



Devil Take the Blue-tail Fly

John Franklin Bardin

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Nova Iorque, 1946, Ellen, uma cravista profissional, regressa a casa para junto do seu marido Basil, após um internamento numa clínica psiquiátrica. Ao encontrar-se por acaso com Jim Shad, o cantor folk que a seduziu quando ainda era estudante, Ellen começa a perder o controlo mental.

Ao longo da narrativa das semanas seguintes, o romance de John Franklin Bardin torna-se um thriller assustador e inesquecível.

Devil Take the Blue-tail Fly Details

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From Reader Review Devil Take the Blue-tail Fly for online ebook

Karen Grikitis says

John Franklin Bardin effectively portrays the disturbed mind of musician Ellen, whose violent alter ego, Nelle, takes over in moments of turmoil with devastating consequences.

Javier_fernandez says

Hasta donde he leído, ésta es una de las mejores novelas del thriller psicológico, esto es, género policiaco sin policías. Una prosa excelente, propia de los narradores norteamericanos de mitad del Siglo XX, y luego, cuando todo parece estable y decidido, sobreviene un tremendo latigazo que lo transforma todo. Por qué se habla tan poco de John Franklin Bardin? No tengo la menor idea. /// * * * 1/2

Maria João Fernandes says

"Que o Diabo Leve a Mosca Azul" começa com o último dia de Ellen no hospício onde viveu nos últimos dois anos. Entusiasmada com o seu regresso ao mundo real, rapidamente se apercebe que a mudança não se deu apenas em si, mas em tudo o que a rodeia.

Devo dizer que este livro também precisava de uma grande mudança. Página após página lemos mais do mesmo: viagens que misturam o real com o fantástico, mergulhos em memórias antigas, muitas sombras e nevoeiro.

O texto é demasiado vago e as descrições subtis. A falta de diálogos apenas evidencia o conteúdo, que mal se qualifica como conteúdo. O autor quer contar uma história, mas só sabe fazê-lo mais ou menos bem, perdendo-se em palavras que não nos levam à lado nenhum. É como se andássemos em círculos e de repente nos apercebêssemos que aquele lugar nos era familiar.

Não é que seja preconceituosa em relação às pessoas mentalmente instáveis, mas a personagem principal, com uma personalidade e comportamento tão invulgares, devia ser minimamente interessante. Ou pelo menos, suscitar a minha curiosidade, ao contrário de me provocar bocejos e de me fazer revirar os olhos.

Penso que o facto de não apreciar música clássica não me ajudou a sentir empatia pelo enredo, mas não foi por falta de tentativa. Para compreender a necessidade deste tipo de música, fiz uma comparação com o que a literatura significa para mim mesma. Não resultou pois o problema não está no que nos é contado, mas sim naquilo que fica por dizer.

A confusão mental de Ellen, a personagem principal, foi transposta para a narrativa, tornando um livro com um início interessante, num rascunho de uma má ideia inacabada.

Gail says

Really quite peculiar.

Bill Kerwin says

Devil Take the Blue Tail Fly (1948) is an odd, accomplished *noir*, almost as effective as Bardin's earlier *The Deadly Percheron* (1946), but this time Bardin draws his inspiration not from the detective thriller but instead from the brooding "women's pictures" of the post WW II period.

It begins its journey in the land of *The Snake Pit*, where our heroine, the gifted harpsichordist Ellen, waits for her husband Basil the conductor to bring her home from the mental hospital, but it soon takes a detour to the neighborhood of *Gaslight* as Ellen begins a feverish search for her harpsichord key, convinced Basil is hiding it from her. But soon Ellen encounters her old lover, the professional folksinger Jimmy Shad (his signature song is "The Blue Tail Fly") and Bardin's novel takes a darker, crazier turn into a funhouse featuring hallucinatory variations on a few feverish Joan Crawford and Bette Davis themes.

The book is not without flaws. For example, like many of the movies and books of the period, its psychologizing seems naive, its Freudianism outmoded. But in spite of all the twists and turns, all the craziness and flaws, the book is held together by two things: Bardin's honest, deeply sympathetic portrayal of mental illness and his vivid writing about music as a craft and an inspiration.

