



The Hypnotist

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In the dead of night, Pip is plucked from an orphanage and hired as a farm hand. But Pip is black. The farmer and his wife are white. And this is 1960's America, where race defines you.

Jack Morrow has left his native Ireland dreaming of a new life in the American Deep South. He has certain skills that he mostly keeps hidden. Skills in hypnotism and mind control...

Pip and Jack's lives become inextricably linked as the heat of racial tension builds to a terrifying storm."

Part thriller, part love story, this extraordinary debut novel looks at where life can take you when your expectations are great.

Officially endorsed by Amnesty International, The Hypnotist was hailed by The Bookseller in their 'Ones to Watch' section as '...gripping, compelling storytelling with a powerful anti-racist message.'

The Hypnotist Details

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Author : Laurence Anholt

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From Reader Review The Hypnotist for online ebook

Jean Kirby says

I didn't really like the cover of this book and it put me off reading it at first, but if you read the first two pages, you will want to find out what happens. Anholt is a good writer and draws you in and keeps the story moving along. You hear from three viewpoints, a young black boy, a young N. American Indian girl, and the hypnotist himself.

The story is set in the USA around the time of Martin Luther King's great speech and the Ku Klux Klan. I really enjoyed it and couldn't stop reading.

Adele Broadbent says

When Pip is bought and paid for at an orphanage, he is worried for his future. But the worn, skinny old man called Mr Zachary who 'adopts' him seems kind enough on the long drive back to his farm, as he explains what he wants Pip to do. Since Pip was the only boy who could read at the orphanage, he was the perfect candidate to read to Zachary's bed-ridden wife Lillybelle.

Pip is shocked when he meets her but they soon build a positive relationship as he covers her every need and reads from his copy of Great Expectations - a gift from his mother before his parents died in a car accident.

There is another young teen at the farm. Beautiful, mute Hannah – an American Indian, who Pip thinks is the most beautiful girl he's ever seen.

But life on Dead River Farm isn't all sweet. The Zachary's have a son called Erwin - an angry, Negro-hating, Vietnam vet and also a leader of the local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. His parents warn Pip to stay out of his way and Pip does just that, at least until the day Erwin finally catches him.....

This story is told in two viewpoints – Pip's story (in 3rd person), and the Zachary's neighbour Jack Morrow (in 1st person). Jack is a university professor from Ireland and an excellent hypnotist. He's been watching the goings on next door with increasing worry. Can he help?

Let Mr Morrow hypnotise you with this story, and see how Pip, Hannah and the Zachary's cope with the evil of the Ku Klux Klan.

Brilliantly written. Absolutely loved it. A bit 'Mocking Bird' a bit 'Shawshank' – a great piece of story hypnotism.

E L E A N O R (bookishcourtier) says

2018 CARNEGIE LONGLIST BOOK 15/20

** Looking back, I'm changing my rating to two stars, because this book really was not exceptional, and there were a load of things that annoyed me about it.*

I do think that this was an interesting idea. But I could kind of tell it was a debut novel? It felt like there was more to give, more to come, and that's okay, because first novels aren't always perfect. I feel like this was maybe not as powerful as it could have been. And I found it hard to separate the sciency stuff from the magicy stuff? It didn't really work for me personally.

The story is definitely quite dark. Pip is a black boy in America at the highest point of racial tension. This book covers topics such as racism, and the KKK. I don't really know enough about this subject to comment on it, but I do think this book does a good job enlightening people to it and its horrors. The book wasn't problematic in any way, and I really liked the themes of hope and the fact that not all the characters are horrible. It made the book a more pleasant experience. **I do have mixed opinions on the characters, though.** I really love Lilabelle - or is it Lilybelle? - and her unending positivity. She is a very inspirational character. I also really liked Hannah. The short chapter/poem things from her POV are a really nice addition to the book. They were both sweet and sad. I found Pip a bit flat, but the character who really rubbed me off the wrong way was Jack Morrow. I don't know why - I think it was maybe just the way his voice spoke in his first person narrative, but he was just *really annoying*. Sorry, Jack.

