



Psycho: Sanitarium

Chet Williamson

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The original *Psycho* novel by Robert Bloch was published in 1959 and became an instant hit, leading to the smash movie only a year later, which brought Norman Bates's terrifying story into the public consciousness, where it still remains (proven by the success of the tv series, Bates Motel). It took Bloch 23 years to write another *Psycho* novel, revealing that Norman had been in a mental institution the entire time. In that sequel, Norman quickly escapes the sanitarium and goes on a killing spree in Hollywood.

But what happened in that asylum during those two decades? Until now, no one has known.

It's 1960. Norman Bates is in the State Hospital for the Criminally Insane and it's up to Dr. Felix Reed to bring him out of his catatonic state.

But Norman and Dr. Reed have obstacles in twisted fellow patients and staff members who think of the institution as a prison rather than a place of healing. And the greatest obstacle is the building itself, once a private sanitarium, rumored to be haunted. A wild card appears in the persona of Robert Newman, Norman's twin brother, taken away at birth after the attending doctor pronounced him brain damaged. As Robert and Norman grow to know each other, Norman senses a darkness in Robert, even deeper than that which has lurked in Norman himself.

Soon, murders begin to occur and a shocking chain of events plunge us even deeper into the deranged madness inside the walls of *Psycho: Sanitarium*.

Psycho: Sanitarium Details

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Author : Chet Williamson

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From Reader Review Psycho: Sanitarium for online ebook

Claire Wilson says

Having been a fan of the character of Norman Bates for quite a while, I was really looking forward to reading this story set in the hospital for the criminally insane where he is incarcerated after his murder spree has come to light. Sadly, this novel didn't quite live up to my expectations, however, was still a good read. 3 stars

Rob Twinem says

Few will forget the last image in that great Alfred Hitchcock classic Psycho when Norman Bates is seen isolated in a protected cell with the immortal words from his mother incarcerated in his mind..."She wouldn't even harm a fly"

In many ways Sanitarium by Chet Williamson tries to encapsulate both the mood of the movie and the somewhat concerning "mother" thoughts that still dwell within the mind of Norman. Added to this is the deep feeling of uneasiness that exist not only in the hospital itself but also amongst fellow residents who have similar murderous afflictions to Norman. This creates a constant tension, the reader can never feel complacent as the volatile residents are liable to explode into violence at any time.

One such resident is a man called Miller who, as a great admirer of Norman Bates, is hoping to learn from him. Miller is a convicted rapist and he feels that by introducing murder into his rapist illusions he can create the ultimate sexual high. Episodes such as this are an everyday occurrence and the staff and doctors must remain vigilant and at a high state of readiness. This story is really a glimpse inside the walls of a building where the patients have no hope of release and must live a day to day existence in the human equivalent of a fish bowl where their every move is observed, their every action noted, and where violence and the unexpected are the accepted norm (no pun intended)

This is an enjoyable but unsettling tale and shows a world where all hope is gone. It was a help to me as I had seen the original movie and the images created by that classic fitted perfectly into the story. I received an advance copy of Sanitarium for an honest review and that is what I have written.

The Book Review Café says

It's 1960 Norman Bates is in the State Hospital for the Criminally Insane and it's up to Dr. Felix Reed to bring him out of his catatonic state. Soon Bates is joined by Robert Newman, Norman's twin brother, taken away at birth after a doctor pronounced him brain damaged. As Robert and Norman grow to know each other, Norman senses a darkness in Robert, perhaps even deeper than that which has lurked in Norman himself.

Psycho-Sanitarium is an intense psychological thriller of murder and deranged madness, which gripped me from the first introduction to Norman Bates and his infamous "mother". As anyone who has read or watched Psycho knows Norman is a very complex character to say the least, and Chett Williamson manages to portray his character very effectively. I couldn't help but feel some sympathy for Norman, as he struggles with the voice of his "mother" inside his head, he appeared vulnerable and timid, but unfortunately there are

many sides to Norman and the author manages to describe the psyche of his character with such conviction that by the end of the book I was terrified! This book also explores the treatment of the insane, which makes for a dark and uncomfortable read at times (some of the treatments were barbaric to say the least).

