



## The Resurrectionist

*James Bradley*

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## **The Resurrectionist** James Bradley

London, 1826. Leaving behind his father's tragic failures, Gabriel Swift arrives to study with Edwin Poll, the greatest of the city's anatomists. It is his chance to find advancement by making a name for himself. But instead he finds himself drawn to his master's nemesis, Lucan, the most powerful of the city's resurrectionists and ruler of its trade in stolen bodies. Dismissed by Mr Poll, Gabriel descends into the violence and corruption of London's underworld, a place where everything and everyone is for sale, and where - as Gabriel discovers - the taking of a life is easier than it might seem.

## **The Resurrectionist Details**

Date : Published June 19th 2008 by Faber & Faber (first published 2006)

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Author : James Bradley

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Horror, Gothic

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## From Reader Review The Resurrectionist for online ebook

### Emma says

I think I've identified the main problem with this book: every character is unlikeable, or boring, so that I honestly couldn't care less about what happens to any of them.

Still, I pressed on determined to finish (admittedly this probably fueled my dislike). Not only are the characters horrible, but there's so many of them with generic Victorian names that I regularly mistook them for one another. Luckily this barely seemed to affect the plot, and may have made some of them more well-rounded, as several people only turned up once, never to be seen again.

Gabriel's downfall is vivid and well written, but quite predictable. Some of his anecdotes surrounding his past were unnecessary and jarring; instead of bringing the character to life they over-complicate him to the point of confusion (Wait, suddenly we find he likes seeing kittens murdered?!).

As I finally felt the story gaining some rhythm and purpose to it (a shocking 3/4 through), Bradley flings us into another continent and situation. Eventually it becomes clear that the book hasn't been bound correctly, but only after dragging through the tedium of yet more lacklustre names and conversations, by which point I think I was actually fuming that the writer would abuse it's readers so much.

I understand that the book is meant to be all noir and about his journey and his life getting twisted up with death. For me though, it moved crushingly slowly with no real purpose, despite the promising quality of the writing. I wasn't even particularly disturbed by Gabriel or the events unfolding, although I'm sure I was intended to be; everything was just tainted by my overwhelming disinterest.

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### Bridget says

I had high hopes for this book, but what a let down. Events and conversations don't make sense and the characters are very unlikeable and not engaging at all. Huge disappointment.

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### Cate Earnshaw says

Unsettlingly beautiful descriptions of the underbelly of Georgian London. Bradley is a wordsmith; this book is dank, fetid and repulsive, strangely beguiling but sadly equally unsatisfying.

Usually the jacket synopsis is covered in the first few chapters, but not with this novel. Here you only reach the 3rd line of the synopsis 1/2 way through the book! So it's not exactly a pacy read. Written in the 1st person, it is sometimes difficult to know who Gabriel is talking to or looking at, but it does become clear eventually. The plot is thin, this is a meander through darkness, and a descent into failure and misery.

\*spoiler\* (though I won't say What happens, I must comment on Where it happens).

Personally I would have been more content if the novel had ceased at the 'obvious end point' or shortly after. Instead we are given an extended epilogue, taking place not in London but Australia. Whilst this section speaks of redemption and poses questions as to the nature of man, it does not add anything further to the character development nor plot. Indeed I must question whether the whole purpose was to relocate the action to the country who gave the Author a substantial financial grant.

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### **Deborah says**

I'm within 40 pages of finishing this book and I have stayed up 2 nights (as I'm wont to do when I get my hands on a book I adore!) reading it after hubby goes to bed.

Finished the book and nothing but kudos to the writer for a great read!

This is a horrific, terrific, psychological and insane story that just captures and keeps coming at you until you're convinced Poe has you sitting by a fireplace in some dank Pennsylvanian farmhouse.

It's different, unusual, beautifully written. Mr. Bradley can turn a phrase, absolutely. His writing is such that it will stop you in your tracks and make you go back to read a sentence again just to experience the beauty or the thrill or the horror of it. Every single sentence is magical and meaningful...

I can do nothing but highly recommend this book to everyone. But, I have to mention this one reservation....it's not for the squeamish. The Resurrectionists were, afterall, men who robbed graves for science's sake.