Also, I wasn't enamoured with the fact that the book kept changing POV. I think I would have enjoyed the book more had it just been in the third person all the way through. Maybe that is just because I prefer third person, or maybe because I really disliked the way that Jack came across in his chapters, but it would have honestly improved the book so much for me, personally. I find it irritating when a book changes POV because there always seems to be one you dislike (in most cases) which can dampen your enjoyment of the story. **And I wasn't 100% keen on the hypnotism thing?** Yes, I hear you saying, THAT IS THE WHOLE POINT OF THE BOOK, but I guess it is just personal taste. And I lost my taste for it through the ever irritating Jack Morrow (or doctor jack morrow to use his full moniker <-- yes this is very annoying after he has said it about 10 times)

So yeah, this was interesting, but not exceptional. But I feel like this is a case of me, not the book. So no hard feelings. This is a heavy book that some readers might find disturbing, so I will give you that warning before you go into it. But if this sounds like your kind of thing, go for it!

Book Box Club says

Set in the Deep South of the American 1960's, a black orphan boy, a mute Native American servant girl and an Irish Neurology professor are an unlikely squad. In a society overwhelmed by prejudice, they must employ all of their courage, cunning and wit to free themselves from their oppressors.

This book is amazing! Here at Book Box Club we loved it so much we featured it in our Freedom Squad themed October box and we were thrilled to get the chance to chat to Laurence in our members only online book club with our members. The Hypnotist is so brilliantly written; it has been months and months since I

read it but some of the scenes have really stuck with me and I still find myself daydreaming about the characters! There is no getting around it, the subject matter is tough reading in parts but that is one of the things I loved about it; Laurence doesn't pull any punches and despite the setting in this dark period of America's (alarmingly recent) history, this story is full of tenderness in Pip's relationships with the people around him. It is rare that characters in YA are so beautifully described and diverse and, for me, they are the most refreshing things about this book.

It was great to hear more about the real stories that went into The Hypnotist and Laurence's inspiration to write the novel in our book group meeting and I strongly suggest anyone interested look up his website for more information on that.

We will certainly carry on recommending this wonderful book to everyone for years to come!

Clair says

I have not read another book quite like this one. A pacey historical fiction set in 1960's America with racial tensions and the KKK. Erwin, the son, is an ex-soldier who fought in Vietnam. He has serious mental health issues and his family tread on eggshells when he is home. Hannah the kitchen maid lives in fear of Erwin, she is traumatised and selectively mute. Pip, named after Great Expectations and is a Black orphan. Mr Zachery bought Pip as a slave to look after and read to his wife Lillybelle. Jack Morrow their neighbour is a hypnotist working as a university lecturer.

I loved the different chapters of this book. Each written by a different character in the story. The southern drawl of Mr Zachery and Lillybelle and the poetry verses from Hannah. Despite living in fear of Erwin and the KKK this book is full of hope for the future. A very interesting read.

Harriet says

"The ancient rule of conflict is that it is easier to kill if the enemy can be reduced to crude group; a lower level of humanity."

Although set in 1963, this book could not be more relevant to the ever conflicted America. Race is a serious issue and I feel like it is addressed very well for a young adult book.

This book has very sad moments but the end is uplifting and hopeful.

Mina says

This book is very different from most of the others, and I can't believe it myself but I am almost pitying Erwin, for his mental instability. However that does not mean in any way I pity him, I pity his family, I pity

his victims.

And I feel like this book is pitiful. Jack, or Doctor Jack Morrow to use his full moniker, starts off being very funny, and very enjoyable to listen to. I didn't like the second person narration at the start, because it's different, his personality was very innocent, bright and set the wrong tone for the book ahead. I thought wasting two pages on trying to hypnotise the reader, was very uncomfortable to read, and quite desperate. However it linked into the story and explained a few scenes later.

Then the author introduced Pip, and his sad background, which made it clear, despite the title, that he was the main character, and the hero of the story.

I didn't like the way they introduced Mr Zachery, I thought teaching to smoke, and setting him as a rough, mean guy was setting him on to be an evil character, and then telling Pip he had "lost" boys before confirmed it. It happened to be the second deceiving character, out of many. I know this is historically accurate, and this is what would have been seen as normal for the time period, I think for today, it would be seen as horrible, because the racial "tensions" happening at that time.