I hold my hands up and admit I have never read Psycho (I've watched the film numerous times, but I never got around to reading the book), so I am not in a position to compare the two books. Personally I found Psycho -Sanitarium to be a very a dark and chilling read, and thanks to Chet Williamson's very descriptive writing it was fairly easy to conjure up images of the mental asylum, the madness that surrounded it, as well as the evil that lurked inside the walls. This is very much a character driven book, but the plot was well developed, with plenty of dark and twisted moments. Psycho-sanitarium reads and feels like the horror stories I use to read many moons ago, atmospheric and full of suspense and intrigue which makes for a very compelling read

First published at <http://thebookreviewcafe.com>

Kimberly says

3.5 stars.

PSYCHO: SANITARIUM, by Chet Williamson fills the "gap" between Robert Bloch's **Psycho**, and **Psycho 2**. I was very impressed with how well Williamson was able to capture the "tone" of Bloch's original classic. The style did remind me quite a bit of Bloch's own, and the idea of capturing the decades Norman Bates spent there was one worth pursuing. The story flowed nicely from scene to scene. There were a couple of surprises along the way, but nothing that I really found "unexpected".

Overall, a great look at the Sanitariums at the time, the different methods used, and of course, the various temperaments of the people that worked in places like that. As a story, it felt "realistic" as a continuation of Norman Bates' character. My only complaint was that it was extremely easy to figure out "what" exactly was going on (the mystery part), and for me, it was more about seeing how the book would conclude, at that point. Still, a nice addition to the "life" of Norman Bates and "Mother".

Recommended.

Sarah says

Set after the events of Psycho, Norman Bates is now in a sanitarium for the criminally insane, he refuses to talk and has conversations in his head with mother, wrestling long with his actions and believing, wholeheartedly, that she did those horrible things, not him.

We're soon introduced to Dr Reed, the one who's treating Norman and a cast of characters who are well written, nicely developed and a good mix of very nice and incredibly horrible.

The action is slow to pick up, setting the scene and making sure you know the key players in the game, but once the first death happens it continues in wonderfully horrible fashion until the end.

There's secrets, lies, tricky people and some backstory to the sanitarium.

What's happening to those people? Is a person on the loose, killing all they stumble across or is it the ghosts of former patients?

The setting is creepy and I love it! I do so love books set in asylums!!

Huge thanks to Chet Williamson, Canelo and NetGalley for this copy in exchange for an honest review

Patty says

This book would make a great movie, or a series. An old mental institution for the criminally insane, the personalities of the various staff and their own issues, people disappearing, ghost roaming around, cruel psychiatrists, the insanity of the patients/prisoners. As a book it was a bit slow, but still I stayed with it. The who might be sane and who might not was interesting. The ending was a little fast for me, the tying up of everything so nicely a bit irritating, and more than a bit unrealistic, but still an enjoyable read.

Nettie says

I received a free copy of this from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Norman Bates has always been my favourite serial killer. From the first time I saw Psycho as a child, I have adored him, so when I saw this book I just had to read it. I thought Norman was written perfectly in this story. It was a bit slow to start with but there are plenty of twists after just half way through to make up for it.

Keith Chawgo says

Chet Williamson has really established himself with his sequel to Robert Bloch's Psycho with this truly amazing book.

Placing the narrative between Bloch's Psycho and Psycho II, Williamson has done an excellent job in creating and full filling a perfect bridge between the original and Bloch's lacklustre sequel. It is important to note that this is a sequel to the novel and not the Hitchcock film though both film and novel are closely linked, there are slight differences such as Norman being a heavy weight middle aged man in the novel against the Perkins characterisation that is famously remembered.

Bloch's Psycho was the dawning of the serial killer novel with its late 50's sensibilities and plot building. It captured the imagination with its tone and execution and at the time, was a truly shocking exploitation novel with its use of interior psychology.

After failed attempts to write a film sequel, Bloch decided to take matters into his own hands and wrote two sequels, Psycho II and Psycho House with various results. Bloch's Psycho II is set a couple of decades after the events of Psycho. Although, a best seller in its own rights, it had no reflection on the film of the same name.

