



Stasi Child

David Young

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David Young's chillingly intricate *Stasi Child* was A London Times “Crime Book of the Month” and a Telegraph Pick of the Week.

1975: When Oberleutnant Karin Muller is called to investigate a teenage girl's body at the foot of the Berlin Wall, she imagines she's seen it all before. But she soon realizes that this is a death like no other before it - the girl was evidently trying to escape from *West* Berlin.

As a member of the People's Police, Muller's power in East Germany only stretches so far. The Ministry for State Security, the Stasi, assures her the case is closed, all they need to know is the girl's name. Yet they strongly discourage her from asking questions. The evidence doesn't add up, and it soon becomes clear the crime scene has been staged. But this regime does not tolerate curious minds, and it takes Müller too long to realize that the trail she's been following may lead her dangerously close to home ...

Stasi Child Details

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Author : David Young

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From Reader Review Stasi Child for online ebook

Susan says

This is an atmospheric and exciting thriller debut, featuring Oberleutnant Karin Muller and her deputy, Unterleutnant Werner Tilsner. The book is set in East Berlin, 1975, and begins when Muller and Tilsner are called to investigate the mutilated body of a young girl by the Berlin Wall – or, as it is named in East Germany, the ‘Anti-Fascist Protection Barrier.’ Both Muller and Tilsner are wary when they discover a Stasi officer, Klaus Jager, is already there and that they will be assisting him, at his request. This is no normal case of a youth attempting to jump the wall, as this girl seems to have been fleeing from the West and escaping into the East...

I really found this an unusual and interesting novel, with great characters and an excellent setting. Karin Muller is an ambitious officer, who buys totally into the system that she works in, while her husband Gottfried is viewed by suspicion by the authorities. However, as Karin begins to investigate who the victim is, she begins to realise that not all is as it seems and that Jager has his own reasons for choosing her to look into this most sensitive enquiry.

East Germany during the years before the Wall fell was very much a different world from the West and the author captures this period well. There is a great deal of mistrust and an atmosphere of informing on all levels – from being spied on by the authorities to nosy neighbours trying to pick up valuable snippets that they can use. The book alternates between Karin Muller’s investigation and the events which led a young girl to become a victim. Fast paced, unsettling and with a fabulous ending, I really hope that this will become a series and we get to meet Karin Muller again. Lastly, I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

Eric says

Stasi Child is an impressive first novel by David Young depicting a competent police procedural detailing the murder of a young female teenager.

From the start, lead investigator Karin Muller detects nothing is as it seems and from the appearance of the body, it is clear her paths are clearly being thwarted by all sorts of means.

Muller and her young deputy are given the task of determining how the mutilated body of a young teenager has become discovered in East Germany. Early on, Muller, her deputy and crime scene investigator know what they are being told has happened is untrue and to prove otherwise may be detrimental to all.

This novel is a police procedural along with a spy novel rolled into one, with several other plot lines thrown in to add to the reader's enjoyment. It takes place in the mid-1970's, which allows Young to add the political and governmental differences of the region to move the plot along.

As with any good spy novel, motives and allegiances of each character are always suspect which also adds flavor to what is more than just a detective story.

Young even tosses in a few good twists, which certainly will create reader anticipation for the next Karin Muller installment.

Highly recommended.

Maria Clara says

4.5/Rozando muy cerca el cinco. Maravilloso thriller! Me ha encantado descubrir a este escritor, y añadirlo ya en próximas lecturas. Me ha gustado mucho lo bien perfilados que están sus personajes, la trama, el mundo que ha creado a raíz del pasado. Sin duda, todo un descubrimiento.

Chrissa Vasileiou says

Εξαιρετικ? βιβλ?ο! Εξαιρετικ? και πολλ? υποσχ?μενο ντεμπο?το! Ο π?χης για τον David Young ?χει ?δη αν?βει ψηλ?, με την πρ?τη του κι?λας συγγραφικ? απ?πειρα!