Then there was Hannah, whom I thought could not have been any stronger, despite her growth at the end. I thought the relationship between her and Pip was a bit out of the blue and should have been delayed a bit more. I LOVED however her little songs every now and again, it gives the reader clever and selective insight into what she was thinking, and what was going on nobody else in the story new. However what annoyed me, was that it was only a couple of pages later that someone else new about it, and the matter was completely solved, or it was no longer a secret.

Lilybelle, whom Pip was told to look after, was a very light hearted woman, that anybody could be friends with. However, once she "grew", she faced prejudices of her own, none of her friends would talk to her, she was "scary" and looked on as lazy. However, when Pip leaves for a week, she gets better, Mr Zachery looks after her more, Their is physical improvements. And it just makes Pip, happy as it is, seem useless and unable.

Then there is the theme of things, I don't know enough about racial history in America. To comment to the deserved extent, however I believe the author has described, explained and captured enough of what it was like to really interest and teach the reader the different view points. However, there were pockets in the book where that was forgotten.

Back to Jack, his role at first was unclear, the blurb said he would meet pip and they would become "Inextricably linked". it was slow at first, however I felt that was needed, because the author had tied himself a knot. With a friendly hypnotise, he could get out of any situation, he could solve all their problems without a blink. And this slowed and lost the book some meaning, when they went traveling, they got out of all situations, they hypnotised everyone who gave them a tiny bit of trouble.

And this is where there the book falls, Pip, had lost the meaning or "main character" yes, they were doing everything for him, yes he was the person originally in trouble. However, he became a whining child, Hannah was suffering more. and jack became the hero every time. The book became very slow, there were several small revelations however, when the big "event" happened, it was jack who saved the day, while Pip was asleep, and that was all that happened.

Jack's happy, innocent personality had to change because of his new role in the story, and in most cases that would be okay, however the change was more of a destruction, he lost nearly all of any personality and he was jumping back and forward from being angry, scared and nosy, to being, kind, parental and heroic.

The book became magical, for random events magically stopped all other events and none of the characters were touched or ever put in really danger.

Nikki says

I quite wrongly put this book off for ages, convinced it wasn't really for me. And in parts, it isn't - I struggled with the way it was written for example, especially translating the spoken bits. But the setting and the time were fine (and I typically don't love more historical reads). And the story is lovely. I loved Pip and Hannah and Lilybelle. It's a little short and in places simplistic (I think you can tell he came from writing for a younger audience), but I think that actually works for the subject matter - race relations in 1963 is not an easy subject to discuss!! It is delicately handled without dancing around the uncomfortableness. I can see why this book has been on so many lists this year!

Maria Mihaela says

Most inspiring book of 2017. Worth rereading

Sue Bursztynski says

A powerful book. If I'd had time to read it in one session I would have done so. It was interesting to read that the author's family, Jews from Persia who fled the country as refugees from racist policies in the 17th century, came from the town of Shushan(Susa) where the story of Esther, the heroine who saved her people from the racist vizier Haman, is set.

Anyway, this and his father's experiences as a member of British Intelligence during and just after WWII, inspired this novel. The author wanted to write about his ancestors, but it was too close to home for the moment.

As historical fiction it works very well. Perhaps a half-star down because it's not really YA, though marketed as such. The main characters, Pip and Hannah, are teenagers, yes, but we also get plenty of viewpoint from the other protagonist, Jack Morrow, the hypnotist of the title, a university academic who is doing great things with dealing with what we now call PTSD. I don't know how our students will react to the adult viewpoint, though the better readers are quite capable of enjoying adult books.

I also can't help wondering whether a hypnotist can do quite the things Jack does in the novel, as easily as he does. It feels almost like Obi-Wan Kenobi with his , "These aren't the droids you're looking for. We can go about our business."

Still, a very readable book which I enjoyed greatly.

Sam says

This book was amazing!

It is beautifully written. The Southern accent made it even more authentic. I loved how Laurence described every character so it felt like you knew them as well. As for the story, well, it is so wonderful and sad at the same time. If you're a fan of To Kill a Mocking Bird, The Help or anything similar to these great stories, then I would recommend The Hypnotist as well.