Williamson's story is set between Bloch's first two books in the series, fitting very comfortably with his vivid characterisations, wonderful pacing and fantastic characterisations of Norman as he tries to control

Mother and deal with his guilt over the murders at the motel in the original.

The story is driven forward by the psychological treatment of Norman using various techniques in the psychiatry world from drug use, ECT treatment and psychotherapy and it is very interesting how the world was changing in terms of these techniques. The 60's made incredible strides in psychiatry during this time and Williamson has shown how the old ways were being put aside towards the new ways of treatment that were being developed during this time.

When the murders happen, the story unfolds to a whodunit which is handled masterly as the mystery unfolds. This is where Williamson exceeds in all his novels, he is able to take multifaceted plot strands and knit them together to provide a kaleidoscope of textures, rich characterisations, extremely intrinsic plot devices and motivation to spin a fascinating story.

Williamson has actually surpassed Bloch in writing style and he has ingeniously been able provide a superior sequel and perfect bridge between Bloch's work. His writing of Bates is sympathetic, thought provoking and at times frightening when Norman is threatened or Mother comes to the fore. Norman is one of the true horror greats and Williamson has lovingly and truthfully written him as a three dimensional multi-faceted individual which at times is failed in the source material. Williamson has given him fantastic weight.

The characters surrounding Norman in the Sanatorium are well done and the surprise addition of a long lost relative creates an interesting opening and gives Norman a bright light in his drab existence. The supporting characters are at times, worse than the inmates that they watch over which gives a Nurse Rackitt feel to the proceedings as the plot awakens itself to the reader.

This is really a superior book to its sequels in every way and it is an ode to Bloch and to Norman that could have easily fallen flat if put in the wrong hands. Masterfully crafted, lovingly put together and incredible piece of fiction that demands to be read and cherished. Williamson is a true master and if you love well-constructed stories with believable plot twists, you can never go wrong with him as he is truly top of his craft.

Robert Bloch's Psycho Sanatorium by Chet Williamson is one of the most accomplished sequels ever written and so far this is one of best psychological thrillers/horrors of the year. This is a truly recommend book and if you are a fan of Psycho, either the book or film, you cannot go wrong. This is a must read.

Kate says

4.5*

Dannii Elle says

I received this book on a read-to-review basis from NetGalley. Thank you to the author, Chet Williamson, and the publisher, Thomas Dunne Books, for the opportunity.

This is a follow up to Robert Bloch's cult classic, Psycho, and I have to admit that I was worried about how this new installment would stack up. The original is well-known and well-renowned and I was hesitant as to how this new author would emanate the feel of the former's writing and original world. I am relieved to

announce that he did it, and with justice!

The story follows the original character, Norman Bates, and his incarceration into a mental institutions for the deeds he committed in the source novel. The novel uses one individual to exemplify a turbulent time in American psychotherapy and the shifting attitudes towards what is deemed treatment and what is deemed torture. He raises the question of which side of the locked door the evil really lurks on...

Williamson manages to heighten the horror of the first book, and expand on scenes brushed over, with a modern and gruesome delight. This has an additional appeal of not only adding to the original but of appealing to a contemporary audience who are already immune to the weaker horror of Psycho. He does all this while still keeping the impression of the prime author and the original text.

Valkyrie Franco says

An unnecessary book for the psycho series. It is well written and doesn't feel too different tone wise from the original but... there is no need for this book! So slow with many sub plots and shallow characters. As for the twist, what twist? Predictable but not in bad taste just not surprising.

Book picked up in the last two chapters the rest just didn't capture my interest nor did I feel like any of it was important. I wanted more into Norman's mind and what makes him work but rarely do you follow Norman.

Just disappointing...

Martin says

Yes, dear readers, Norman Bates is back. Thanks mostly to author Chet Williamson who did an impressive job bringing back to life this lunatic motel keeper who has a penchant for embodying his dead mother and killing people in showers. Sure, original author Robert Bloch did pen more than one sequel during his lifetime but, having been all underwhelming, it took PSYCHO: SANITARIUM (Canelo publishing) to finally do the original novel justice. Never mind that the wait was long time coming (more than 50 years, not counting the previous follow-ups).

