



Purgatory Gardens: A Novel

Peter Lefcourt

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Sammy Dee is a mid-level Long Island mafioso in witness protection. Didier Onyekachukwu was the corrupt minister of finance of the former Upper Volta. Both men find themselves in middle age, living in the Southern California version of genteel poverty in a down-market condo complex called Paradise Gardens. Enter Marcy Gray, a “mature” actress barely getting by on a meager SAG pension. She is looking for a guy to help her through the duration and, frankly, at this point her standards are not as high as they should be; she’d settle for someone who doesn’t pick his teeth at the table and who drives at night. Occasional sex and some travel wouldn’t hurt. Her search has narrowed to two fellow residents: Sammy and Didier, who, being male, are mostly interested in getting into Marcy Gray’s pants. Though a little of the money they mistakenly think she has wouldn’t hurt either.

Once both men realize that the other is the primary obstacle to Marcy’s affections, each decides to put a hit on the other, and winds up unknowingly hiring the same father-son demolition squad.

As the contract killers play both of their clients against one another, Marcy manages to keep both men out of her bed until one or the other of her prospects passes muster. Poisoned pizza, blown-up cars, sex in the sauna, and media madness ensue. It’s Elmore Leonard meets Carl Hiaasen as directed by the Coen brothers. With *Purgatory Gardens*, Lefcourt is back at the top of his game as one of America’s leading comedic writers.

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Purgatory Gardens: A Novel Details

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From Reader Review Purgatory Gardens: A Novel for online ebook

Jill Meyer says

Peter Lefcourt writes very funny books. The humor is usually dark and his books are much more character-driven than plot-driven. In fact, only Lefcourt's "The Woody" - published in the late 1990's and is about Washington politics - has as much plot development as character development. It is one of the funniest, most satirical books I've read.

Lefcourt writes both stand-alone books and books reusing old characters. It's always fun to learn what old friends in literature are up to these days, and in "Purgatory Gardens", we do see Charlie Berns again. But instead of being the lead character as he was in previous novels, Charlie is more of a secondary character, though one whose actions do add a boost to the story. The three main characters - Marcy Gray, a fading Hollywood actress, Sammy Dee, a low-level Mafia guy now in the Witness Protection Program, and Didier something-too-long-and-complicated-to spell - are all residents at "Paradise Gardens", a mid-level apartment complex in Palm Springs. All are in their late 60's and all are on the run from various troubled pasts. They wind up in Palm Springs - Charlie Berns is their common neighbor - and a love triangle evolves. Both Sammy and Didier are in love (and lust) with Marcy and are at odds at how to capture her love - and body.

Lefcourt's characters are always interesting in a sort of deranged way. Even when they're doing something stupid - as in this case - or illegal, there's an almost lovable feeling to them. You want to know them and maybe have them as friends. Maybe you're smart enough not to want to be too entangled with them, but you'd like to have them in your life. And the safest way is as characters in a very funny novel, one you can reread every now and again.

Peter Lefcourt is a Hollywood insider whose knowledge of what's going on and how business really works is always on the pages of his "Charlie Berns" books. "Purgatory Gardens" is another fun and charming novel by Lefcourt. I would also, again, recommend "The Woody" (not available in ebook, for some reason) and another novel I thought was outstanding, was "An American Family", published in 2012 and a serious look at a Long Island family which begins on November 22, 1963 and ends on September 11, 2001.

Darlene Williams says

Repetitive

Three characters should have three different angles. This was more of three characters with almost the same angle. Very repetitive in a not so great way. The story was okay.

Suzanne E Rush says

Nice little summer read.

Simple story but fairly well developed. Entertaining poolside reading. Set n the extraordinary community of Palm Springs, the author nails a retirement culture that thrives or simply exists there.

Paul says

This book was alright but it never got truly funny or even absurd, which is what I was expecting when I read what it was about. I think I will try one of the authors other books.