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### **Verity (The Cosy Reading Nest) says**

This book is undoubtedly one of the worst books I have ever read. The plot jerks from one thought to another with no real explanation, the "gory" parts made me yawn and absolutely no part of this novel was haunting like the synopsis promised it would be.

Aside from the bad writing, my main problem with it is that just as the book promises to be getting bearable, (over half way through!!) the plot line inexplicably changes and it is as if Bradley has begun a new novel. Which is just as boring as the one before. All this, and the ending was laughable.

Save your time and money!

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### **F.R. says**

I freely admit that I threw this book down in boredom after only eighty pages. Although there seem to be interesting events taking place in the tale, the prose has a dreamy and unhurried quality, which serves only to distance the reader from the plot and left me feeling totally uninvolved.

If Robert Louis Stevenson had written about body snatchers like this, they'd never have captured the public imagination.

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### **Andrea says**

Awful, awful, awful book. The language of the main character is horribly false and appears to be based upon James Bradley's imaginings of the way people spoke in this era, rather than any actual knowledge. A really poorly developed story.

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### **Sophie says**

Agghh - another over-hyped disappointment of a book. Rambled on; took half the book to get any sort of a story going and then lost it again. When will publishers and editors start becoming a little more selective?

The whole style seemed fragmented and inconsistent. Not easy to empathise with the character either or any of them for that matter. Wish I hadn't stuck it out to the end as it wasn't worth my time. How did it get picked as a 'Richard & Judy' pick?

I'd steer well clear of this one as it does the genre of the gothic novel a great disservice.

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### **CS says**

James Bradley is an accomplished author, and his sense of atmosphere and mood are among the best I've read. His use of words is brilliant.

Unfortunately, he uses them in a muddled, Grand Guignol-esque story with a less than three dimensional central character. He also has an annoying habit of jumping forward in the narrative, then using flashback, more told than shown, to fill in the missing details.

The hero, Gabriel, is more acted upon than acts himself. Bradley makes up back story as it suits him for his character. (view spoiler)

I'm sure the book is meant to be an elegant, literary rumination on life, death, and the thin thread that connects us to each other - but by the time (view spoiler) I had lost all interest in what that rumination might be.

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### **Amanda - Go Book Yourself says**

Possibly the worst book ever written. I was really looking forward to reading this book but the character development is non existent. The first couple of pages were really interesting and I loved reading about the work of the anatomists but it all goes down hill after that. The second part of the book is just ridiculous. I was determined to finish it but I was sorry I did.

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### **Helen Maltby says**

I did NOT enjoy this. It seemed to leap from one thought to another and made little sense at the time. Call me old-fashioned but I like to know who a character is talking to. I'd rather the author didn't assume that because the character knows who he is talking to, then so does the reader!

On the plus side it isn't so long as it appears as it is full of very short chapters with lots of white space!

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### **Annerlee says**

*"In their sacks they ride as in their mother's womb: knee to chest, head pressed down, as if to die is merely to return to the flesh from which we were born, and this is the second conception [-] A knife then, to cut the rope which binds the sack, and, one lifting, the other pulling, we deliver it of its contents, slipping them forth onto the table's surface, naked and cold, as a calf or child stillborn slides from its mother."*

Wow- what a tender, sad, beautiful start to a book... I've never experienced such a moving description of a corpse - never looked or considered the dead so closely before. If I didn't read any more of this book - the first, haunting three pages would be enough...

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### **Magdalena says**

That was a really frustrating read! No real character development, plot sketchy and not really thought through. Read it if you like but I wouldn't recommend it.

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### **Manisha says**

Awful. Very thin plot and I couldn't care less about the characters. And what the hell was up with the ending. I seriously felt like throwing this book across the room on more than one occasion, it made me so angry and frustrated. How can a book go so wrong? Avoid.

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### **Nath says**

I loved this book. Such an enthralling adventure into the grimmest depths of the grave robbing trade, and an excellent view of the ghastly London underworld. Great characters, excellent story and about as ghoulish a novel as I've experienced. Haven't been as chilled by a book since The Silence of the Lambs. Intensely readable but with splashes of literary magic, I feel the need to use such tired cliches as 'unputdownable' and 'page-turner', but without irony or rancour. Read it.

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