



A Perfect Night to Go to China

David Gilmour

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Winner of the 2005 Governor General's Award for Fiction

This astonishing novel - unlike anything Gilmour has ever written before - begins with every parent's worst nightmare: the disappearance of a child. A father makes a casual error of judgement one evening and leaves his six-year-old son alone for fifteen minutes. When he returns the child is gone and three lives are changed forever. Has the boy been kidnapped? Spirited out of the country? Is he dead?

The story that unfolds is told by the novel's narrator, a television host named Roman, who searches for his son through the city and through the underworld of dreams and tries to bring him back. Pursued by an unshakeable conviction that his son is speaking directly to him, Roman begins to enter a haunting relationship with the missing child and his own conscience. In the meantime, his behaviour becomes increasingly erratic and he is rejected by his grieving and angry wife, eventually fired from his job, and shadowed by a persistent policeman who thinks Roman is hiding the child. Written in the clear, elegant prose Gilmour is known for, *A Perfect Night to Go to China* is a completely absorbing and original work of fiction. It sets up a harrowing premise and doesn't let up until the last surprising page.

A Perfect Night to Go to China Details

Date : Published September 16th 2006 by Thomas Allen Publishers (first published 2005)

ISBN : 9780887622519

Author : David Gilmour

Format : Paperback 198 pages

Genre : Cultural, Canada, Fiction

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From Reader Review A Perfect Night to Go to China for online ebook

Negar says

[illegible]

Maryam Malkian says

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Pardis Parto says

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Celise says

If you put books in a pile of books you want to get rid of, maybe don't casually pick them up and read a couple of pages. You might realize that there aren't very many pages, and on those pages there aren't very many words. You might quickly read the first 30 and think "Well I've made it this far, might as well finish". So you'll read the whole thing.

Well, here's another.

Shane says

While I empathize with the protagonist, Roman, for losing his son due to bad timing, he does not come across as a likeable man. He is famous, but he has no friends. He is estranged from his wife. He does not give a shit about his job. The only two people important to him are his mother and his son - both departed from this world, and only to be found in a dream space resembling a French-speaking Caribbean Island. And

Roman is so lonely. Why? That was the piece unanswered. Does Roman symbolize the loneliness and isolation that plagues our media crazed universe?

Roman drifts about the Toronto landscape in search of his son: into the home of an immigrant, into a graveyard, a lumberyard, an old coffeehouse, his TV studio, a church, a strip joint, a greasy spoon, hotels - no place or person leaves an imprint on him. He reminded me of Leopold Bloom walking the streets of Dublin, but at least old Leo kept his hands busy during his peregrinations. Roman even dumps the attractive woman trying to seduce him on the Caribbean Island (Heaven?) and embraces a bottle of tranquilizers instead. The only interesting character to me was the police investigator who mysteriously turns up everywhere and who is convinced that Roman has spirited away his own son. Has he?

I have difficulty with novels that do not offer hope. And Roman's trajectory is overtly hopeless; he can't even kill himself. Or does he?

Giving the author the benefit, that he indeed has written a hopeful story, albeit disguised from the understanding of us mortal plebes, I surmised in the end that Roman did indeed spirit his son away to the island via that immigrant chap who's house he invaded (at the end of the novel, wasn't Roman seen stepping through a door into a house on the island where he had just seen a little boy?), and by faking his death has foiled the cops and his wife who goes by the rather James Bond'ish name of M. Hey - if you write an open-ended novel, the reader will come up with a myriad possibilities! Maybe that was Gilmour's motive after all!

Mohsenkhosro says

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Saeed Habibi says

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Maryam Muhammadi says

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Paulapenkala says

Not that it is bad. it just does not have much memorable about it and there are so many i prefer.

Brittany says

How I Came To Read This Book: It was nestled in my bookshelf from unknown origins. Likely the boyfriend read it for Can Lit in school.

The Plot: Roman is a self-absorbed TV host who makes the casual mistake of going out for a drink one night, only to return home to find his six-year-old missing. The rest of the book basically follows his mental and physical deterioration as he grapples with the immense, overpowering feeling of guilt that consumes him after his son's disappearance.

The Good & The Bad: This is one of those books where you can tell every word is meant to count for something - and indeed, it does have a rather compelling, chilling, haunted feeling to it. Even though Roman is kind of a d-bag, you also feel his self-awareness, the huge amount of blame that's crushing him, and the madness that is inescapable madness that's consuming every part of his life. In short, it's very well-written, particularly in terms of the dialogue, and the dream sequences were interesting and heartbreaking as opposed to distracting.

It got a little weird by the end...and the super ambiguous ending was a little gah! But overall this was an easy read with a very complicated, painful world rooted in reality.

The Bottom Line: A sad little book that will resonate with most for emotion, if not plot.

Anything Memorable?: Nope.

50-Book Challenge?: Book #20 in 2011.

ZaRi says

[illegible]

