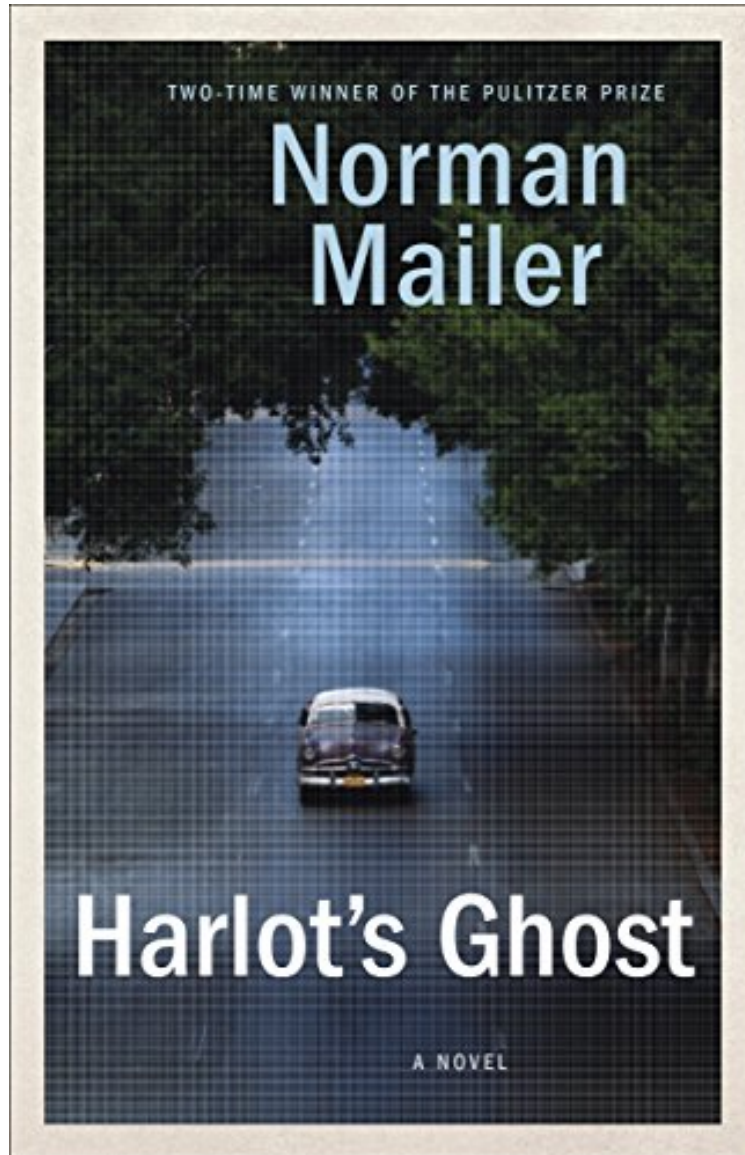


[Free download] Harlot's Ghost: A Novel

Harlot's Ghost: A Novel

Von Norman Mailer

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Von Norman Mailer : Harlot's Ghost: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Harlot's Ghost: A Novel:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. "The road had become a lie." (Harry Hubbard)Von expressNorman Mailer has helped shape America's cultural landscape from the fifties through the seventies and if you drop his name, most people will remember The Naked and the Dead, Advertisements for Myself, Armies of the Night, The Executioner's Song, but hardly anyone will mention Harlot's