Θα αν?βει σε λ?γες ημ?ρες ολοκληρωμ?νη κριτικ? για το βιβλ?ο. Αλλ? μερικ? πραγματ?κια ?θελα να τα πω απ? τ?ρα.

Η πλοκ? ε?ναι καλογραμμ?νη και φροντισμ?νη και η ιστορ?α ?κρως...ιντριγκαδ?ρικη. Π?ρα απ? το ?τι ε?ναι καλοστημ?νη και χωρ?ς κεν?, με ενδιαφ?ροντες χαρακτ?ρες που εξελ?σσονται και μια ιστορ?α γεμ?τη ανατροπ?ς που κρατ?ει αμε?ωτο το αναγνωστικ? ενδιαφ?ρον, ο συγγραφ?ας ?χει δημιουργ?σει το ιδανικ?τερο περιβ?λλον ως φ?ντο: την Ανατολικ? Γερμαν?α στα μ?σα της δεκαετ?ας του '70. Ολ?κληρη η ιστορ?α της και η κοινων?α της αποτυπ?νονται στις σελ?δες του βιβλ?ου, ?χουν 'ποτ?σει' τους ?ρωες και τον τρ?πο σκ?ψης και συμπεριφορ?ς τους. Ηθελημ?να ? αθ?λητα, οι π?ντες υπακο?ουν στις προσταγ?ς της Δημοκρατ?ας. Και μ?σα σε ?λα αυτ?, εξελ?σσεται η ?ρευνα της Αστυνομ?ας του Λαο? για μια πραγματικ? περ?εργη υπ?θεση, που αποδεικν?εται πολ? πιο περ?πλοκη απ' ?τι φαντ?ζει αρχικ? και θα οδηγ?σει την υπολοχαγ? Μ?λερ σε πολ? επικ?νδυνα μονοπ?τια.

Θα αναφ?ρω στην ολοκληρωμ?νη κριτικ? μου (που ?λεγα παραπ?νω) τα του βιβλ?ου, της πλοκ?ς και των χαρακτ?ρων λεπτομερ?ς. Εδ? θα ?θελα να σχολι?σω κ?τι που με στιγμ?τισε προσωπικ? ως Χρ?σα, ως ?τομο. Μια απ? τις 'πετρι?ς' μου, απ? αυτ?ς που προτιμ? να μην αναφ?ρω στο site που αρθρογραφ?.

Λοιπ?ν, διαβ?ζοντας το "Παιδ? της Στ?ζι" θυμ?θηκα για μια ακ?μα φορ? τους λ?γους που ποτ? δεν συμπ?θησα αυτ? τη χ?ρα. Τη χ?ρα του Χ?τλερ, τη χ?ρα του Τε?χους, τη χ?ρα της Στ?ζι. Μια χ?ρα που αν?καθεν προσ?φερε στην παγκ?σμια ιστορ?α μον?χα πληγ?ς. Ας θεωρηθ? υπερβολικ? ? μονομαν?ς ? 'κόλλημ?νη', δεν με πειρ?ζει. Απ?λαυσα κ?θε σελ?δα του βιβλ?ου ξεχωριστ? - μ?λιστα,μου ?ρεσε ΠΟΛΥ περισσ?τερο απ' ?τι περ?μενα το συγκεκριμ?νο μυθιστ?ρημα!- και μ?σησα σε κ?θε σελ?δα τη Λα?κ? Δημοκρατ?α της Γερμαν?ας εξ?σου ?ντονα. Τον φ?βο, την παρ?νοια, τον κ?νδυνο, τον κυνισμ?, την πεισματικ? εμμον? στις φανατικ?ς τους ιδ?ες, το μ?χρι πο? ε?ναι ικανο? να φτ?σουν για να διαφυλ?ξουν τα κεκτημ?να και τα αρρωστημ?να πιστε?ω τους... Ο συγγραφ?ας γρ?φει την ιστορ?α τους με πιστ? ρεαλισμ? στις συνθ?κες που επικρατο?σαν τ?τε, και φυσικ? δεν τον κρ?νω γι' αυτ? - αλ?μονο. Θα μου πεις, σε ?λες τις χ?ρες συν?βαιναν (και συμβα?νουν) αντ?στοιχα γεγον?τα. Θεωρ? ?μως πως μ?νο στη Γερμαν?α του 20ου αι?να τα πρ?γματα ?ταν τ?σο αρρωστημ?να και οι ?νθρωποι που ε?χαν την εξουσ?α τ?σο διατεθειμ?νοι να