You learn so much when reading this book. I couldn't put it down and if I had to, I couldn't stop thinking about it. Definitely a must-read! :)

While I was reading I always felt like this book should be read in school. It is extremely educating and full of historic events - a lot of them not very pleasant. But they teach and inspire you in very different ways and I guess, that is what makes this book so beautiful.

And I was fortunate enough to chat with the author yesterday! He is so nice and passionate about all of his books. He has great ideas for more stories and I can't wait to read them!!

Maja Diana says

I am not able to give this book a rating, as I didn't finish it.

However, from the parts I did read I can tell you:

- It is well written. Fx. I sometimes struggle when writers decide to write out drawls and accents, but in this book it was just alright.

- The Main Characters are all really interesting. Every one from the Caucasian Irish Neurology Professor, to the Black Orphan teenager, and the Mute Native American girl. Together, they all have interesting back stories, and I really liked all three of them.

- The story is set in the 60's, and features the fight against racism.

I just couldn't read it. The scenes made me uncomfortable. As in, they were hard to read without getting too affected.

Basically, I'm one of those people who lives through all the *slightly* scary things by saying: "It's not real, it's just fiction." But with this book, I couldn't do that. In fact, the few scenes I did read wasn't hard to imagine happening right now, today.

So, do I recommend this book? Definitely. It's been said to be great for people who liked The Book Thief. (Haven't read that yet, so I wouldn't know)

I will most likely attempt to read this another time.

Katy Noyes says

Quite a combination of elements. They work though.

A very different book, The Cure for Dreaming, combined female emancipation and hypnotism in a story of women's rights in the early 20th century.

Here we are placed in the 1960s, in a time and place where Jim Crow rules, where the KKK work discreetly with violence to instil fear.

An orphaned black boy, Pip (named after his schoolteacher mother's favourite Dickens novel) is taken from the orphanage to a Southern white-owned farm to work as farmhand.

The farmer is less than friendly, but his wife is desperate for a child to read to her, and Pip reads from his mother's copy of Great Expectations and warms quickly to the obese but motherly woman he works for. A Native American girl also works for them, but is mute.

The second strand to the story, and second narrator offers us an outside glimpse of Pip's life - Jack Morrow, Irish neighbour to the farm and local professor and expert in hypnosis, watches as Pip struggles to fit into his new life and into the community where black people are less than fairly treated, and where racist incidents are a regular occurrence.

Especially as the farm owner's grown son is soon hellbent on ridding the place of Pip.

Pip, Jack and soon the mute Hannah are caught together in an exciting tale of survival. Jack's skills of hypnotism are integral to their tale, and Great Expectations is also skilfully interwoven into the plot.

With real-life KKK atrocities part of the story, and insights into the organisation, this feels dangerous. There's a love element, some mystery, and some appealing characters throughout.

I was reminded of a recent read (Beck by Mal Peet / Meg Rosoff) with some basic elements of the plot, but this really is quite unique and intense.

Others have compared it favourably to 'Mockingbird', and I can see why, with some similar themes. While it's not in the same league, it will be excellent material for someone reading Harper Lee as a set text as usual follow-up, it is excellent for discussion material on 1960s civil rights background history.

Quite violent in places, and could be quite upsetting to younger readers, so I would recommend this to KS3 and above, in particular those age 14 and above.

Pat Walsh says

I was given an ARC of The Hypnotist to review and I thought this was one of the best books I've read in a long time. Can't recommend it highly enough.

Benenden School Library says

There is so much to write about this book! It was gripping, sad, happy, terrifying and interesting, all at once.

Part of the story is told around a young, black boy, in a time in America when the Klu Klux Klan dominated parts of the country.

It tells us how he is plucked from his orphanage and taken to a farm in the middle of nowhere, where he meets Jack, a young professor with extraordinary gifts; Hannah, a brave young farm girl that Pip grows to love as he watches her around the farm; Lilybelle, an obese, but loveable mother like woman; and Erwin, the son of Lilybelle, and the farm owner, but also a leader of the KKK!

The other part of the story is told by Jack, Pip and Hannah's teacher, who has the gift of hypnotism.

This is a enchanting story which I loved! - ***Polly, Year 9***