As in Bloch's PSYCHO, the narrative in PSYCHO: SANITARIUM is clear, to the point, with a bit of more pizzazz. The Williamson touch I call it, meaning he makes it his own while moving the plot along with Norman's arrest and his confinement in a psychiatric hospital. What then follows is a moody, scary engaging thrill-ride where you get the chance to meet a bunch of well-defined characters. You've got psychiatrists, orderlies, nurses, and of course, fellow patients who are far from being the only ones making Norman's stay unpleasant. You even get to meet a distant relative of Norman's who may or may not be what he seems. When people connected to our resident psycho start disappearing, then all hell breaks loose. But is Norman really back to his old tricks?

I wish I can say that he is, but that would be revealing too much. But trust me, you have to go through the motion of reading this thing to find out. Not that the revelation is such a gasp worthy moment, but you're never sure of your hunch until the last chapter. In addition, there are a couple of scenes that will certainly give you the creeps or make you even more aware of your gag reflex. Now on to the big question: is PSYCHO: SANITARIUM as memorable as Robert Bloch's PSYCHO? No freaking way. How can you top

an infamous classic such as this one? But it is a worthy follow-up that does deserve the stops, if only to rekindle with Norman Bates and his pushy mama.

Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for the chance to read this novel in exchange for an honest review.

JL Martin

Richard Cosgrove says

I've always been a fan of Norman Bates, ever since discovering the original Robert Bloch book in the library as an inquisitive ten year old and then seeing Hitchcock's classic a few years later. I've since read Bloch's other two entries in the Bates series (Psycho 2 - very different to the movie - and Psycho House) so it was with some trepidation that I approached Chet Williamson's continuation of the mythology.

Thankfully my fears were unfounded, as Williamson treats the character of Bates with respect and reverence, perfectly nailing the feel of Bloch's character and telling a fascinating story of Norman's time locked away without compromising either the literary or cinematic canon (well, any more than it has been already, but I'm generally in favour of all things Bates in whatever medium they appear).

Definitely recommended for fans of Norma Bates's little boy, and even if you're not familiar (really?) then Psycho: Sanitarium is a deftly written, entertaining thriller.

Tobin Elliott says

I received this book from a Goodreads Giveaway, and, having enjoyed the original book and movie so much, I was really looking forward to reading it.

Until I started reading it. I gave up forty-odd pages in, because it was just mind-numbingly boring.

I had a couple of glimpses of Norman through internal monologue arguments with his mother while his physical body was in a catatonic state.

Other than that, I was treated to a completely unnecessary bit of recapping, given glimpses into Norman's reading material as a child, excessive character descriptions of stock/cardboard cutout characters that inhabit the sanitarium. Like Myron, who's the violent employee who likes punishing the patients and *has the devil inside him*. Really? *Yawn*. Or, hey, what about the pretty nurse who's helping the kind-hearted psychiatrist. She's really too good and too pretty for the place, but she's doing it out of penance for not being able to help her own dad. Seriously?

Yeah, it was awful. I couldn't go on. DNF.

Jon Recluse says

Chet Williamson's PSYCHO: SANITARIUM slips seamlessly into the gap between the end of Robert Bloch's PSYCHO and the beginning of PSYCHO II, shedding light upon Norman Bates' time locked away in an asylum for the criminally insane....and within his own mind, with only Mother for company.

When an intrepid psychiatrist tries to free Norman from both his catatonia and the grip of his mother, to save him from the horrors of shock therapy, his patient begins to emerge once more. But there are obstacles in the way...including a malingering serial rapist who wants to know what it's like to kill, sadistic caretakers and the rumors that the institution may be haunted. The sudden appearance of Norman's twin brother, given up for dead at birth, gives him a reason to come out of his shell. Until a series of disappearances involving people who threaten Norman in some way begin to occur.

Chet Williamson, a master in his own right, captures the original pulp sensibility of Robert Bloch's writing, along with his signature twists....and twisted sense of dark humor pitch perfectly.

PSYCHO: SANITARIUM earns it's place on every horror fans bookshelves tucked between PSYCHO and PSYCHO II.

"Uncle" Bob must be tickled pink...

Highest possible recommendation...a classic addition to a classic!
