Right from the start, with poor Caroline trying to get a flirty security guard off her back and fleeing his attentions to the office of Martin, who just committed suicide (or did he?) I was engrossed.

One of my favourite aspects of this mystery is that we are not quite sure what is happening, or why, at the start. Caroline does not believe Martin killed himself, but nobody seems to agree. But what did happen to Martin, and why? Caroline barely has time to think the matter over before peculiar things start happening and it starts to look like some kind of cover up is going on. But - by whom, and why?

The other facet of this book that I enjoyed is Caroline's family. Seriously - am I the only person getting tired of protagonists who never have families? It's not like I am into family stories, but one could be forgiven for thinking no book could be written about a person with a family and still be interesting, given the way so many protagonists are either loners, or have just the one family member. This was, however, one area where I felt irritated by Caroline at times. As a mother she can be so ineffectual - specifically when it comes to her son Dan. She keeps making these half-hearted attempts to find out what is going on with him, but she has all the parental authority of a wet paper bag. And it is not as if this is essential to the plot - all the crucial plot

elements could have been worked in without her being so weak as a mother.

There are some points that seem to have been thrown in without being developed, almost as if the plot was changed at some point and some of the references to the initial plot were not removed. I think a review on Amazon mentioned that the mention of creationism as the agenda of one of the suspects is pretty much irrelevant - it doesn't tie into the mystery itself and it is never developed.

Other than that there are a few editing problems, primarily homonyms ("wait" for "weight", that sort of thing). It can be mildly annoying.

Another review on Amazon said the "f" word was used too often. I was racking my brain trying to remember if the word was used in the book. Either using it once is "too often" or the text was edited after that comment. When characters swore they did so for very good reason as part of the natural dialogue. There was nothing remotely gratuitous about it so I have no idea what that other review was on about.

Eventually Caroline - with the help of a journalist, Angela - unravels what is going on and why. The last part of the story becomes quite "actiony", which I did not expect. Not complaining, but the pace and tone of the story changed and I was not expecting it.

Family members ring true. I particularly liked Jean, Caroline's mother. It is easy to see where Caroline got her strong sense of ethics. Peter, Caroline's husband, starts off as a bit of a cliché as the unhelpful husband who drinks too much but as the story develops so does he, and by the end he is a great character. The characterisations are a strong point - believable people with the occasional flaw. Caroline's son Dan is interesting (if extremely annoying at first) but Ben and Claire, Caroline's other children, are just sketched in.

Overall, a very good book with an interesting mystery. I have never heard of the award the book won, but if this book is typical of the award's winners then it is an award worth winning.

Just my cup of tea.

Quentin Feduchin says

Really a good read, and pretty real. Indeed so real at times I was pretty darned irritated by middle-aged indecisive women, until I realised that none of us is ready to handle the kind of thugs that powerful people can employ to get their requirements filled...

It wasn't only that; even the everyday family things such as a teenage boy, and a mother's fear about interfering with him and his friends, could get irritating, but then again one has to realise that that is what families are all about, and who's perfect?

The story though, is quite powerful. I can imagine that the civil service can indeed be cruel, not just in England, but in the USA, and Australia too. And when powerful people decide to break the law and decide to make sure nobody knows about it, well, that's what the story is about, and it's well worth reading.

I gathered this might be one of her first. I highly recommend it.

GlenK says

The Loyal Servant is a fast-paced, political paranoia thriller. There is a lot of plot (handled well except towards the end when things felt rushed) and a lot of characters. I did have problems with some of the characters. For example, Angela, the anything for the story newspaper reporter, is initially very unpleasant and never becomes likeable despite her role in the story. And the mother of titular character Caroline seems to be dramatically pointless (and irritating!). My problems with a few characters aside, I did find this book an engaging, fast read.

AngryGreyCat says

I must admit that Political Thrillers are not a genre that I read normally, so I almost hesitate to say too much about it other than some broad generalizations since some of the things I noted might be the norm within the genre.

This was a very fast paced book, which I assume was part of the thriller aspect, which was fine and kept me turning the pages, however, I found some of the transitions at that pace to be rather abrupt. At one point, I had to reread to figure out what happened during a transition from one chapter to the next. The characters were well developed and in my mind (as a former civil servant) very realistic. In fact, I found the whole scenario realistic in the portrayal of corruption and the ensuing cover up. Caroline's family situation was a little bizarre, but after reading the news for as long as I have been, I don't find it terribly unrealistic.

Although I am not a big fan of political thrillers (or politics in general), I have to say that this book was very well done and I will probably read the next in the series.

David Highton says

A Whitehall conspiracy with a civil servant and a cynical journalist allied to uncover the connections. Takes far too long to get going.