Ghost (1991), an exploration of the CIA from the end of WW II to 1965. Distinguished critics, Christopher Hitchens, Lehmann-Haupt, Anthony Burgess and Salman Rushdie among them, considered it one of Mailer's finest works. It sold well and is even today on CIA reading lists, so we should raise it from its grave. Mailer acknowledged that it was not the Great Book he had long promised, but he maintained that with its sequel (after 1300 pages Harlot's Ghost ends with the words "To be continued"), to be titled Harlot's Grave, it would become a "mega novel." The sequel would carry Mailer's protagonist Harry Hubbard to Hollywood and then to Nixon's White House and from there to the Iran-Contra affair. To which Newsweek commented, "The thought is enough to send a reader in search of a drink." Since Mailer had concluded that the FBI, the police, the DEA, and the justice system were all corrupt, in his typically Manichean way, however, this could only mean that some other faction within the government had to be the good guys. The CIA, he decided, was good and necessary and no executioner's song would be able to silence his voice. Of course, Mailer did not intend to write a piece of spy fiction, rather he saw it as the coming of age of Harry Hubbard, his fictional young intelligence officer, and through him, the far more spectacular adventures in duplicity of Hugh Tremont Montague (code name Harlot), Hubbard's mentor. Harlot is obviously based on the real life and legendary spy hunter and CIA chief of counterintelligence, James Jesus Angleton. Active in the OSS during WW II and co-founder of the CIA, he is well chosen to represent the story of the CIA. Harlot's combination of his zealotry with his high intelligence makes his vision of the Cold War landscape complex and fascinating. In those days, the CIA was like a china shop with a burladero shield as front door and Norman Mailer with his riotous lifestyle - much of it took place on television - was at least half bull. In a clever way, he is blending fact and fiction, mixing real characters with fictional creations. He devised a fictional relationship among real Mob boss Sam Giancana, Frank Sinatra, John F. Kennedy, and Modene Murphy, a character based on their real life mistress and go-between Judith Campbell Exner. Mailer's portrait of the Cold War era CIA is at times uncritical of its deceptions and blunders. Nevertheless, the reader who remains alert after a slow opening and a whole lot of words for rather modest effect, will realize that this is just the warm-up for this seemingly crazy enterprise and it becomes clear that Harlot's Ghost is not only working, it is an important novel. The best sequences, are indeed pageturners. The CIA in action with the operatives in full motion builds up a certain breathlessness. But first, the hero Harry Hubbard, the son of pioneers, infused with two generations of Skull and Boners with an earthly father who is an OSS hero, has to win at least the attention of Harlot/Montague. Of course, there's no conventional plot line, instead the CIA has divided the world into "theaters" and Mailer writes about episodes, like the project to drive an actual tunnel into East Berlin, or the campaign to destabilize Cuba after the Bay of Pigs adventure including Operation Mongoose and the exotic attempts to kill Fidel Castro. Then there is Mailer's famous, or infamous problem with women as it was most prominently displayed at the "Town Bloody Hall" debate between a glamorous and brilliant Germaine Greer and a proudly sexist Mailer (30/04/71). Not surprisingly, the women in Harlot's Ghost are essentially sexual objects, except for Hadley Kittredge Montague Hubbard, 3rd cousin of Harry, wife of Hugh Montague and in the end, wife of Harry Hubbard. Mailer tries hard to make her look like Jacqueline Kennedy, but she is not convincing, unless the reader begins to think of her as Norman Mailer himself. She thinks like Mailer; she talks like Mailer and by the Lord Harry, she is Norman Mailer! In the Author's Note at the end of the novel, Mailer explains "since very little was known about Angleton at the time I began this novel, and he was obviously a most complex and convoluted gentleman, I decided to create my own piece of work..." Although James Angleton was indeed one of the most complex and even divisive men in the history of American spying, Mailer's claim that he had "absorbed one hundred books on the CIA," reading everything from E. Howard Hunt's spy novels to Allen Dulles's *The Craft of Intelligence* doesn't sound as impressive as he intended because in the same year as Harlot's Ghost was published, BBC's senior correspondent Tom Mangold came out with *Cold Warrior*, an extremely well researched biography charting James Angleton's involvement in some of the most notorious counterespionage events of the sixties and seventies - inevitably the same real events that Mailer in part fictionalized. It is tempting to compare this novel with *The Naked and the Dead*, for in both books he explores such issues as courage under pressure (Hem are you listening?), the morality of a large bureaucracy, service to one's country, and personal integrity threatened by the enticements of power. In the earlier novel, however, the moral landscape is bleak but not hopeless, while in Harlot's Ghost the terrain is always shifting beneath one's feet and one should be glad, Mailer has never written the sequel. Recommended reading Epstein, Edward Jay: *Deception* Grose, Peter: *Gentleman Spy* Helms, Richard: *A Look over My Shoulder* Mangold, Tom: *Cold Warrior* Prados, John: *Lost Crusader* Thomas, Evan: *The Very Best Men* Weiner, Tim: *Legacy of Ashes*