One of the great sorrows of John Franklin Bardin's life was that his mother, who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, was confined to a mental hospital and remained there until her death. He never forgot her, though, or her continual obsession with "going home," which he used as an inspiration for both *Percheron* and *Blue Tail Fly*. His obvious sympathy with the character of Ellen anger psychological makes this book than a mere thriller.

The most important factor that unifies *Devil Take the Blue Tail Fly*, however, are the continual passages about the challenges and joys of music, for it is music that gives Ellen's life its shape and meaning:

This was now, here and undeniable, an eternal instant. Irrevocable, irrefutable, it had a strength and a reality that defied oblivion. With it she was unique, just as it was unique; without it she ceased to exist, just as it was nothing. Rthis power to evoke music depended upon her reading of black marks on a ruled page, upon the dexterity of her fingers and her body's sense of rhythm, upon her knowledge of the way it was, the quality of its sound. But she depended upon it too, for without it she did not know herself. Outside its orbit she was a bundle of sensations, a walking fear, an appetite, a lawless creature. But when this sound esited, she undertood, her life had meaning, order, morality. This was her end, she was its means.

Luísa Ferreira says

Uma surpresa mais do que agradável, um verdadeiro thriller psicológico que roça o horror e toca o génio.

Fernando says

Uma surpresa, suspense "psiquiátrico", estrutura narrativa moderna, desenvolta e com final forte e intenso. Ellen (Nelle) é um personagem que irá inquietar a memória de todos os leitores. Bem escrito e muito perturbador.

Chana says

The woman is mad and to make matters worse, shock treatment takes the only thing that matters to her. She belongs in a locked ward for the criminally insane, life sentence.

M.R. Dowsing says

Probably JFB's best as it doesn't have a silly Scooby Doo ending. This is stylish, dark, compelling psychological noir. The protagonist is a classical harpsichord player and her world is portrayed very convincingly - the scene in which the phoniness of the hangers-on at her comeback party becomes apparent is especially well done. Strange this wasn't filmed with Gene Tierney or Susan Hayward in the lead, Vincent Price as the husband, Robert Mitchum as Jim and Herbert Marshall as the shrink.

Guy Salvidge says

Slower moving than *The Deadly Percheron* and without the many curveballs the plot of *Percheron* throws. On the other hand, some of the writing is very intense and surreal. Unique even.

Lix Chvz says

I loved the choice of words on the descriptions of Ellen's mind; but things became most predictable at the middle of the story. Still worth the reading!

Jack Tripper says

(ETA: Here's the cover of my 1967 Macfadden mass-market edition, which isn't listed here)

1948's *Devil Take the Blue-Tail Fly* is a mind/reality-bending tale that's unlike anything else of the era, at least that I've read. It's a combination of noir and psychological horror where the reader is never on solid ground, due to the deteriorating mental condition of the protagonist, a semi-famous, mentally disturbed classical harpsichordist newly free of an insane asylum, whose buried and forgotten past may finally be catching up with her.

It's very dream-like and surreal at times, yet seemingly rooted in reality at others, and while there were a few too many long, hallucinatory passages that can be a little overwhelming, overall this was an intense, tripped-out thriller that's at or near the same level as Bardin's more well-known debut, *The Deadly Percheron* (though quite different). The closest thing I could compare it to as far as the "feel" of it would be later-period David Lynch films like *Lost Highway*, *Mulholland Dr.*, and *Inland Empire*, yet this prefigured those by half a century.

Recommended for fans of noir, psychological horror, or the aforementioned Lynch films.

4.5 Stars

Pertita says

Quando comprei este livro fi-lo quase exclusivamente por causa do nome (só dei uma vista de olhos na sinopse). Vamos ver como me saí!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Gostei bastante embora seja um livro triste. Faz-nos pensar a importancia da nossa mente, o que ela nos pode levar a fazer, pensar ou sentir....

Jim Collett says

This was an amazingly "modern" book, considering it was written in 1948. It is difficult to follow but worth staying with until the end. Strange, sad, tragic.

Luis says

Esperaba algo mas fluido... Pero se me hizo super densa la lectura...uno pierde interés enseguida dando tantas vueltas... A veces extiende mucho cosas innecesarias y se vuelve aburrido. No pude terminar de leerlo...
