



Blind Corner

Dornford Yates

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This is Yates' first thriller: a tautly plotted page-turner featuring the tense, crime-busting adventures of suave Richard Chandos. Chandos is sent down from Oxford for `beating up some Communists', and on return from vacation in Biarritz witnesses a murder. Teaming up at his London club with friend Jonathan Mansel, a stratagem is devised to catch the killer. The book has equally compelling sequels, Blood Royal, An Eye For a Tooth, Fire Below and Perishable Goods.

Blind Corner Details

Date : Published November 1st 1985 by Harper Perennial (first published 1927)

ISBN : 9780060807757

Author : Dornford Yates

Format : Hardcover 225 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, European Literature, British Literature, Literature, 20th Century, Contemporary

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From Reader Review Blind Corner for online ebook

Tina says

Good old-fashioned Edwardian adventure--sometimes a little hard to follow the physical action, and very old-fashioned violence--but very engrossing.

John says

good for a teen to read , not me

Melanie says

so evocative of the era, another brilliant read

Avril says

I've started exploring Dornford Yates via John Buchan and Angela Thirkell. I started reading Buchan's thrillers when I was in high school, drawn to those with a Scottish setting and pleased to find that he'd been the son of a Scottish Presbyterian manse. (I read the books of his sister, O. Douglas, too.) He is conservative, but I didn't mind the class consciousness in books so clearly historical. I recently started reading the 'Barsetshire' series of Angela Thirkell and, again, didn't mind the extreme class consciousness of her pre-War and war books. I've had to give up reading her post-WW2 books in which she rails at the British Welfare State and the lower classes no longer knowing their place.

Reading Buchan and Thirkell led me to a book by Kate Macdonald, *Novelists Against Social Change: Conservation Popular Fiction, 1920-1960*, which examines the writing of Buchan, Thirkell - and Dornford Yates. I knew nothing of Dornford Yates; I'd seen his books around but never thought I'd want to read them. But Macdonald compares him to Buchan and Thirkell and I thought I should check out his comedies and thrillers.

Yes, Yates is appallingly class-conscious. If I was reading his books as they came out I would have found them appalling, given that I would have been in his 'servant classes' and expected to work at all hours for little pay while worshipping my betters. But now, reading this book 91 years after it was published, I can enjoy it as historical fiction. The mores of another time don't affect me and I can follow his upper-class heroes without wanting to overthrow them. And as a historical thriller, in the style of Buchan, this book was a lot of fun. I don't think I'd want to spend time with Yates, though!

Dfordoom says

Dornford Yates (1885-1960) was one of the most popular British authors of thrillers in the years between the two world wars. In fact Yates, Sapper and John Buchan he could be said to be the big three of the thriller

genre at that period. All three authors are unjustly neglected today, Yates even more so than Sapper and Buchan.

Blind Corner, published in 1927, was the first of his thrillers featuring Richard Chandos.

A young Englishman named Richard Chando, by an accident of fate (the kind that happens so frequently in thrillers) witnesses a murder while travelling in France. The murderer and his victim had been discussing a treasure that one of them apparently had information about. Chandos promises the dying man that he will look after his dog and when he examines the dog's collar he finds that he now possesses the key to finding the treasure.

He fails to report the matter to the police, presumably because he scents adventure in the offing. On his return to England he has another chance encounter, but this one turns out not to be accidental at all. He meets Jonathan Mansel and through him discovers that the dead man was a British intelligence officer.

This is not however going to be a spy thriller. The treasure had belonged to a nobleman in Austria who was literally a robber baron. He had hidden his loot in a well on his estate and now several centuries later Mansel intends to find it.

They are not the only ones hunting the treasure. The murderer has joined forces with a notorious criminal named Rose Noble, a particularly dangerous but extremely cunning man. The two gangs become involved in what is in effect a private war. Mansel and his friends are holed up in the dead nobleman's castle while Rose Noble and his gang lay siege to it. In some ways there's not much difference between the two gangs. Neither has any legal right to the treasure. But there is a crucial difference - Mansel and his friends are gentlemen who are loyal to each other while Rose Noble and his crew are lower-class thugs who would cheerfully slit each other's throats.