σκοτ?σουν προκειμ?νου να περ?σει το δικ? τους. Μισ? τη Στ?ζι του Young ?πως μισ? τη Ναζιστικ? Γερμαν?α του Kerr. Και αγαπ? τον τρ?πο που ?χουν επιλ?ξει οι συγγραφε?ς αυτ? να αποτυπ?νουν στις σελ?δες των βιβλ?ων τους τ?σο μα?ρες σελ?δες της ιστορ?ας. Θ?λει πολ? ταλ?ντο, και ο Young δε?χνει πως το διαθ?τει. Η ιστορ?α του κατ?φερε να με μαγ?ψει τ?σο, που να της χαρ?σω το 5αρι μου ασχ?τως της αποστροφ?ς μου για τον τ?πο ?που λαμβ?νει χ?ρο και τις συνθ?κες που επικρατο?σαν τ?τε εκε?.

Κ?τι ?λλο που δεν μου ?ρεσε στο βιβλ?ο, με ξ?νισε και με δυσκ?λεψε, ?ταν η επιλογ? του μεταφραστ? να αφ?σει τις πρωτ?τυπες λ?ξεις/ορισμο?ς που υποδηλ?νουν βαθμ? της αστυνομ?ας ? κ?ποια υπηρεσ?α κτλ. στα γερμανικ?. Επειδ? χρησιμοποιο?νταν συνεχ?ς πριν απ? το ?νομα, ?πρεπε να ανατρ?χω κ?θε τ?σο στο γλωσσ?ρι στο τ?λος του βιβλ?ου. ?λλωστε, ο?τε καν που μπορο?σα να τις προφ?ρω! Νομ?ζω πως θα ?ταν καλ?τερα να ε?χαν μεταφραστε? και αυτ?ς, κανονικ?.

Αναλυτικ? η κριτικ? μου για το βιβλ?ο στο site "Book City" και τον παρακ?τω σ?νδεσμο: Το παιδ? της Στ?ζι

Fictionophile says

Read my interview with David Young, the author of "Stasi Child": <https://fictionophile.wordpress.com/2...>

An original and accomplished debut thriller, “Stasi Child” is a compelling police procedural set in 1970s Cold War Germany.

Unlike any police-procedural I’ve read before, this novel is set in Berlin – before the wall came down. The plot is intricate but well rendered so that even the many unfamiliar names, places and references do not detract from its enjoy-ability.

The book, though fiction, was meticulously researched and taught me a lot about the culture and history of socialist East Berlin. Although very familiar with books set during the war with references to the German SS, I was NOT familiar with the term ‘Stasi’. Stasi is the commonly used name for The Ministry for State Security. The Stasi were a secret police force whose mandate was to spy on the general population. To further their mandate they utilized a network of informants.

The book is told in two principal voices, the first being that of the policewoman Karin Müller. A young woman, she is the first female to head the homicide division of the People’s Police. Childless, she is married to a teacher named Gottfried, yet is very attracted to her deputy, Tilsner. Karin is a loyal citizen who (for the most part) believes in the fairness of her socialist country. Her past holds some very traumatic memories which come to light over the course of the story.

Karin is tasked with finding the identity of the dead girl. A teenager who was viciously murdered and then mutilated to hide her identity making Karin’s task an arduous one. She is to work in cooperation with a Stasi officer named Jäger whom she doesn’t completely trust. For that matter, she doesn’t completely trust her deputy Tilsner either.

