



Gentleman Junkie and Other Stories of the Hung Up Generation

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Bold and uncompromising, Gentleman Junkie and Other Stories of the Hung-up Generation is a watershed moment in Harlan Ellison's early writing career. Rather than dealing in speculative fiction, these twenty-five short stories directly tackle issues of discrimination, injustice, bigotry, and oppression by the police. Pulling from his own experience, Ellison paints vivid portraits of the helpless and downtrodden, blazing forth with the kind of unblinking honesty that would define his career. Reviewing this collection, Dorothy Parker called Ellison "a good, honest, clean writer, putting down what he has seen and known, and no sensationalism about it." Harlan Ellison has been called "one of the great living American short story writers" by the Washington Post. In a career spanning more than fifty years, he has won more awards than any other living fantasist. Ellison has written or edited seventy-four books; more than seventeen hundred stories, essays, articles, and newspaper columns; two dozen teleplays; and one dozen motion pictures. He has won the Hugo Award eight and a half times (shared once); the Nebula Award three times; the Bram Stoker Award, presented by the Horror Writers Association, five times (including the Lifetime Achievement Award in 1996); the Edgar Allan Poe Award of the Mystery Writers of America twice; the Georges Melies Fantasy Film Award twice; two Audie Awards (for the best in audio recordings); and he was awarded the Silver Pen for Journalism by PEN, the international writers' union. He was presented with the first Living Legend Award by the International Horror Critics at the 1995 World Horror Convention. Ellison is the only author in Hollywood ever to win the Writers Guild of America award for Outstanding Teleplay (solo work) four times, most recently for "Paladin of the Lost Hour," his Twilight Zone episode that was Danny Kaye's final role, in 1987. In 2006, Ellison was awarded the prestigious title of Grand Master by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. Dreams With Sharp Teeth, the documentary chronicling his life and works, was released on DVD in May 2009.

Gentleman Junkie and Other Stories of the Hung Up Generation Details

Date : Published April 1st 2014 by Open Road Media (first published August 1975)

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Author : Harlan Ellison

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From Reader Review Gentleman Junkie and Other Stories of the Hung Up Generation for online ebook

Jesse Doggett says

This is only a 3 because the stories are not my cup of tea. Ellison is an excellent writer and brilliantly portrays the characters and their spirit. It's just these stories are about the common man at his darkest. The stories so vivid, they were disturbing to me to read. Great writing, just not for me.

L. says

Since we are talking Harlan Ellison there is really no reason to engage in any advocacy. I am either preaching to the converted or spitting into the wind. There is no middle ground with Ellison. Consequently the point here is to be informative. "Gentleman Junkie" is a collection of dark stories dealing more with the real world than you usually find in Ellison's more famous works of speculative fiction. These are stories about racial prejudice, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, anti-Semitism, alienation, violence and other fun topics. Consequently, these are tales best consumed one at a time, because to sit down and read this book cover to cover would be a bit much for most souls.

Allan says

I revisited this book that I read way back in my angst teenager years and to this day it is still a great read. The stories are dated but they still give that good old punch to the gut while reading them.

Definitely not happy stories, but hey it is Harlan Ellison after all! There is a lot of darkness, depression, violence and anger in all these in this collection, but all are very well written gems!

April says

Harlan Ellison's first big hit from the early sixties is back in print here with a poignant look at American life in the mid-twentieth century. With dark edges and a cautionary bent, this collection of short stories could become a classic of American literature. Despite Ellison's obvious mastery of the short story, "Gentleman Junkie" is often overlooked simply because it is a foray into an unusual genre for this normally speculative author. It certainly deserves more attention than it's gotten, not only for the quality and downright grittiness of the fiction but also for its historical significance in giving Ellison a reason to keep pursuing the career of writing.

Written during his short stint in the military, Gentleman Junkie and other tales carries a persistence and brand of honesty rarely seen in writers analyzing the follies of their own generation. All of the stories deal with the issues du jour, such as racism, anti-semitism, sexism, addiction, and the beginning of the end of the American dream. All of these narratives also showcase the dark side of humanity and highlight much of the beginning of the counterculture era.

Many of the shorts in this collection make quite an impact: here are a few focal points.

