



Resurrection Man

Eoin McNamee

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'An extraordinary book, illuminating not only the political map of Belfast but also the dark ring-roads of collective memory and the secret blueprints inside our heads.' *Daily Telegraph*

Victor Kelly is the resurrection man, a violent and ruthless Protestant killer roaming the streets of Belfast in the 1970s. In this, his brilliant and shocking debut novel, Eoin McNamee announced his arrival as one of the leading chroniclers of Ireland's fractured past.

'Achingly exquisite prose as concentrated as poetry, as unfailing an ear for the cadences and quirks of Belfast dialogue as Roddy Doyle has for Dublin and a fatalistic sense of suspense.' *Sunday Times*

'McNamee's stunningly dreamlike prose conjures up images of marvellous precision and intensity . . . An awesomely impressive debut.' *Time Out*

'Impressively confident . . . as lean and grimly purposeful a book as the demon-driven terrorist it sets out to explore.' Jonathan Coe

'One of the most outstanding pieces of Irish fiction to come along in years.' *Irish Times*

Resurrection Man Details

Date : Published 2004 by Faber (first published January 1st 1995)

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Author : Eoin McNamee

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From Reader Review Resurrection Man for online ebook

Sieglinde says

Set in Belfast during the 1970s, it follows the life and career of Vincent Kelly, the leader of a group of killers. It also portrays the effect that he and his deeds had on those close to him, his mother's unending denial and belief in her boy's innocence, his lover's descent into depression, the fear his very name generates in the community, and the betrayals that ultimately lead to his downfall.

Jaslo says

Beautifully written. I learned about Ireland and some sad elements of man's nature.

Nick Davies says

A very impressive and very affecting novel - telling of the dark and grim happenings of sectarian violence in 1970s Belfast, this reminded me of some of the 'Red Riding' series of novels by David Peace - similarly unpleasant and violent, highly realistic, writing of great powerfulness. Some of the similes in this were wonderful, it was highly descriptive without ever getting tied down in pointless describing, and it certainly had an impact on me as a rider.

Only a four though, because I didn't 'enjoy' it all that much - it was too dark and too violent at times, I found much of it difficult to follow (a lack of familiarity with Irish names and places), and the lack of clear characters that you felt you could align with and root for.. it kept me slightly at arms length. This didn't stop me greatly appreciating the significance of Eoin McNamee's talent and style, however.

Elliott says

I would put this at two and a half stars, and here's why: Initially, McNamee's writing reminded me of Esquire writer-at-large Tom Chiarella's, which I hate. I would describe this style of writing as overly rhetorical, indiscriminately mixing slang and archaisms, and prone to vague metaphor. I find it self-indulgent and irritating. With that said, there is rhythm to McNamee's writing that isn't present in Chiarella's. Reviewer John Banville describes it as a "dreamy, poetic immediacy." I would describe it with an adjective I just now came up with..."Irish-y." I am a genius.

Tony says

McNamee, Eoin. RESURRECTION MAN. (1994). ****. This was McNamee's debut novel and was highly acclaimed at the time of his release and has gone on to become a standard of Irish crime literature. The author eerily provides an appraisal of the roots of violence in a city where reality has long since taken the

shape of conspiracy and paranoia. Belfast is a city torn by religious and political hatred whose roots have been lost to modern men but who have continued to pursue such hatred almost as if it was hereditary. The central character is Victor Kelly, an Irish Protestant with a Catholic last name. Victor grew up perfecting his sense of violence and love of gangster images from the movies – especially John Dillinger films. He is a killer in Belfast, a city dakly described by the author, with its dark streets, abandoned alleys, and abandoned buildings. It's like many dangerous big cities; Detroit, L.A., Bagdad, or Lagos. Troops patrol the city, along with the IRA. Now there is the terror of the Resurrection Men, a group of men headed by Victor. The rest of his crew are psychologically afflicted men to whom violence is a way of life. They terrorize the Catholic neighborhood by randomly picking up their men and killing them in a ritualistic manner. The victims are found with their heads nearly severed and their bodies with hundreds of knife wounds. Victor and his crew work under the protection of their own political organization – all the rough live of the Protestant community – but soon his murders get out of hand and he is ultimately caught up in a web of betrayal from his own side. Along the way we meet the women and mothers associated with this group, and suffer with them as their men and sons become more and more strangers to them. You never have sympathy for Victor, but only for those people around him whose lives are dragged down with his. Recommended.

Molly says

This is the story of the Resurrection Man, a violent and ruthless sectarian killer who roams the streets of 1970s Belfast. McNamee's novel illuminates the political map of Belfast and dark ring-roads of collective memory. Based on the Shankill Butcher Killings.