The second voice of the story is that of Irma Behrendt. A young teenage girl who is in a sort of reform school called a Jugendwerkhof, on the island of Rügen. Here she and her best friend, Beate endure hardship and abuse.

I love it when the title of a book fits the story as much as this one did. The author makes the choice of title abundantly clear in the narrative.

This book contains a glossary of German terms and phrases. Very helpful to the reader if you are reading a paper book, but not so helpful to those, like me, who read the book electronically. I didn't discover the glossary until after I'd finished the book.

This is an authentic story of corruption and lost innocence. A novel that shows to what lengths people will go to fulfill their desires. It is a novel with a bleak and chilling atmosphere that lends itself well to the plot. At times brutal, the narrative was set during the winter (as the cover suggests). This book will appeal to a wide audience, both male and female. Anyone who enjoys thrillers, historical fiction, political/spy stories, and of course police-procedural mysteries.

This is David Young's debut novel and the first of a proposed trilogy. I very much look forward to visiting Karin Müller again in his next book, "The Stasi Wolf".

Thanks to Bonnier Publishing/Twenty7Books via NetGalley for providing me with a digital copy of this novel in exchange for my unbiased review.

Richard says

A book set in East Germany when the Berlin Wall divided a common people can only be interesting based on location and historical setting. When it has been so extensively researched, crafted with skill and written with a shifting tension it can only be winner.

David Young has produced a novel of great weight and found a niche his plotting and thrilling style exploit to the very end.

A terrible crime which needs investigating but when everyone is a potential informer and the state controls everything and everyone who can expose corruption at the highest levels?

A fascinating murder mystery, with honest police work undermined by political and party factions.

Karin Muller leads the investigation but it will have far-reaching outcomes for her personally regarding her current relationships, her past life and scars she carried and her professional future.

Written so we care for these characters, we feel their pain and isolation and wonder how the truth is within Karin's pay grade to find and if found will ever be allowed to be known.

Darker than a moonless night, more tense than overwound watch, devoid of hope and trust in others. A book to chill one's soul and despair for a lost people bound by a regime content to destroy and undermine.

We can rejoice in part that one wall did tumble down and freedom was embraced. This is historical fiction but it bears a truth of something that happened in my lifetime and therefore makes compelling fiction.

Emma says

3.5 stars

What David Young gets right here is the never ending paranoia and complications of living within a state so controlled by an overwhelming bureaucracy and a powerful police security force. Every action could be being watched by the Stasi and you have no way of knowing just who they are, how or why they are monitoring you, and what will happen to you if they decide you have become an enemy, or just a problem, of the state. This feeling comes over very effectively in the novel; Oberlutnant Muller not only has to work with

Stasi officer Klaus Jager, she also has to worry about the bread van so often spotted across the street from her apartment, her fellow officer Tilsner-who seems to have more money than he should, her husband Gottfreid-who has been meeting a certain religious official with known Western sympathies... Every single time she tries to move forward in her murder investigation, there is something or someone acting to prevent any progress. Likewise, the second voice of the novel, young Irma must wonder whether she can trust those around her, because anyone can be Stasi.

While the intriguing historical context was an excellent choice, the murder case that formed the plot was somewhat confused and lacked that page turning thrill. There was far too much of it that needed to be explained in extended conversations between characters- that 'so tell me why this happened...' 'oh, i'll tell you it all...' kind of dialogue that is rather unsatisfying. In addition, Muller's whole relationship with her husband rang false to me, it didn't suit her at all and felt shoehorned in for some extra fizz. (view spoiler)

Overall an interesting, if flawed book that relies heavily on its fascinating historical context.

Adina says

I am mad with the author because the idea of the novel had so much potential. Moreover, the real historical information was interesting and could have resulted in an amazing historical mystery. Too bad the writing did not live up to the idea.

