



Stay Up with Hugo Best

Erin Somers

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An incredibly timely, terrifically witty and moving debut about a young writer's assistant on a late night comedy show and what transpires when she accepts an invitation from its enigmatic host to spend a long weekend at his mansion in Connecticut.

June Bloom is a broke, cynical twenty-nine-year-old writer's assistant on the late-night comedy show, *Stay Up with Hugo Best*. Hugo Best is in his sixties, a beloved icon of TV and humor, and a notorious womanizer. After he unexpectedly retires and a party is held for his now unemployed staff, June ends up at a dive bar for an open-mic night and prepares for the sad return to the anonymous comedian lifestyle. What she's not prepared for is a run-in with Hugo at that dive bar. Nor for the invitation that swiftly follows: Hugo asks June to come to his mansion in Greenwich for the long Memorial Day weekend. "No funny business," he insists.

June, in need of a job and money, confident she can handle herself, but secretly harboring the remains of a childhood crush on the charming older comedian and former role model, accepts. The exact terms of the visit are never spelled out, but June is realistic and clear-eyed enough to guess. Even so, as the weekend unfolds and the enigmatic Hugo gradually reveals himself, their dynamic proves to be much more complicated and less predictable than she expected.

At once hilarious and poignant, brilliantly incisive and terrifically propulsive, *Stay Up with Hugo Best* is an incredibly timely exploration of sexual politics in the #MeToo age, and the unforgettable story of one young woman's poignant stumbling into adulthood.

Stay Up with Hugo Best Details

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From Reader Review Stay Up with Hugo Best for online ebook

Karly says

I thought I would love this book about an aging late night talk show host and a young writer who works on his show. Although "funny" at times, I wanted it to be more lighthearted and less serious. No doubt it was well written, and if you are a fan of old comedy acts, you may very well enjoy it more than I did. But for me it was sad and a little depressing.

Fran says

June Bloom, 29 years old, was a writing assistant for "Stay Up with Hugo Best", a late night comedy show. June lived with a roommate in a Brooklyn neighborhood both "charmless and in flux". She had slowly worked her way up from audience page to writers assistant for her childhood crush, Hugo Best. This "beloved" TV comedian and womanizer unexpectedly announced his last show and upcoming retirement.

June is now unemployed. It will be back to open mics in shady environs, playing to mostly empty chairs or customers ignoring her presence on stage. "The Birds and the Bees" is one such establishment. Hugo Best happens upon June Bloom at this club. Surprisingly, Hugo realizes that she has worked on his show and invites her to spend Memorial Day Weekend at his Connecticut mansion. He promises "no funny business". What are June's expectations for this special weekend with an iconic comedian?

June was trying to discover her niche. Approaching 30 years of age, she hadn't found her true direction in life. "Being in a chauffeured car all of a sudden was a shock to the system akin to jet lag. I felt transported across time zones". This must be the good life!

Hugo Best, seemingly magnetic and charismatic, had planned a Memorial Day/Retirement Party to be attended by his friends including comedy people, actresses, models and neighbors. Who will be in attendance?

"Stay Up with Hugo Best" by Erin Somers is the story of two individuals striving for self worth. June feels she "should have arrived". Stand up comedy is arguably lonely and unsettling. Hugo is unsettled as well. Life as he knew it has changed.

Thank you Scribner and Net Galley for the opportunity to read and review "Stay Up with Hugo Best".

Jessica Woodbury says

A wry and meditative novel about fame and the proximity to it. June is an aspiring comedian at the very bottom of the totem pole at a late night talk show hosted by famed comedian Hugo Best. After Hugo's run on the show ends, meaning they're both out of a job, the sixty-something Hugo invites 29-year-old June to his Connecticut mansion for the weekend even though they've barely spoken before. What follows isn't quite what you expect, but it's also not all that far off, as June tags along on a couple of days in Hugo's life.

What Somers has to say about comedy, fame, and the sad lot of the many low-level strivers is interesting enough but June herself doesn't quite come into focus. By being 29 and not 19, we know she is smart enough to know what she is getting into when she accepts Hugo's invitation. It's probably not surprising how at a remove from it all June is, but June is one of those protagonists that's becoming more and more common, especially in these Young New Yorker novels. She has a goal, she knows what she wants to be, and yet she doesn't seem all that invested in it. She continues to float along, making you wonder why she cares about comedy at all. We know she likes it when people find her funny, but there's little of her investment in herself. This is a common theme these days, and Somers does more with it here than most do. June's role as fame-adjacent but without any actual responsibilities or artistic investment is a prime spot to analyze millennial ennui. But I hoped for more from June.

This isn't a laugh-out-loud funny kind of book, more observational and quiet. But I raced through it in two sittings so it's an easy one to get through.

Sara Batkie says

I really enjoyed spending time with this book! Every page has something on it that sparkles, whether that's a line of dialogue, an arresting description, or a character's random musings. Somers has a really good grasp on a certain kind of New York aspiring artist, people who often aren't locals to the city and come with expectations that seem almost perversely difficult to achieve; who have a knowing, ambivalent relationship with fame but still yearn for it; who make compromises for outsized opportunities that never quite deliver what they hope. I've been that person, and still sometimes am, so it was both nostalgic and a little painful to follow along with June as she blunders her way through this long weekend with her hero/ambiguous crush object. Make time for this one when it's out next spring.