"Daniel White for the Greater Good" - This piece is often recognized as the most important and memorable of the collection. Tackling racism in the south, Ellison turns expectation on its head and makes the reader consider the law of unintended consequences. Juxtaposed with the final tale, "The Night of Delicate Terrors", it provides a fascinating look at the realities of race in Ellison's time, something many take for granted in this age of acceptance.

"There's One on Every Campus" - This is a story about "that girl" -- the one we all know and yet don't bother knowing. But who is she really, on the inside? "There's One..." is a fascinating story about early feminism, sexism, and individualism. It is memorable because it is such a clear snapshot of that pre-counterculture time period.

"Someone is Hungrier" - My favorite in this collection, this one has a darker tone than most of the other stories, (though all have their moments). Again, it's a new look at feminism and the bad things that can happen to those who reach too far, too fast. Ellison superbly uses irony to capture the truth of unhealthy ambition.

"No Game for Children" - A classic take on revenge and juvenile delinquency, with a slightly horrific twist. Gentleman Junkie... is a fascinating look at the late fifties and early sixties. Ellison's prose is easy to submerge oneself into, as existing fans can already appreciate. This book can be used as a learning tool for current and future generations, an important historical fiction, and just an outright great group of stories. Philosophically deep and also pleasurable to read, this collection deserves a look from anyone serious about American literature.
Recommended.

This book was provided to me by SF Revu in exchange for an unbiased review.

Jesse Lynn says

Harlan Ellison has been my favorite author since I first discovered him several years ago. "Gentleman Junkie" is by far the best short story collection I've ever read. None of the stories have any science fiction elements in them. Each one is about life and its effect on people. Honest writing about the human heart in conflict with itself. A must read for any fan of literature.

Ron says

Ellison's only collection that isn't speculative fiction, written while he served in the military from 1957-59, this is his best and most powerful work. I haven't read it in over twenty years, but just reading the titles of the stories brought back the memories and gave me chills. This is Flannery O'Connor for the drugged-out 60s.

Quill says

The Basics

A collection of short stories, mainly in a contemporary vein. Each story deals with some transgression or sin and how it impacts the life of the sinner and those around them. From greed to lust to addiction.

My Thoughts

The unfortunate thing here is that these stories don't entirely hold up for a modern audience. At times, they come off as morality tales, and there's a preachiness there. They waffled between being simple, honest portrayals of hard lives and wagging a finger at the characters in an attempt to teach the audience something. When they were the former, it was wonderful. When they were the latter, it rankled.

I think, too, that it's easy to write a contemporary story that teaches something, but harder to do so in science fiction. There is no SF to be found here. It's all steeped entirely in reality, and I simply prefer seeing Ellison wind his way through a more fantastical setting, molding it to suit what message he wants to impart. Using SF as the package for a message can make it an easier pill to swallow, where these stories felt jagged and force-fed.

I didn't hate it by any means, but I remember thinking quite clearly that I wish I could figure out what was holding this back from being what his other collections have been to me. The writing was still beautiful. I have enjoyed his contemporary stories, like from *No Doors, No Windows*, in the past. So what was the problem? They weren't smooth. Particularly any story that incorporated drug use was judgmental. Regardless about how I felt about these topics, I didn't enjoy feeling as if I should feel one way or another.

I wouldn't recommend this for a first time reader, but for completionists, go for it. It's always worth Ellison's prose.

Final Rating

3.5/5

Bob Rust says

Foreword (Gentleman Junkie and Other Stories of the Hung-Up Generation) • (1961) • essay by Frank M. Robinson

Introduction: The Children of Nights • (1975) • essay by Harlan Ellison

Final Shtick • (1960) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

Gentleman Junkie • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

May We Also Speak? • (1961) • essay by Harlan Ellison

Daniel White for the Greater Good • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

Lady Bug, Lady Bug • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

Free With This Box! • (1958) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

There's One on Every Campus • (1959) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

At the Mountains of Blindness • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

This Is Jackie Spinning • (1959) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

No Game for Children • non-genre • (1959) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

The Late, Great Arnie Draper • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

High Dice • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

Enter the Fanatic, Stage Center • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

Someone Is Hungrier • (1960) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

Memory of a Muted Trumpet • non-genre • (1960) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

Turnpike • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison
Sally in Our Alley • (1959) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison
The Silence of Infidelity • non-genre • (1957) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison
Have Coolth • (1959) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison
RFD #2 • (1957) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison and Henry Slesar
No Fourth Commandment • (1956) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison
The Night of Delicate Terrors • (1961) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison

David Allen says

This 1961 collection, about jazz, New York, the South, rent parties, racial prejudice, drug abuse, homicide and love, is one of Ellison's early "deadly streets"-themed books, with no SF or fantasy elements at all. Despite some dated elements (such as the subtitle), these 22 stories are mostly still effective.