Both gangs are now caught up in a race as they pursue the treasure from different directions, from within and from outside the castle.

Blind Corner is slightly different in tone from most British thrillers of that age since the heroes are in fact engaging in activities that are in fact quite illegal, even if they are decent chaps and thoroughly brave and noble. In that respect they're closer to gentlemen thieves like Raffles than to conventional heroes such as Bulldog Drummond.

Yates wrote about three dozen novels in various genres including eight Richard Chandos thrillers.

This is a thoroughly enjoyable adventure yarn and well worth tracking down.

Jane Irish Nelson says

More of an adventure than a traditional mystery. When Richard William Chandos is sent down from Oxford, he decides to take a European vacation. Finally on his way home, he overhears a threatening conversation, and actually witnesses a murder. The dying victim entrusts him with his dog and a valuable secret. This secret leads Chandos and two friends, Jonathan Mansel and George Hanbury on a treasure hunt in Austria, always trying to keep one step ahead of the opposition. Though exciting and riveting, the writing style is at times somewhat wordy, but the book is still extremely enjoyable. Recommended.

Neil says

Since coming across Yates's books a year or so ago I've been trying to read them in order. The earliest are mostly "Berry" books, light, charming, romantic comedies written with a florid style. There are also other collections of non-Berry short stories, not perhaps quite as good, but still light, charming, romantic comedies written with a florid style. Then as well as the two Anthony Lyveden books (similar full length novels, but not so humorous) there was *The Stolen March*, a tiresome piece of whimsy which made me wonder if I was going to enjoy Yates' books as much as I had hoped. Now I have got to the first of the Chandos books and what a change. The book is exciting, suspenseful and thrilling throughout, much less floridly written, I devoured it all in a couple of days. Yates can grip almost as well as Rider Haggard, and although like Haggard, perhaps the story doesn't, by modern standards, move all that quickly and the ending is clearly discernible from a long way off, it was book I really enjoyed and I look forward to the next in the series.

Julian King says

This was my first Jim Thompson, and I have to admit I found it difficult. As a member of the 21st century, and a British citizen, the 1950s USA demotic, especially concerning the minutiae of running a private cinema, was at times for me opaque to the point of impenetrable. The story is told in the form of a monologue by the central character, and although every page positively reeks with the seedy atmosphere of his existence, many of his actions and motives had to be deduced from clues I had a habit of missing. I enjoyed guessing, though, and mostly I guess I guessed right, as I did manage to hold on and reach the end of the story mostly knowing (or thinking I knew) what had gone on. What's more, all of the above notwithstanding, it was still gripping enough to inspire me to have another go sometime soon.

Eugene says

Young adventurers driving fast cars across Europe in a quest to secure hidden treasure ... what's not to like? The author maintains the tension well, and it's a good thriller. OK, you have to turn a blind eye and/or grit your teeth to the protagonist's privileged background and attitude, but it's worth it. Not up to Buchan standards, but fun nonetheless.

Victoria Jackson says

I think this is his first book, it is when they first employ Bell and Rowley. I love these "Tweed and petrol" books of the early 20th century. Excellent. Hero is on his way from Biarritz when he witnesses a killing. Speaks to the victim who gives him a dog with a collar. There is treasure buried in a well near Salzburg. His friend Hanbury's favourite reading is a biography of Walter Scott. They decide to buy the castle! They have a Rolls Royce and buy another car, send 3 servants direct to Salzburg. A race for the treasure ensues. My second Dornford Yates book.

Joan Schulhafer says

A tad dry for me. But I got what I wanted--a taste of the 1930's, England, and exposure to a new author. Recommend it as a classic to hard core readers of traditional British mystery, but not my perfect cup of tea.

Suzannah says

Light airplane reading. Yates writes serviceably, but not brilliantly. And the sequel was pretty silly.
