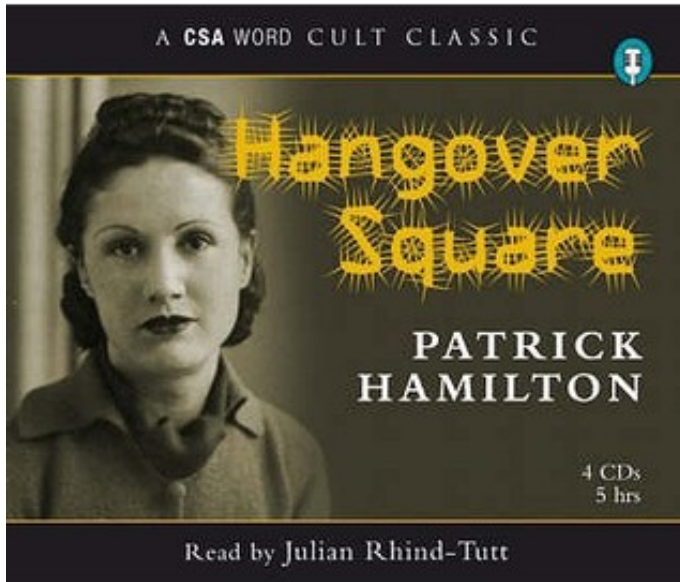

Patrick Hamilton

Hangover Square



Title: Hangover Square

Author: Patrick Hamilton

Format: Unknown Binding

Language:

Pages: 4

Publisher: , 0

ISBN: 1906147043

Format: PDF / Kindle / ePub

Size: 7.9 MB

Download: allowed

Description

London 1939, and in the grimy publands of Earl's Court, George Harvey Bone is pursuing a helpless infatuation with Netta. George is adrift in hell, until something goes click in his head and he realizes that he must kill her.

Insightful reviews

Leonie: The writing is quite good, but it's not the kind that compensates for any lack in the story. I didn't like the story much, so at times this was a bit of a chore. It's about a man who is in love with a woman he knows is worthless and mean (Hamilton helpfully clarifies with authorly authority that she has no real consciousness and is a fish, not a human being) and has no affection for him, but hangs around her all the time anyway. As well as being generally hopeless, he is suffering from a mental illness which involves "dead" moods in which he plans killing this woman. Because these moods are intermittent and he has no memory of them when in his right mind, it takes the length of the book for what we know is going to happen to happen. It all seemed a bit like we were supposed to wish Netta dead for not appreciating George. Petty and misogynistic, in other words. (Indeed, looking at other reviews, it seems many readers did want the nice man to kill the nasty woman.) And the descriptions of George's dead moods were repetitive. But there were some scenes that livened the book up, and it's always interesting to see that other ages could be just as seedy.

Kenneth P.: Patrick Hamilton's *Hangover Square* takes place in pre-war London, late 1938 into the summer of 1939. Neville Chamberlain has returned triumphant from Munich. Hitler has been awarded the Sudetenland and there will be peace. Londoners revel in ecstatic denial.

Protagonist George Harvey Bone, out of work but with a bit of money, is hopelessly, head-over-heels in love with Netta, an aspiring actress with neither talent nor work-ethic. She has been described as "frighteningly" beautiful, and her beauty alone has carried her into her early thirties without lifting a finger (except of course to swill the juice). Netta is at the center of a strange drinking clique that includes the fawning, aforementioned George and several other drunks that include Peter, an avowed fascist who has been imprisoned for assaulting a leftist demonstrator. Peter seems to be Netta's on-again-off-again lover which, of course, drives the hapless George Harvey Bone crazy. What's more, Netta has a secret fascination with Hitler. She loves the jackboots, the uniforms, salutes, swastikas.