The blurb immediately drew my attention, a mystery set in 1975 East Berlin with a DDR police woman as main character. I do have a soft spot for books set in Berlin before the wall fell and for the city in general so I was looking forward to dive in the atmosphere of that time. Tough luck because that never happened.

Oberleutenant Karin Müller is the youngest woman leader of a crime unit and is requested to assist a Stasi Officer with the investigation of the murder of an unknown young girl. Strangely, the girl appears to be shot as she was fleeing from West to the East, contrary to the general migration current. Karin soon realizes the crime scene is staged and embarks in a quest to discover the identity of the girl and of the murderer. Obviously, the political climate being what it is and working for the Stasi will make her investigation feel like she is working on a mined field.

I believe the weakest point of the novel was its characters, especially Karin. Being the chief of her team I would expect her to be smart, tough, self-confident. Instead, she almost throws up when she sees the dead body and blushes for every minor compliment she receives from her annoying, obnoxious deputy. God, I think I read that word more than 30 times. She seemed to redden every few pages from any minuscule thing. I almost have up the novel because of this. Moving on, Karin's relationship with her husband seemed forced only for the plot's sake which became even more obvious with the preposterous coincidences that moved the story forward. Actually, the whole book is filled with these amazing coincidences. And the ending...The discovery of the killer was so under climatic and so easily passed over that I forgot immediately about the whole scene. I hated that the killer wasn't even a character in the book and had maybe two sentences written about him. This , for me is a serious plot construction error.

Moving on to the writing, it was bad, pedestrian even. The period was not researched enough, in my opinion, because I did not feel any of the pressure I usually experience when I read books about that time and space. Moreover, the author adopted an abundance of cliches and the ending was more taken out from a Jack Reacher novel than a quality mystery.

Let's hope this will be the last unpleasant surprise for this year.

I received this copy from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Steve says

4.8 stars – nearly perfect.

I originally saw this listed on Netgalley, and my request was subsequently denied. So I waited (im)patiently for its release, and finally got to it. This brilliant debut novel was well worth the wait!

This suspenseful thriller is set in 1970s East Germany. The Berlin Wall, known as the “Anti-Fascist Protection Barrier” in the East, is standing, and there’s a distinct sense of claustrophobia and near-paranoia for everyone, for everyone is a potential enemy of the state. It’s this atmosphere in which Oberleutnant Karin Müller is charged with investigating the death of a teenage girl found mutilated in a cemetery near the base of the Berlin Wall. Müller, along with her deputy Werner Tilsner, and with a senior officer of the Stasi, investigate, and almost immediately become ensnared between corrupt two wings of the Stasi, become a mission of life and death for Müller, and those around her.

David Young’s writing is vivid and convincing, and the plot is intelligent, intriguing, and intricate. The character development is outstanding. Müller, sent to West Berlin by her Stasi superior, judges the western capitalism as “glorification of business and the business of making money, on the backs of the people”, is emotionally complex in her conformity with Communism and its values, and is very compassionate and principled in her actions to see this investigation through to the inevitable end.

The author captures the time period very well in this fast-paced thriller, and the final third of the book is a series of hairpin twists and turns, like the mountain roads of the Harz range where the finale takes place. I’m looking forward to more from this author and this series.

Manchester Military History Society (MMHS) says

Excellent and unusually located police procedural set in the former East Germany.

I can’t think of many English language detective novels set in the former East Germany and David Young has created a fascinating character in the damaged but tenacious Oberleutnant Karin Müller.

In most countries she’d be just a regular cop in charge of the murder team, however this is communist ruled East Germany and she’s a card carrying party member believing in “real and existing socialism”.

Investigating a teenage girl’s body at the foot of the Berlin wall Karin has to walk a political tightrope that adds an extra frisson to the story as she deals with her superiors and the Stasi, the East German secret police.

Whilst many police procedurals have conflict with superiors in East Germany conflict with superiors can mean at best dismissal then demotion to a menial job or at worst death.