Jill says

I go to Harlan Ellison when I am angry. When the world isn't even pretending at fairness, when it seems like there's nothing left for an individual to do. I seek out Harlan Ellison when I am at my most powerless, in hopes that his vitriol will spark me forward. Ellison does this in ways no one ever has. Ellison is angrier than all of us.

This collection barely even touches the scifi/fantasy/horror Ellison is best known for -- hints of a vampire or old souls in a couple, but aside from that, this Dorothy-Parker-lauded series of stories is about injustice. Racial and economic, particularly, and all the heartbreaking bullshit that comes with those disparities. Most are pretty good, a few are incoherent, and another few smack of that particular magic Ellison alone has: fingers in the side, arresting and intense, and with your full attention engaged. Not a standout collection, really, but still special.

Special. Special. Special in its fucking *prescience*, see, because not to get *political* in an Ellison review because oh heaven knows *he'd* never utter a word of opinion ----- but a racist just got elected president of the United States, and Ellison wrote these in the 50s and 60s. And what has changed?

I seek out Ellison when I'm angry.
I want that anger to mean something.
Usually he makes me believe it does.
Usually.

Lucinda Powell says

I originally bought a used copy of this nearly twenty years ago at a library booksale when I was attending GSC. I loved it but lost it somewhere along the way. Several years back, I was able to buy another used copy from a guy in Canada on ABE. This book is vintage Ellison with some of the best short stories ever written by anyone. "Daniel White For The Greater Good" should be taught in classrooms nationwide, in my humble opinion. My other favorites were "Turnpike" and the title story "Gentleman Junkie." "Someone is Hungrier" is perfect and one I've never forgotten but the one that really got me and brings tears to my eyes every single

time I read it is "There's One on Every Campus." Utter truth. I wish I could give 6 stars here. A gem!

Chris says

This collection showcases Harlan Ellison's mastery of the short story form, yet it just doesn't have the same panache as his speculative fiction. The writing is skilled, as is expected from Ellison, but it felt to me more like writing exercises for someone who hasn't quite yet found his voice, as might be the case since these were written early in his career. The one story that strays outside of realism is "Enter the Fanatic, Stage Center" which not surprisingly, was my favorite.

Craig says

This is a collection of the best of Ellison's non-genre early stories. It's a rather dark book, focusing on universal issues such as drug use, sexism, racism... the same issues that still currently dominate our culture and discussions. The stories are surprisingly human in temper as well, bringing insight alternately to the qualities of bravery and cowardice, ignorance and knowledge, sin and redemption... you know, all of the heavy hitters. A few of the stories seem just a bit creaky with age, but they're still thought-provoking pieces well worth consideration.

Gregor Xane says

A jumble of outrageously egoistic, shamelessly moralistic fables, and self-righteous vignettes of patronizing maliciousness, served up in colored dialectic, jazz jive, pretentious literary allusions, and discordant, thesaurus-vocabulary showboating. I loved it!

Cale says

This is one of Harlan Ellison's earliest collections, and the stories here are all general fiction, not Science Fiction. It includes a couple of stories I've read before, the powerful racism stories 'Daniel White for the Greater Good' and 'The Night of Delicate Terrors', but a number of them were new to me. The stories are powerful images of a time long past, stories about Beat generation poets and 60's swingers and jazz musicians, druggies and truckers, every day people living fairly normal lives, but captured in impressive simple stories. Ellison paints them well, making these people you wouldn't notice on the street come to life for a brief few pages. Many are unpleasant or unlikable, living lives I don't envy, but even so I appreciate the brief glimpses of their perspectives. Ellison's ability to capture those lifestyles that he has never lived is amazing; all of them are believable. It's an early collection, but even here you can see the promise that is Ellison's amazing career.
