

Stoner - A Novel by John Williams

This is a wonderful book. The writing is spare. But it is a fine example of how to convey much with little. It is about a man who awakes from a sleepwalking existence into the discovery of love - in his case, a love of literature. Throughout the hardships of his subsequent life he remains true to this one over-riding love of his life. It would be easy to regard Stoner's life as horribly depressing, but Williams himself apparently regarded Stoner as a true hero. The reason is clear. A hero remains faithful, and Stoner remained true to his love unflinchingly. Is the physical deformity of Stoner's adversary, Lomax, simply a metaphor for his deformity of soul? That seems a little crass for a book otherwise so subtle (someone enlighten me). The disaster of Stoner's marriage should be recommended reading in Gender Studies courses as an illustration of what domestic abuse can really look like.