Eva says

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June Bloom, a young assistant writer on a late night talk show called *Stay Up with Hugo Best* is working hard to satisfy her own aspirations and those of her demanding parents. One night she bumps into the star of the show, Hugo Best, outside of a small club. After a small discussion she is invited to stay with him at his private home in Connecticut for the Memorial Day Weekend. June doesn't know exactly why she is invited and while she has a had distant attraction to the star for a while, she doesn't know how this would translate to real life. What does it mean to be invited for a weekend away? What expectations are held and by whom?

In the era of the #metoo movement, one in which women are slowly beginning to feel more empowered emotionally, physically and sexually, men had better know that things that once worked for them will no longer.

By now you are probably thinking you know the storyline this book will follow but you might not. The only way to find out? Is to read it. I hope you enjoy this fresh and cleverly written novel as much as I did.

Andrienne says

Though set in NY and Connecticut, this tale could easily have happened in Los Angeles. High-powered aging celebrity invites an attractive underling to his mansion. We all know how the story goes. Quite timely with what's happening with all these #metoo movement. Instead of a one-dimensional take, this debut really digs deep. I was completely invested in the story. Every quip and observation feels real. This was probably as close as I can get to being at a celeb mansion observing what all those rich and powerful men can do or get away with minus the ick factor. Well-played debut.

Thanks to the publisher for access to advance copy.

Jennifer Herron says

Yuck.

Runwright says

I won an ARC in a Goodreads giveaway and liked the cover right away. The plot surrounds a young female staff member who gets invited to spend the weekend with her former boss, a kind-of fictional character based on real-life comic David Letterman, when his popular late night talk-show ends. I struggled for deeper meaning to the play-by-play weekend recap and balked at the story's resolution. Since this ARC was printed several months before publication date, with enough time for the editors to work their magic, I would like to note that this preliminary review won't necessarily reflect the finished book and invite you to make your own assessment when you read it.

Rachel Watkins says

June Bloom grew up idolizing Hugo Best's comedic talent, despite his reputation as a womanizer. But landing her dream job as a writer's assistant on his late night show has been more than anticlimactic. Unexpectedly invited to Hugo's house for the Memorial Day weekend, June feels she knows what's she getting herself into. The four days that follow are funny, sad, glamorous and not at all what June expects.

Michelle says

I wasn't completely sure what to expect when I started this one but I could not stop thinking about it during the few days that I read it. The book takes place over the four days of memorial day weekend after Hugo Best, a late night talk show host, has wrapped up filming his last show. On a whim, he invites June Bloom, a writers assistant on his show, to his house in Connecticut. June, now jobless and having a crush on Hugo since childhood, accepts his invitation despite the fact that he is 30+ years her senior and has quite a reputation.

What follows is a quietly hilarious and, at times, sad character study of these two. June laments the difficulty of being a not quite successful twenty-something and Hugo struggles with saying goodbye to his show and growing older. They both grapple with what fame means to them - how much they want it, how it protects, how it isolates. Somers' writing is keenly observant and she does dialogue in a way that made me feel like the characters were real people I was listening to.

This one reminded me of a more real-life version of 30 rock, so I highly recommend for those who love comedy but also a real-life look at what it means to be famous, seek fame, and sometimes feel disappointed by it all.

Mary Keane says

This novel is moving and felt so true. And funny! I kept it within reaching distance for days and read whenever I had a moment. I haven't done that in a long time. I loved it.

Jamie says

This was me while reading this book: when I was away from it, not actively engaged with the words on the page, I kept saying, "Why is this book?" As in, what purpose does this book have in the world? But then when I was reading it I was SO INTO IT.

I'm still pretty torn now that I've finished... I think I needed this to be a more overt satire or a more grounded reality, but instead it splits the difference. I almost wish June, the narrator, was a little less fleshed out - or, conversely, I wish that Hugo had been more finely sketched.

The thinly veiled homages and send ups of real life folks like Leno, Letterman, Howard Stern, even an amalgam of Trevor Noah and Aziz Ansari (the way I took it at least) made this feel like it wanted to be more satirical. But then we have moments like June with her fellow writer Julian, a scene that had my heart in my throat even though it was SO arch and they were SO performative with one another, but the honesty that slid through the cracks of their disaffection was heartbreakingly wonderful.

I have a while to think on this one, but as of right now I'm not sure how I'm going to sell it, except to be honest as I have been with my whole staff and say that I can't get my head around this and sometimes those are the best books.

Marji Morris says

This novel takes place pretty much all in one weekend. It's sort of a coming of age book, except June Bloom is 29, long past where she should have come of age. It's sort of an end of innocence book, and it offers a depressing look at an entertainer long past his prime.

June's had a crush on comedian Hugo Best ever since she was a kid. As an adult, she gets a job at the studio that produces his talk show, and verrrrrrry slowly works her way up to writers' assistant. While Hugo doesn't quite hold up his image as well close up as in her mind, the desire to get close to him lingers. Then the show

folds and they are all out of a job. Depressed, Hugo invites her to his home for Memorial Day weekend. And she goes.

June is unprepared for what she finds there, and eventually realizes she is the adult.

Thanks to the publishers for this advance copy.

Darren says

I got this as a e book from Net Galley. I enjoyed reading it. It had a good story to it. I liked the variety of characters in it. It is my first book read by this author. I find this book would make a good comedy/drama movie. I hope to read more books by this author.

Jamie says

Review to come