This book can be very brutal in its detail of the murders. This, I imagine, does not even measure to how brutal the actual murders were. This book is sad and hard to read at some points, but it is also a very powerful read.

Gary says

A painful reminder of The Troubles.

Stephen Buggy says

It gets better in the second half is all that can be said for it.

The real life Shankhill Butchers story is dripping with symbolism and horror. I am not sure if McNamee adds much to the story. He refuses to take Loyalist self-justifications at all seriously and swerves immediately to describing their beliefs explicitly as fascism. I understand he may have been nervous of acting as a mouthpiece for vile propaganda but by failing to explain the Butchers' motivations in their own terms he makes their actions seem random. The violence is so gratuitous and inexplicable that it struck me as ridiculous. Some individual scenes are excellent - the transcript of a witness in particular is excellent - but there is a better novel about the Butchers yet to be written.

Ariel says

It was an excellently written book, the character of Victor Kelly was terrifying. I found myself almost sympathizing with him despite his horrid deeds.

Sam says

A thoroughly good read, captivating and fast paced. The similarities with the real-life Shankill Butchers and Lenny Murphy make this book all the more poignant.

Sandra says

This is the third of Eoin McNamee's I have read, and while 'enjoyed' seems an odd word to use, I did so more than the others.

The contrast between the beautiful language it is told in - especially Heather's part - and the horrific activities, especially given that much of what is described must be based on known fact, is compelling.

Victor and his compatriots feel like an alien species; Belfast a far-distant place, and it is the knowledge that circumstances brought them to this, circumstances I lived my parallel life to, that adds a horrible fascination and racks the tension up even further.

Jacopo Turini says

Avevo scritto una recensione ma si è cancellata. Che nervi. La riscriverò poi, forse. Comunque è un bel libro, Eoin McNamee scrive molto bene. Si ripercorre fedelmente la vera storia degli Shankill Butchers (quei sociopatici brutali che a Belfast tra il '75 e l'81 rapirono torturarono e uccisero più di venti persone, per lo più civili cattolici prelevati a caso in strada) e del loro leader Lenny Murphy; qui lui si chiama Victor Kelly, e invece che di macellai si parla di Resurrection Men. Una storia del genere ha necessariamente i suoi confini nelle atmosfere allucinate della più cupa Belfast degli anni dei Troubles, ed è una storia di orrore nel terrore. Ogni personaggio è vittima del grigiore plumbeo di una città iper violenta; anche l'unica figura facilmente positiva, Ryan il giornalista, non è affatto un personaggio luminoso, oppresso com'è da una atmosfera deprimente, soffocante e cinica. I moventi politici lasciano il posto quasi subito a omicidi à la Jack lo Squartatore, per mano di una microcriminalità megalomane e disperata, ossessionata da un certo tipo di fama televisiva e popolare. Questo rovescio dell'epica cittadina si nota soprattutto nell'affascinante personaggio di Victor Kelly, che è visto fare un gioco con i suoi sgherri: ad occhi chiusi, mentre gli altri guidano, riesce a mappare perfettamente la città, raccontando aneddoti e segreti su ogni via e su ogni abitante, rovesciando appunto la memoria popolare tradizionalmente irlandese in un racconto di minaccia e crudeltà. Quella Belfast è uno specchio delle sue azioni. Kelly è un vero e proprio angelo della paura, e tra anfetamine, megalomanie e orribili e metodiche crudeltà, sprofonda nell'orrore fino a diventare scomodo ed eccessivo anche per gli altri paramilitari lealisti. Man mano che Victor si avvicina alla pazzia, perde l'identificazione con la città, che resiste alla sua lettura e finalmente lo ingoia.

Maureen says

McNamee's writing puts you on the dangerous streets of Belfast. It is a violent time with a terrorist on the loose. In spite of being bleak, it is very enthralling and the poetic cadence of the author's writing keeps you mesmerized until the end.

Mat says

Read this book when it was first issued (I was given it to review). Wanted to like it but thought it completely horrid, and I say that about few books. Partially my detestation is because I found to be so lazy. It sketched a state of mind in the midst of the Troubles but had absolutely no surrounding detail -- events, evocation of place, any hint at a bigger picture. Seemed like the author, without having done any research, just free wrote, making it some extended riff on an uninteresting two-dimensional character with no backdrop of anything, really -- Northern Irish society (the obvious angle), romance, psychopathology, anything.

Tom says

brutal killings in Belfast - I must have read the best 2 pages when I flicked through this in the bookshop.

Meh.