George Harvey Bone's lack of self esteem, his blatant masochism, is maddening. But he is not a well man. He has a split personality, a kind of Jekyll and Hyde syndrome. As Jekyll he slobbers over the lovely Netta, bestowing upon her the most humiliating of endearments. He pays her bills while forever kissing her lovely ass (that he would never see). But as Hyde, George harbors murderous thoughts. When he slips into his "dead moods" he finds himself in a state similar to Plath's bell jar, but with murder on the brain, the murder of Netta.

So there they were--1939 London waiting for the bombs that would never drop because of

Munich thank the Lord. This book gives us a London of drink and denial. What'll you have dearie? Here's How! Down the hatch!

There is some serious allegory going on here. As Chamberlain appeases Hitler, George Harvey Bone sucks up to Netta and her fascist friends. But there are two sides to the schizophrenic George: Chamberlain the appeaser and Churchill the pugilist.

Kudos to Patrick Hamilton. This is no thirty year flashback, no Monday morning quarterbacking. He wrote this *in the moment* (1939) and with pinpoint political accuracy. This is a well done psychological crime drama that builds to an effective crescendo. The portrayal of London in 1939 is delicious and the dialogue is spot on. As Hitler races across Poland, as England races into war, *Hangover Square* races to it's inevitable and perfectly developed conclusion.

Emma: I love this book. I love it fiercely.

Hangover Square is set in a decade that I am completely fascinated with, the thirties, and Hamilton has beautifully balanced elements of dark humour, crushing sadness and thriller tension. It is, I have discovered, my perfect book.

I don't recall the last book that made me cry, but I wept reading Hangover Square. I balled my eyes out for George Harvey Bone. Used and abused by the vile Netta Longdon and her little gang of equally vile hangers on, he is a hopelessly infatuated fool, his obsessive desire having a vice like grip.

he dropped his voice as he greeted Netta, and caught her eye shyly, and looked away again. When meeting her after a parting of any length he never dared to look at her fully, to take her in, all at once. He was too afraid of her loveliness - of being made to feel miserable by some new weapon from the arsenal of her beauty - something she wore, some fresh look, or attitude, or way of doing her hair, some tone in her voice or light in her eye - some fresh 'horror' in fact

I read somewhere recently that something like 80,000 thoughts go through our head each day, and that one of the primary reasons we often feel isolated and separate from each other is because of all these thoughts, constantly dividing, seeking satisfaction, moving from object to object, around and around. George is a slave to his thoughts, hopeless against them, isolating and alienating himself from anything remotely healthy in his need for Netta, who is the worst human being you can imagine. George also experiences episodes of psychological meltdown and during these 'dead moods', his thoughts turn homicidal, a 'click' goes in his head, and the reader is left in no doubt that George will kill Netta Longdon and escape to Maidenhead. The only question is how and when he will kill her.

what about the New Year, then - January the first? That seemed a good idea - starting the New Year - 1939. The New Year -the turn of the year - that meant spring before long. Then it would be warmer, Maidenhead would be warmer. He didn't want to go to Maidenhead in the cold. He wanted to go on the river. Then he must wait for spring. It was too cold to kill Netta yet. That sounded silly but it was a fact. Or was this shilly-shallying on his part?

A mental breakdown, murderous intent and a desire to live in Maidenhead shouldn't be funny, but it is.

There is a sense of apathy in the intimate and isolated space of Earl's Court, where Netta and her seedy little gang hang out. The merry band of deluded wasters are void of any personality or intellect, righteous in their own importance and suspicious of the society they have exiled themselves from. The saloon bars are claustrophobic, but lonely and there is minute detail in the observations and perceptions Hamilton makes of the people that frequent them, in their language, pub politics and pre-war anticipation. The social and political isolation of characters like Peter (Netta's 'friend'), and the young man Netta picks up to take to Brighton, are perhaps illustrative of a time, albeit an extreme illustration, and of a society still recovering from the effects of the First World War, on the cusp of the second. It's sad but utterly enthralling.

