



Harlot's Ghost

By Norman Mailer

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"The most daring, ambitious and by far the best written of the several very long, daring and ambitious books Norman Mailer has so far produced...Unlike just about every American writer since Henry James, Mailer has managed to grow and become richer in wisdom with each new book....There can no longer be any doubt that he possesses the largest mind and imagination at work in American literature today."

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Narrated by Harry Hubbard, a second-generation CIA man, HARLOT'S GHOST looks into the depths of the American soul and the soul of Hugh Tremont Montague, code name Harlot, a CIA man obsessed. And Harry is about to discover how far the madness will go and what it means to the Agency and the country....

A Main Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club

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Harlot's Ghost By Norman Mailer Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Those who quail at the prospect of a 1400-page novel by the author of *Ancient Evenings* and *Tough Guys Don't Dance* need have no fear. Mailer's newest effort, a mammoth imagining of the CIA that puts all previous fictions about the Agency in the shade, reads like an express train. Never has he written more swiftly and surely, more vividly and with less existential clutter. A contemporary picaresque yarn, *Harlot's Ghost* bears more than a slight resemblance to those great 18th-century English novels that chronicle the coming-of-age of a young rogue with good connections. Harry Hubbard is a bright young man whose father and whose mentor, Hugh Montague (also known as Harlot), are both senior CIA figures and induct him into the Agency. Most of the book, after a melodramatic beginning, is one long flashback, Harry's autobiographical account of his early career--partly in his own words, partly in an exchange of letters with Harlot's beautiful, brilliant wife, Kittredge, whom Harry admires from afar and will one day steal. He is seen in training in the '50s under real-life figures like Allen Dulles and Dick Bissell, and with the martini-swigging, pistol-toting William Harvey at his first post in Berlin--where he meets Dix Butler, who becomes in a sense his nemesis. A quiet spell in Montevideo under Howard Hunt follows, then he goes to Washington, where he watches the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the Cuban missile crisis develop--and becomes the lover of President Kennedy's mistress. The book winds down with Kennedy's assassination and a sense of growing despair, only to conclude with a gnomic "To Be Continued." Whether or not there is really to be a sequel, *Harlot's Ghost* is entirely self-contained, and a bravura performance. In an author's note listing his voluminous sources and the relation of fictional to nonfictional characters, Mailer claims that good fiction "is more real, more nourishing to our sense of reality, than nonfiction." The book is an utterly convincing portrait of that strange, snobbish, macho, autocratic collection of brainy misfits who have played so large and often tragic a role in American history. BOMC main selection; first serial to *Rolling Stone*.

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From Library Journal

To call Mailer's CIA novel a spy story would be like calling *Moby Dick* a whaling story. If you are seeking myriad details about how The Agency really operates, you will find them here, but Mailer has always sought the nuances that give facts their essential meaning, and that is what makes this book so much more than just another CIA expose. For Mailer's true purpose is to define that part of the American psyche that has spawned and sustains the CIA. It is a spirit (and note that this is a book more metaphysical than political) born of militant Christianity and buccaneering rapacity, of noblesse oblige and authoritarian devotion, a spirit believing itself turned in to God without worrying if it's heeding the devil. The dialectic here is Manicheanism more than Marxism, and--shades of Melville--the quest is one in which we may forfeit our souls. An immensely long but never laborious book, one where Mailer works compelling variations on his quintessential themes. Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 9/1/90.

-Charles Michaud, *Turner Free Lib., Randolph, Mass.*

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From Kirkus Reviews

The *Big One*, volume one (yes, 1,408 pages!) of Mailer's long-promised masterpiece, in which he does for the CIA what Melville did for mammals and God, and what Thomas Mann did for the metaphysics of tuberculosis. A small serving of potted plot: Herrick (Harry) Hubbard has been raised in the thickish atmosphere of the CIA, which his Hemingwayesque father, Cal, helped deliver out of WW II's OSS. Harry's godfather is CIA overseer Hugh Tremont Montague, a Christian Einstein of spycraft, who may also be the Devil. Hugh is married to Hadley Kittredge Gardiner (named after Hemingway's first wife, Hadley Richardson, and the great Shakespearean scholar George Kittredge). Harry loves Kittredge and marries her after Hugh breaks his back and causes the death of his son in a climbing accident. All this happens before the

novel begins and will be told in detail in volume two. In fact, Kittredge abandons Harry for boorish CIA superman Dix Butler in the novel's overture and Harry hides out in the Bronx to write volume one. All this is framework for the stuff of the story, which tells of Harry's early years in the CIA (1956- 63), during which he is sent to Berlin to work under fabled spymaster William King Harvey, a genius now gone to gin, then to Florida to work on the Bay of Pigs invasion, then into Operation Mongoose, the assassination of Fidel Castro. And during these latter ops, he falls for Modene Murphy (who's modeled on Judith Exner, mistress to Frank Sinatra, Godfather Sam Giancana, and JFK). The novel ends with Harry setting up Castro's murder just as JFK is assassinated. That's it, but it tells you nothing about the sorcery of the telling, with Mailer's novelistic gifts working at full mastery, his magic with moods, metaphor and touches of color (his Havana harbor rivals Enobarbus's description of Cleopatra's barge), his genius for character and matted plotting, humor, and gripping flights of philosophy (far more lively than *The Magic Mountain's*) with the CIA seen as "the mind of America." (Book-of-the-Month Split Main Selection for December) -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lewis Dall:

Inside other case, little men and women like to read book Harlot's Ghost. You can choose the best book if you'd prefer reading a book. Providing we know about how is important a book Harlot's Ghost. You can add knowledge and of course you can around the world with a book. Absolutely right, mainly because from book you can realize everything! From your country until finally foreign or abroad you can be known. About simple factor until wonderful thing you could know that. In this era, you can open a book or perhaps searching by internet gadget. It is called e-book. You may use it when you feel weary to go to the library. Let's learn.

Katrina Roberts:

People live in this new time of lifestyle always aim to and must have the free time or they will get lot of stress from both daily life and work. So , once we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely of course. People is human not a robot. Then we ask again, what kind of activity have you got when the spare time coming to you actually of course your answer will certainly unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading guides. It can be your alternative with spending your spare time, typically the book you have read is Harlot's Ghost.

Paul Tirrell:

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Betty Serrano:

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