David Young’s research is impeccable with fantastic attention to detail from the procedures in the Stasi remand prisons to the uniqueness of Volvo tyre tracks as well as capturing well the feel of 1970’s East Germany.

If you like police procedurals, strong female characters, along with an Orwellian landscape then read “Stasi Child”.

Liz Barnsley says

I’m a bit late reviewing Stasi Child, which has actually caused much hilarity but in the end I win. As I knew I would...

The thing with Stasi Child is that it doesn't matter that this is a late review because that book has stayed with me. When I rather randomly decided that today would be the day, I thought I'd have to remind myself of the read somewhat but then discovered that I remembered it pretty much in its entirety – the political landscape, Karin Muller a completely engaging character, the beautifully done descriptive sense of it all – I guess in a lot of ways that is the biggest compliment I could pay it considering the number of books I read, take it as read that this is really really good...

There are lots of reviews of this novel out there -many speaking to how David Young has recreated with a huge dose of creative genius the stifling and claustrophobic atmosphere and reality of 1970's Berlin – and that he has. Whether you know something or nothing of this period of history you'll get it – in fact you'll be right there as events unfold. For me as a reader that is when it works – Allowing the truth of the time to unfold within the story, underneath the narrative, the characters live it so YOU live it – much better than random history lesson type info dumps in some historical novels...

For me though it's always about the emotional resonance of a story and Stasi Child had emotional resonance in spades – this was a book I devoured – along with the deep and lasting sense of history you get a banging good story, a proper page turner with absolutely the most gorgeous and absorbing writing style. I mean what else can you ask for really..

Well you want decent characters who you can identify with, want to follow down the rabbit hole, root for or alternatively wish fiery painful death upon – you can put a big tick in that box also. Karin as a main protagonist incredibly well drawn and full of depth I LOVED her (big big book love because I just wanted her to win godarnit) – as she wakes up to the realities of her country and the way it works, begins to doubt her own loyalties, her journey is totally engaging and I was with her all the way. Surrounded by an eclectic and enigmatic cast (Klaus Jager hmm) of others, there was not a single dull moment in the entirety of Stasi Child, not once did attention wander and really I only put it down to feed the kids. Apparently it is frowned upon not to do so.

Belting crime story too. The tale twists and turns, thought provoking and so addictive, weaving its way through the historical flavouring, the character arcs and just so perfectly constructed to engage and inform and entertain, really storytelling doesn't get much better than this. David Young is a bit of a genius but sssh don't tell him I said that. I may NEVER see my blog post if he is too busy preening. Plus I'd really like another book from this author soon. Writing up this review has made my chronic impatience kick in.

Brilliant brilliant book. Just read it (you won't need to weep)

Pat says

A police procedural set in East Berlin during the 1970's. A teenage girl's body is discovered near the border crossing between East and West Berlin. The assumption is the girl was escaping East Berlin and was shot by security guards. The only problem is the girl's body indicates she was escaping West Berlin and that does not make sense to Karin Muller, investigating officer.

I really enjoyed this book and keep checking for more. Hope this is a series.

Raven says

Constructed around three contrasting narrative viewpoints, the book takes place in 1970's East Berlin, with the famed wall firmly in place, and the contrast between life either side of it strongly in evidence throughout. A young girl's body is discovered close to the wall, with the general consensus being that she has taken the unusual step of fleeing from the West to the East, unlike most of her contemporaries. However, as Oberleutnant Karin Müller (the only female head of a murder squad in the Deutsche Demokratische Republic) and her infuriatingly charming sidekick, Unterleutnant Werner Tilsner investigate further, they come to realise that much darker dealings are afoot. With their every move being monitored by a representative of the Stasi, fundamentally manipulating their remit in the investigation, and Müller's husband Gottfried also attracting the unwanted attention of the secret police, there is much subterfuge to be undertaken, and angst to be had, by Müller along the way. Additionally, Young incorporates a seemingly unrelated plot involving the restrictive and harsh conditions experienced by a group of youngsters in a notorious 'Jugendwerkhof', ostensibly a home for less well disciplined, or rootless, youngsters to be indoctrinated in the ways of the State. As all three narratives wend their way towards each other, the depth of corruption, control, and conspiracy within this closed society become all too clear.