Doug H: A masterpiece its personal right, Hangover sq. is the darkish younger cousin to Patrick Hamilton's extra mature The Slaves of Solitude. If you've learn one, you'll want to learn the other. (If you haven't learn either, you should!) They percentage related topics yet they're markedly varied - opposite photos of every other, even. One is a dry comedy with tragic elements; the opposite is a depressing tragedy with comedian elements. either specialise in the struggles of underdog protagonists in suffocating environments, however the Slaves of Solitude is a twisted social satire and Hangover sq. is a twisted mental thriller. i used to be stirred extra intellectually via The Slaves of Solitude. Hamilton used to be many years older while he wrote it and that i imagine the writing is better: extra controlled, extra philosophical, extra poetic, extra elegant, extra mature. There are extra moments whilst he telescopes out from the microcosmic motion to make a macrocosmic comment. If I needed to decide on only one of those booklet to reread, it'd be this one. On the opposite hand, i used to be hit more durable emotionally through Hangover Square. Its protagonist speaks to the lonely social outcast that all of us secretly hold in our heads (even if we aren't all schizophrenic murder-fantasizing virgin man-children alcoholics). whilst he's abruptly proven unforeseen kindness and actual admire by means of a gaggle of socially-important strangers after having been taken care of like a punching bag via his scummy London "friends" for thus long, I cried. I cried a lot. This was once the excessive aspect of the booklet for me and it restored my religion within the simple goodness of people. (Well, it restored my religion within the easy goodness of people that aren't overall assholes.) i feel these satisfied scenes have been so powerful that the radical would truly were greater if it had ended there. it can were extra literary anyhow. In contrast, the ultimate plot issues felt a piece "genre porn" and overly gratuitous. A minor quibble. an exceptional read. I hugely suggest it. P.S. Don't learn J.B. Priestley's spoiler-laden creation till after you're performed with the book. I'm yes completely satisfied I didn't.

Patrick McCoy: Hangover sq. is yet one more successful Nick Hornby advice from the pages of The Believer journal (of which his studies were accrued in volumes: The Polysyllabic Spree and housework vs. The Dirt). it's the tale of a gaggle of unemployed humans dwelling in Earl's court docket ahead of the war, spending all day in saloons killing time with drink and waking overdue daily with a hangover and no funds of their pockets. George Harvey Bone used to be a superior citizen, yet he has come on demanding instances and has fallen below the spell of a undeniable femme fatale Netta, defined as thus: "This woman wore her acceptance now not as a woman

should, simply, consciously, as a cheerful crown of pleasure, yet really as a murderous utensil with which she may possibly wound indiscriminately correct and left, and which she might basically hire to thrill while it suitable her purposes. They have been like bad-tempered streetwalkers with no strolling the street."At first it was once tricky to learn this novel as George time and time back performed the idiot to Netta letting her reap the benefits of his kindness and devotion. the unconventional turns into extra advanced as we know about George's spells within which he type of withdraws and turns into a distinct individual and a plan of revenge emerges. take into account that I obtained stuck up within the tale and felt inspired sufficient to choose up one other Patrick Hamilton novel, *The Slaves of Solitude*, due to the fact that I loved this one so much.

James Newman: Picked up a duplicate in Waterstones Ledenhall industry London circa 2002. replaced my opinion of the English novel. a type of infrequent situations while one unearths an writer that you'll devote a life of examining to. with no reserve. A reader invests within the author as somebody up to the phrases at the page. Patrick was once an alcoholic consuming a number of bottles of Whiskey a day, but he controlled to create such careful, delicate, breath-taking prose. Hamilton's writing is outstanding extra so during this novel that any of his others....*The Slaves of Solitude* and the nighttime Bell trilogy (plains of cement) are very with reference to it. The descriptions of the decrease periods in smoke-ridden west-end pubs, the nuances of conversations, sinister motive implied among the lines; the craftsmanship admirable in every one page, paragraph, sentence... Hamilton was once Dickens for the ingesting man, and for my funds one of many maximum English novelist of the twentieth century. unfortunately overlooked, and sometimes forgotten. an exceptional writer.

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