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. As sequels come and go... Von Ein Kunde A general study of Mailer's pacing shows that the "Thomas Mann for baby boomers" writes one masterful epic for every lighter novel. Further study of the epics show that they alternate between "True-life novels", (*The Executioner's Song*, *Oswald's Tale*), and fictional epics which intertwine with historical events, (*Ancient Evenings*, *The Naked and the Dead*). Therefore logic states that Mailer, having written *The Gospel According to the Son*, is now due for a grand fictional epic. Many of the reviews here demand a sequel, and I have an inclination that it may be coming very shortly. Mailer may have written a large, 3000-5000 page epic initially, and may be choosing to release it serially, much in the way Stephen King has done with his *Dark Tower* series. I, of course, would never compare the two, with all due respect for King, (he helped me through the fifth grade quite nicely). This is not a

review of the novel, just an prediction. I feel a sequel in the wind, and it shall come, I feel assured, within the next year. Whenever anyone asks Mailer about a sequel, he often shrugs and says something in regards to 'soon'. Now that mailer has triumphantly returned to the top of the bestseller's lists with *The Gospel According to the Son*, it may be a good timing decision on Mailer and his publisher's part to release a sequel soon, possibly before Christmas. That said, Mailer has never been one to heavily promote his books, so it might be wise to keep your eyes out. I am simply making a prediction based on what little I know about the publishing world. Don't send me hate e-mails if I am mistaken. I'm just a kid who has never even stepped foot inside a publishing house. But if I am right, feel free to send me praise e-mails by the dozen, because then I am truly a publishing guru who deserves exaltation. Jeremy Daniels

0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Stunning picture of post-WWII U.S. ruling class psychology

Von Ein Kunde

A book I've read many times, and have found more rewarding each time so far. My initial readings prompted me to do a moderate amount of research on the origins of the C.I.A., Castro, and U.S. leaders in the decades immediately following WWII (although there are other major topics in the book, which I intend to research as I find time). When I returned to the book, I was far more impressed by the level of complexity and consistency in the book than I had been capable of appreciating before. Although something of an endurance test (it is not a pleasant read), in terms of overall impact, it is one of the 5 best novels I have read; it is as close to a life-changing novel as I have ever seen, for someone (like myself) unfamiliar with the class of people who are bred to power in this country. I picked it up because I was so impressed by Mailer's first work, "The Naked and the Dead", and the psychological depth of the characters in that novel; HG surpassed my expectations. Over the five years since I first read it, my impression of its quality has only increased

