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Here At The New Yorker



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Synopsis

For over sixty years Brendan Gill has been a contented inmate of the singular institution known as the New Yorker. This affectionate account of the magazine, long known as a home for congenital unemployables, is a celebration of its wards and attendants—William Shawn, Harold Ross's gentle and courtly successor as editor; the incorrigible mischief-maker James Thurber; the two Whites, Katherine and E. B.; John O'Hara, "master of the fancied slight"; and, among a hundred others, Peter Arno, Saul Steinberg, Edmund Wilson, and Lewis Mumford. Brendan Gill has known them all, and by virtue of his virtually total recall, keen eye, and impeccable prose, his diverting portraits of these eccentrics in rage and repose are amply supplied with both dimples and warts. Here at the New Yorker—now updated with a new introduction detailing the reigns of Robert Gottlieb and Tina Brown—is a delightful tour of New York's most glorious madhouse.

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Customer Reviews

Brendan Gill sold his first story to the New Yorker in 1936, when he was 21, and has worked there ever since. When his irreverent memoir appeared in 1975, it caused the most delightful of frissons, because the outside world then knew little about his workplace. Gill declares that "in the old Ross-Shawn days, what hadn't happened at the magazine was more worthy of note than what had." In reality, of course, a great deal was happening, and Gill seems to have heard and remembered it all. (This edition also contains a 1997 introduction, complete with acute and politic comments on the Bob Gottlieb and Tina Brown regimes.) But Here at the New Yorker is far from an exposÃƒÂ©,

consisting instead of the recollections of a lucky man who loves his work and many of his fellows. Each reader will have his or her favorite anecdotes. Gill remembers taking the subway with Marianne Moore, who was squeezed next to two high school musicians. "Miss Moore stared with admiration at the drum, then said to the boy holding the drumsticks, 'Sonny, when the time comes, give it a big bang just for me.'" And, speaking of big bangs, the old New Yorker was far more squeamish--an organ in which bare nipples were nowhere to be found. Its first editor, Harold Ross, shown a cartoon complete with one such entity, growled: "Take that goddam tit up to Mrs. White and ask her what to do about it." His successor, William Shawn, shared his modesty though not his speech patterns. When Mr. Shawn asked the novelist Henry Green what led him to write Loving, Green's reply wasn't quite what he had expected. Alas, readers, you must turn to page 386 of this endlessly charming book for the offending response. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

For over sixty years Brendan Gill has been a contented inmate of the singular institution known as The New Yorker. This affectionate account of the magazine, long known as a home for congenital unemployables, is a celebration of its wards and attendants - William Shawn, Harold Ross's gentle and courtly successor as editor; the incorrigible mischief-maker James Thurber; the two Whites, Katherine and E.B.; John O'Hara, "master of the fancied slight

I was disappointed. I read this book quite a few years ago and enjoyed it enormously at the time, but when I re-read it more recently, it seemed dated and unimpressive. Also, Gill's ego is as big as all outdoors and although a few of the selections are interesting and give a refreshing and close-up view of the luminaries (e.g., Eleanor Roosevelt),they are always in relation to Gill himself. It seemed to me that, speaking generally, the subjects of the individual essays are too often no longer widely known. Their interest is personal to Gill himself and his self-importance. There is very little "dirt-dishing" which is surprising for a guy like Brendan who, though admittedly very urbane and gregarious, is frankly a bit of a yenta. All told, I bought the book because my previous copy was in tatters and now I have to say that I'm sorry it did it.

such a good old memoir.

Loved reading it the first time & only later discovered how HTNY glossed over what actually had been an anything-but-smooth relationship between Harold Ross & William Shawn (1st & 2nd TNY

editors, whose chart comparison indicated an anything-but-harmonious working relationship).In 1997, needing a replacement for my original disintegrated paperback copy, I took one look at the $16 price tag - for a paperback! - & in disgust, threw it back on the bookstore shelf. I'll get one for far less than that, eventually.Post Note (04/09/10): And that's exactly what happened, when the opportunity presented itself recently to obtain a $6.00 edition from .It amazed me during the re-reading that so many of the stories in HTNY - first read @ 30 years ago - still sounded very familiar; it was as if I had only read them for the first time a year or two earlier. But the book's impact - so tremendous decades earlier - had been defused.If you are impressed by an author when your youthful idealism is still flourishing, the same writing decades later - after that idealism had been given the bum's rush (William Shawn's two wives, etc.) - doesn't stand a chance of having the same effect.After re-reading HTNY, I felt a most uncomfortable ambivalence. The writing is fine, particularly in respect to Thurber's bizarre antics, but Gill's loquaciousness was off-putting (particularly after he complained that other writers went on interminably). In examining the facets of everything, he stuffed sentences like sausages. This is an editing failure that complimented other editing oversights that did not go unnoticed.And his Jekyll and Hyde treatment of Ross was equally disconcerting, tantamount to dirty pool. In the beginning chapters, Gill's recollection of Ross was a portrait of an offensive Neanderthal that barely could walk in an erect position; the last forty pages or so is a too-glowing tribute to Ross's talents, vision, and dedication, with a brilliant analysis by William Shawn about Ross that concluded the book.Six dollars turned out to be the perfect price for this flawed trip back into the past. Frankly, I was much more impressed with the recent work of the author's son, who about a year ago wrote a brilliant piece in a local New York newspaper about the drastic (and eventually beneficial) changes that ensued in his life after he had lost his high-paying advertising job and ended up as a Starbuck's employee. I would have paid ten dollars that morning, for the newspaper, had I known of its contents ahead of time.

Did not read the book; the type size made it unreadable. and it was in poor shape. I know I shouldn't expect much for 99 cents, but I have found that the low priced books have always been in much better shape. The dealer should have thrown it away. I will find another to order. Thanks for asking.Harry Green

This book is written from the very old days at the New Yorker, even with the new edition. I wouldn't have bought it if I had been able to get a sample on the Kindle.

The book looks as if it has been produced by an inefficient photocopier. The text is not at all clear and the photo reproductions are very dark. i think the inferior production process should have been made clear when the book is advertised for sale. If it had i would not have bothered to buy it, especially as it was intended as a present.John Shaw

I gave it two stars because it does have a lot of information about famous New Yorkerwriters of the middle years--around the 1940's and 1950's--but the author himself isinsufferable. He was without question the least interesting and least celebrated writerat the magazine, yet he constantly sticks himself into the narrative. Nora Ephron gavethis book a scathing review in Esquire. "One of the most offensive books I have readin a long time," she called it. What irritated her particularly was Gill's obliviousness.He treats supposed friends with a callous lack of empathy, makes the magazine's foundingeditor, Harold Ross, into a caricature of bad habits instead of the visionary lover ofsophisticated writing that he in fact was, and thinks that the best writer of them all was...himself, Brendan Gill. Odious. Interested readers will find a vastly better history ofThe New Yorker in Ben Yagoda's About Town. And the Ephron essay, with her other Esquirepieces, is in her collection entitled Scribble Scribble.

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