Paula Spencer

Yet Paula Never Asks, What Did I Do To Deserve All This?

Ten years after the bestselling The Woman Who Walked into Doors, Roddy Doyle resurrects one of his greatest characters.

When Roddy Doyle published The Woman Who Walked into Doors in 1996, critics and readers alike hailed it as a tour de force of literary ventriloquism that captured both the vulnerability and strength of a thirty-nine-year-old Dublin housewife with a fondness for drink. Now, Doyle triumphantly returns to Paula Spencer with the moving tale of her fight for a better future.

Paula is now almost forty-eight years old. Her abusive husband Charlo is long dead, and it’s been four months and five days since she’s had a drink. Her youngest children, Jack and Leanne, are still living with her, but she worries about Leanne. Paula continues to work as a cleaner, and the fridge is often half empty. But for the first time in her life she is going to parent-teacher meetings, and she’s bought a CD player for the kitchen, where she surprises her sisters with her taste for U2 and The White Stripes. Readers will root for Paula as she slowly begins to put her life back together. She’s even met a man at the bottle return; he’s nice, there’s something steady about him. Told with the unmistakable wit of his extraordinary voice, this is a redemptive tale that will have Doyle fans cheering.

My Personal Review:
A couple of other reviewers have told what story there is to this novel, so I won’t try to enlarge on it.

Really, there is not much story at all. What we see; is what life is like to a woman who has not have an easy time of it; and that is an understatement.

Paula is now 48, and she has lived what should have been the best years of her life, and we are taken right into her heart and soul for a year or so.

It is not pretty, but Paula is not defeated by remorse or even worrying about why her lot is what it is. All she wants to do is get along and even the
least amount of joy she is able to have, she is thankful for. Though she is never envious of others, and she has every reason to be, she takes each day as it comes. Will tomorrow be better? Who knows, Paula now lives her life, entwined with her few close friends and dysfunctional family, one day at a time. Despite it all, she has no enemy in the world. She doesn’t even carry a bit of hatred in her heart for her now dead abusive ex-husband.

No doubt, Doyle shows what a life some people lead. Of course, many women’s lot in life is worse than Paula’s and many’s lot is better. But this is Paula’s. There is always hope, and without that, what is there to live for?

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