Kurzbeschreibung

With unprecedented scope and consummate skill, Norman Mailer unfolds a rich and riveting epic of an American spy. Harry Hubbard is the son and godson of CIA legends. His journey to learn the secrets of his society and his own past takes him through the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the momentous catastrophe of the Kennedy assassination. All the while, Hubbard is haunted by women who were loved by both his godfather and President Kennedy. Featuring a tapestry of unforgettable characters both real and imagined, *Harlots Ghost* is a panoramic achievement in the tradition of Tolstoy, Melville, and Balzac, a triumph of Mailer's literary prowess. Praise for *Harlots Ghost* [Norman Mailer is] the right man to exalt the history of the CIA into something better than history. Anthony Burgess, *The Washington Post Book World* Elegantly written and filled with almost electric tension . . . When I returned from the world of *Harlots Ghost* to the present I wished to be enveloped again by Mailer's imagination. Robert Wilson, *USA Today* Immense, fascinating, and in large part brilliant. Salman Rushdie, *The Independent on Sunday* A towering creation . . . a fiction as real and as possible as actual history. *The New York Times* Praise for Norman Mailer [Norman Mailer] loomed over American letters longer and larger than any other writer of his generation. *The New York Times* A writer of the greatest and most reckless talent. *The New Yorker* Mailer is indispensable, an American treasure. *The Washington Post* A devastatingly alive and original creative mind. Life Mailer is fierce, courageous, and reckless and nearly everything he writes has sections of headlong brilliance. *The New York of Books* The largest mind and imagination [in modern] American literature . . . Unlike just about every American writer since Henry James, Mailer has managed to grow and become richer in wisdom with each new book. *Chicago Tribune* Mailer is a master of his craft. His language carries you through the story like a leaf on a stream. *The Cincinnati Post* From the Trade Paperback edition. From Kirkus's *The Big One*, volume one (yes, 1,408 pages!) of Mailer's long-promised masterpiece, in which he does for the CIA what Melville did for mammals and God, and what Thomas Mann did for the metaphysics of tuberculosis. A small serving of potted plot: Herrick (Harry) Hubbard has been raised in the thickish atmosphere of the CIA, which his Hemingwayesque father, Cal, helped deliver out of WW II's OSS. Harry's godfather is CIA overseer Hugh Tremont Montague, a Christian Einstein of spycraft, who may also be the Devil. Hugh is married to Hadley Kittredge Gardiner (named after Hemingway's first wife, Hadley Richardson, and the great Shakespearean scholar George Kittredge). Harry loves Kittredge and marries her after Hugh breaks his back and causes the death of his son in a climbing accident. All this happens before the novel begins and will be told in detail in volume two. In fact, Kittredge abandons Harry for boorish CIA superman Dix Butler in the novel's overture and Harry hides out in the Bronx to write volume one. All this is framework for the stuff of the story, which tells of Harry's early years in the CIA (1956- 63), during which he is sent to Berlin to work under fabled spymaster William King Harvey, a genius now gone to gin, then to Florida to work on the Bay of Pigs invasion, then into Operation Mongoose, the assassination of Fidel Castro. And during these latter ops, he falls for Modene Murphy (who's modeled on Judith Exner, mistress to Frank Sinatra, Godfather Sam Giancana, and JFK). The novel ends with Harry setting up Castro's murder just as JFK is assassinated. That's it, but it tells you nothing about the sorcery of the telling, with Mailer's novelistic gifts working at full mastery, his magic with moods, metaphor and touches of color (his Havana harbor rivals Enobarbus's description of Cleopatra's barge), his genius for character and matted plotting, humor, and gripping flights of philosophy (far more lively than *The Magic Mountain's*) with the CIA

seen as "the mind of America." (Book-of-the-Month Split Main Selection for December) -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. From Library Journal To call Mailer's CIA novel a spy story would be like calling Moby Dick a whaling story. If you are seeking myriad details about how The Agency really operates, you will find them here, but Mailer has always sought the nuances that give facts their essential meaning, and that is what makes this book so much more than just another CIA expose. For Mailer's true purpose is to define that part of the American psyche that has spawned and sustains the CIA. It is a spirit (and note that this is a book more metaphysical than political) born of militant Christianity and buccaneering rapacity, of noblesse oblige and authoritarian devotion, a spirit believing itself turned in to God without worrying if it's heeding the devil. The dialectic here is Manicheism more than Marxism, and--shades of Melville--the quest is one in which we may forfeit our souls. An immensely long but never laborious book, one where Mailer works compelling variations on his quintessential themes. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 9/1/90.-Charles Michaud, Turner Free Lib., Randolph, Mass. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.