If, like me, you have enjoyed the Soviet-based crime fiction of authors such as Martin Cruz Smith, William Ryan, Tom Rob Smith or Sam Eastland, this will prove itself an absolute must read. Like the aforementioned authors, Young perfectly captures the socio-political atmosphere of a society in the grasp of a suffocating control of the state apparatus. The fear, suspicion and deprivation encountered by not only Müller and her team and the youngsters at the Jugendwerkhof, but also that of ordinary citizens, is incredibly well depicted, and Young provides an unflinching gaze on the workings of this closed society. He carefully balances the seeming utopia of life beyond the wall in the West, with the harsh and stringent regime of the East, which makes the plight of these citizens all the more affecting as the story progresses. Having only accrued knowledge of this location and period in German history from non-fiction and celluloid representations, it was entirely satisfying to see how well Young crafted the pertinent details into his fictional representation. Aply supported by an engrossing plot, with its varying strands and well-structured premise, this wasn't just a linear crime thriller, which again added to the satisfaction of this reader.

Likewise, Young's grasp of effective characterisation was a real bonus. Müller herself was an entirely empathetic and believable protagonist, balancing the problems of her gender, with the importance of her position in the police, and the nefarious individuals seeking to derail and influence her investigation. The interplay between her and Tilsner, both on a personal and professional level, always overshadowed by the demands of her loyalty to her husband, was a real hook throughout, and added a nice frisson to the general gloom and sadness that infuses the story. The character of Oberstleutnant Karl Jager, as a representative of the Stasi was also nicely weighted within the plot, with his shadowy influence and mercurial nature, providing an intriguing and slightly sinister air to the whole affair, in his dealings with Müller and Tilsner.

Similarly to Tom Callaghan's debut earlier this year, *The Killing Winter*, set in Kyrgyzstan, it was extremely

satisfying to read a book located in a largely unexplored society, within the crime fiction genre. Young has more than proved that his name will be one to watch in the future with this powerful, well-researched and intriguing thriller. A highly recommended debut.

Aditi says

“Cheating was a concept both foreign and integral to the fighting of wars.”

----Tom Clancy

David Young, a British author, has penned a riveting German thriller in his debut book, *Stasi Child* which is the first book in the *Karin Müller* series. This series welcomes an exciting and brave new female detective chief inspector or in German, an *oberleutnant* who is a married yet career-minded woman, assigned on the case when a teenage girl's mutilated body is found near The Wall in East Berlin in the 1970s, that leads her and her junior subordinate, Comrade Tilsner, to the edge of The Wall, Berlin's corrupt politics and an isolated teenage reformatory handled by then government.

Synopsis:

East Berlin, 1975

When Oberleutnant Karin Müller is called to investigate a teenage girl's body at the foot of the wall, she imagines she's seen it all before. But when she arrives she realizes this is a death like no other: the girl was trying to escape - but from the West.

Müller is a member of the national police, but the case has Stasi written all over it. Karin is tasked with uncovering the identity of the girl, but her Stasi handlers assure her that the perpetrators are from the West - and strongly discourage her asking questions.

The evidence doesn't add up, and Muller soon realizes the crime scene has been staged. But this is not a regime that tolerates a curious mind, and Muller doesn't realise that the trail she's following will lead her dangerously close to home.

Karin Müller, a twenty something oberleutnant in her police force, is asked to investigate the identity of a dead teenage girl, who body has been found near The Berlin Wall, and Karin soon sniffs that there is something wrong with the girl's alleged death of simply getting shot as she was trying to escape from the west Berlin. And within no time, Karin starts asking questions at the right places but that lands up into more trouble, and little idea she had that behind this innocent teenage girl's murder there is the hand or involvement of someone close to Karin. Can she get to the bottom of this scandalous murder?

