



I Should Have Stayed Home

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The acclaimed exposé of 1930s Hollywood: the gigolos, the starlets, the fan magazines and the despair behind the glitter. *I Should Have Stayed Home* tells the story of two jobless roommates and movie extras. After Mona gains notoriety for cursing a judge during a friend's trial, she and Ralph are introduced to Hollywood society. Ralph battles with his own corruption and loss of principle, while Mona serves as his conscience, warning him against himself and the temptations of success.

I Should Have Stayed Home Details

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From Reader Review I Should Have Stayed Home for online ebook

Guy Salvidge says

A bit like *The Day of the Locust*, only not nearly as good. McCoy is turning out to be a bit of disappointment other than the exceptional *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*

Belinda says

This is my first Horace McCoy book--of all of the authors I have hunted in my noir fiction scavenger hunt, he has been the hardest to find. I am not exactly sure why--he's written plenty of books and his work "*They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*" was a pretty famous and revered film, directed by Sidney Pollack. My library did not have that particular book but they had several others and I started this one first. It reminded me a lot of *Day of the Locust*--a sordid but truthful look at Hollywood and its Dream Factory and the people caught up in it. It does not have the twisted quality of *Day of the Locust* (which I adore--both film and book) but it made up for it in really great storytelling and an unusual point of view--so often these Hollywood dreams type of stories end up being narrated or about a woman or girl pursuing her dreams and being crushed at every turn. The main character of this book is a young man from Georgia who is living in a platonic relationship with a woman who is also a film extra as he is. All of the casting couch stereotypes are turned upside down here--they still happen--just to a man instead of a woman. As with most noir type books there are plenty of twists and turns and heartbreak around every corner. I blew through this really quickly and intend to head back to my online library and grab another Horace McCoy. It's always so exciting to find a new author to love <3

Andy says

In the same vein as McCoy's "*They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*" this tale concerns two struggling young Hollywood wannabes, a feisty girl who's hip to the BS and corruption of Tinseltown and her roommate she kinda has a crush on, a dopey farmboy who ends up getting led around by a lecherous old dowager who beds him down with promises of getting him a big break in the pictures.

A 1930's "*Mulholland Drive*" minus the lesbiana, you won't be able to put this one down.

Carla Remy says

Since Horace McCoy is considered a documenter of the depression (*They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*) this book makes sense. The title refers to Hollywood (the idea and the literal town). There is no crime in this book, darkness, but not noir darkness.

It's about doing anything for Hollywood success. Adorably, this book is from 1938 and the main character thinks "the good old days of film" are past. Well, the book doesn't take place at MGM.

The characters are "extras." I know this world, though in my day we call it "background." And, let me tell you, this is still going on. Except people are perhaps less innocent now than they were in the day of this book. Or maybe they're not, I guess you still gotta think you might have a chance.

I was not an actor, but I did do background and found everything quite interesting to observe,.

Tosh says

There is really no such thing as a bad Hollywood or noir novel. If it's well-written, and tells the tale, it rarely fails. For me, there are usually the exceptional and then there is the enjoyable. "I Should Have Stayed Home" is very enjoyable, but clearly to me, not exceptional. The novel was originally published in 1938, and it does capture that moment in time, with respect to how people see the movie world. Everything else in the world was shit, yet the images of the cinema world were like medicine for those who were spiritually ill or suffering from the effects of the great depression. McCoy's novel clearly expresses his time, but yet for me, it lacks poetry, which makes a noir novel great.

The story is about a farm boy who comes to Hollywood to become, not an actor, but a star. He lives with Mona, who is also an star-want-to-be, but is also quite realistic in her chances in becoming such a professional. On the other hand, Ralph, is quite blind to the world around him, and therefore is an innocent floating in the shit that was / is Hollywood. In the hands of someone like David Goodis, this would have been a trip to the underworld, but McCoy to me, is almost a nay-nay person, wagging his finger towards the Hollywood climate.

There are those who are in, and those outside the Hollywood system or factory. There is a political element, in that it is a world that exploits its people, and I sense McCoy is of that thinking that the system is pretty horrible. There is a strong message that Hollywood is very much of an opium to the great population out there. This may be the case, but it is also like any other business that produces goods for the population, and to be fair to McCoy, I think he conveys that very well. The problem I have with the book is that I find Ralph a huge bore. I kind of hate him, because he's so simple, and on top of that, he's a southern racist. He's a little lamb who lost his way, and he lost in a damned world.

He does come upon good people - for instance Mona, but also one of the producers, who is actually very kind in letting him know that he will never ever make it in Hollywood. Ralph, due to his (stupid) nature, cannot accept that fact. I think reading this novel has to be a total experience than if I actually read the book in 1938. The mind-set of the readers at the time, were going through harsh times, so the promise of a "Hollywood" must have been a given thing or the end of that rainbow, which promises a greater future. McCoy pops that balloon. For me, "Dirty Eddie" by Ludwig Bremlmans is a much better book on Hollywood morals and decadence. Yet, this is a wonderful read, but just not essential for me, with respect to the "Hollywood" novel.

byAx says

Gli illusi disillusi

Come nel bel *Non si uccidono così anche i cavalli?*, anche in questo romanzo McCoy racconta le ombre dietro le luci.

Le illusioni sono il pane di chi spera in un destino migliore, forze che muovono ma che non spingono, capaci di camuffare la realtà agli occhi di chi la vive nella speranza, un giorno, di sfondare in qualcosa - a differenza dei Sogni, che la realtà invece la modellano aprendovi nuove porte. Sono fisiologiche, e molti di noi se le raccontano spacciandole per Sogni. Triste, ma umano.