I can't believe this is a debut novel by the author as the story is concocted so strongly that it immediately gripped me with the thrill and the suspense. The book's cover image aptly captures the feel, horror and the stale smell of death through its arresting image. Right from the very first page, when the author gradually began delving about the character's lives and backgrounds alongside with the murder investigation is quite addictive and kept me hooked to the pages of this book till the very end.

The author's writing style is very much articulate and fantastic and well layered with suspense and twists. The plot is very easy to comprehend with by the readers as the author descriptively and strikingly explains each and every scene right to its very bottom, so that the readers can get a clear image of what is happening page-by-page. The narrative is not only engaging, but also free flowing and is also laced with German dialect, also the best part about the book is that the author has included a glossary for the German terms used in the book. The pacing is really fast as the mystery is so alluring that the readers will keep turning the pages of this book until the cliffhanger filled climax.

The mystery in the book is devised smartly by this author, as it has been covered with so many angles and dimensions that will keep the readers anticipating till the very end. And also the readers will be welcomes with a sudden new and unpredictable twist and turn during the course of the story that will not let the readers to turn away their heads from the book even for once. Moreover, the author's technique of unraveling the mystery is pretty unique.

The characters in the book are extremely well developed and keep the story even more interesting. The main character, Karin, is a strong and fearless female detective, who despite of the domestic responsibilities stay focused on the job, although working with a handsome subordinate like Tilsner, distracts her a lot. She is a sharp and thoughtful woman, who carefully makes her move, even though at times she is pushed to be tested by her boundaries and limitations. In short, Karin has a complex side when it comes to relationships, otherwise, her smartness will simply make the readers fall for her. The secondary and supporting characters are also well etched out thereby giving them a realistic yet edgy profile.

The author captures the 1970s divided Berlin and the divided fascist and anti fascist politics with extreme vividness. From its bone-chilling cold weather to its shifting landscape of white mountains in the east side to posh city in the west side to its local people to its culture to its then politics, will instantly transport the readers to an era when Berlin was divided by The Wall and the Stasi guards still controlled and dominated its citizens.

In a nutshell, this book turned out to be a roller coaster ride that is high on adrenaline rushing action scenes, raw violence and enough tension.

Verdict: *Crime fiction lovers do not miss this new author on the block and his debut German thriller.*

Courtesy: *Thanks to the author, David Young, for giving me an opportunity to read and review his book.*

Christine says

I will never forget 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall, that divided East and West Germany. Everybody was glued to the television, as scenes played out of the infamous dividing wall coming down. Prior to 1989, East Germany was under Communist rule and East Germans could not enter the West. It was a society cut off from the rest of Western Europe. David Young, in his remarkable debut novel, brings to life the culture and atmosphere of East Germany in the years before the fall of the wall.

Karin Muller works for the police in East Germany in 1975. The secret police or the Stasi hold all of the power and control in the land. Muller is asked to identify the victim, by a Stasi officer. A teenager has been found at the Eastern side of the Berlin Wall, brutally killed. The East Germans call the Berlin Wall 'The Anti Fascist Protection Barrier'. There seems to be an indication from the forensic markings, that the victim was trying to get from West Berlin to East Berlin.

I was in awe, whilst reading this novel. David Young manages to capture beautifully the sense of place. I could completely believe in the Communist East Germany being portrayed. There is an atmosphere of oppression, bureaucracy and a sense of being watched. East Germany is a place, where secrets do not stay hidden for long. The Stasi play a major part in this. They recruited millions of men, women and children to spy on their fellow comrades and report back. Despite this, David Young also shows that there are many people like Karin Muller who have a sense of purpose in this regime and are comfortable with it. Karin Muller works within the system to discover the truth about the murder victim.

This is terrific crime read; with its insight into a bygone era and a fascinating political slant. Those of you who have read and loved Child 44, will appreciate this one. Thank you, David Young!