Qui siamo a Hollywood, che di illusioni ne ha create molte e molte altre continuerà a crearne. E non solo nell'Arte, ma anche e soprattutto nella vita della maggior parte delle persone che le ruotano attorno come satelliti aspettando l'occasione giusta.

Proprio come l'esperienza di Mc Coy.

Amaro.

3 ½.

Michael Thomas Angelo says

It was very Day of the Locust as far as mirroring the theme that Hollywood attracts dreamers who are never able to capture the prevailing myth of stardom and end up self destructing. The title is a humorous truth and depressing conclusion of the narrator.

Rebecca McNutt says

This book deals with multiple dark and disturbing issues, but it's written as a classic thriller styled novel and it unveils the good, the bad and the ugly of life in Hollywood. I really enjoyed reading it, though at first I was skeptical.

Ed says

Entertaining story about a rather naive twenty-three-old man from Georgia named Ralph Carston who goes to Hollywood to become a movie star. He shares a flat with Mona Matthews, and they find work as extras in the motion picture business. They attend posh Hollywood parties and restaurants where Ralph runs into the rich socialite Ethel Smithers who takes a shine to him. She keeps promising Ralph that she has the right connections to land him a screen test as they carouse around Hollywood. There are a few humorous scenes, especially when the older, wiser Ethel seduces young Ralph, and the dialogue is often snappy like found in an old movie. Barbara Stanwyck makes a cameo appearance along with the other marquee acting stars of the day. It's a fast read, and a somewhat hardboiled look at Tinsel Town.

Brian says

McCoy is best known for his three novels: "I Should Have Stayed Home", "They Shoot Horses, Don't They?", and "Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye". His major themes: grim reality and the horribly neglected . His depiction of Hollywood in the 30's is still valid; storyline remarkably contemporary.

Christopher Fulbright says

Unbelievably fast and easy read. There wasn't really a whole lot to this short novel, but what there was of it

really hit the nail on the head. Anybody who's had a dream and struggles to achieve it gets the way the main character feels in an instant. The only thing keeping me from giving this novel an extra star is the fact there wasn't a whole lot to it other than angst, implied perversions, and a couple of very minor scrapes with the law. I felt like there could have been something happening on another level at times, but in the end, the evidence didn't play out and it was just wishful thinking on my part. Still, it didn't bore me at any point and I loved the prose here. This is the second book by McCoy that I've read and I feel like he rivals James M. Cain for hard-hitting prose that just gallops across the page. I liked this one.

Joanne Parkington says

30's noir at it's best .. sure, the lingo's dated and it's hard now to understand that punching a women on the nose was ok but the story of greed and corruption still resonate today.

Suni says

Hollywood, 1938: Ralph Carston è uno dei tanti giovani di belle speranze che hanno lasciato la provincia sperduta in cui sono nati (in questo caso un paesino della Georgia) per trasferirsi nella Mecca del cinema e inseguire il sogno di diventare star.

Niente va come deve: non solo non c'è lavoro, ma non c'è neanche l'occasione di fare un provino – l'unico che Ralph ha fatto è andato malissimo per colpa del suo accento.

La logica vorrebbe che Ralph tornasse a casa, ma non può farlo, perché nelle lettere alla sua famiglia ha lasciato intendere di aver quasi sfondato e non ha il coraggio di raccontare la verità.

Per puro caso una sera il ragazzo incontra una ricchissima vedova di mezza età, amica di tutta la gente che conta e, soprattutto, ninfomane. Questa donna si invaghisce di lui e vuole farne il suo toy boy, idea che a Ralph fa orrore, ma d'altra parte si rende conto che è un'occasione unica per entrare nel mondo del cinema dalla porta principale e realizzare il suo sogno.

Da questa premessa prende avvio una sequela di tentativi di scendere a compromessi, di impennate di orgoglio, di crisi sempre più profonda, di prese di coscienza e di cocciataggine nel ripetersi che «*se ce l'ha fatta Gary Cooper, posso farcela anch'io!*».

Confesso che non ho amato molto questo protagonista che continua a fare e disfare, che non prende mai davvero una decisione, tanto che perfino la risoluzione della vicenda non è opera sua.

Ma il romanzo è scorrevole, ben scritto, con dialoghi quasi cinematografici (McCoy fu anche sceneggiatore) e inoltre racconta il lato oscuro di un mondo di cui in genere, oggi come allora, si vedono solo le luci.

Toby says

I found this awesome old Penguin whilst location scouting for my upcoming film production, I honestly didn't mean to buy anything but ended up with half a dozen really cool titles to check off of my lists.

I've not read any McCoy before, I saw the movie of They Shoot Horses and felt like I had a good idea of what to expect but I didn't really expect to be comparing it to Day of the Locust, which I did and unfavourably so unfortunately. It's a good little book but not something you expect to find in the green crime penguin. There's not much in the way of crime going on here but what's there is a good quality piece of writing.

Ronald Koltnow says

Probably the greatest Hollywood novel ever, McCoy's I SHOULD HAVE STAYED HOME traces the fall of two would-be-Hollywood-stars, a couple of kids inspired by film magazines to go to Tinseltown to find fame and fortune. Our poor sod of a hero, nice-looking but with a too heavy Southern accent, becomes a gigolo. His more worldly roommate tries to keep his feet on the ground. This is a noir, although one of temperament rather than action. There is a death, although it isn't murder; there is theft, although it's merely shoplifting. This is tragedy on a small scale, about delusions created by Hollywood, and subscribed to by the rootless youth of post Depression America.
