



Shotgun Opera

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Mike Foley can never forget the night he tagged along with his brother on a job for the mob that ended in a hail of bullets. Now his brother is dead, Mike's making wine in Oklahoma, and life is almost as good as it gets when you've been hiding out for forty years. Until his past comes calling.

Mike's nephew Andrew needs to disappear, and he needs to do it yesterday. Hanging with the wrong kind of friends, he's seen something he shouldn't have, and now he's running for his life with an assassin on his trail. The consummate professional hit woman, Nikki Enders is the most lethal of a deadly sisterhood. And Andrew Foley is next on her extermination list. Unless Uncle Mike can stop her. As kill teams descend on Foley's farm, one pissed-off ex—tough guy is about to take a final, all-or-nothing stand with shotguns blazing....

Shotgun Opera Details

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Author : Victor Gischler

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Tazio Bettin says

Although I have to admit I have slightly mixed feelings.

The narration is quick paced, the prose very easy and pleasant to read, unembellished and straight to the point as it is appropriate with the genre.

What most shines is the characters. Every single introduction into the story is simply great. You read Enrique Mars entering the stage, and you already know he's gonna be business. You read about Jack Sprat and his wife and you know they're wicked vicious. I have a hard time picking my favorite. They're all jolly great. The main flaw I saw was a need to close the circle with every thread Gischler wove, which led to scenes that I couldn't help feeling forceful. Example is the last chapter about the man with the voice. Or the epilogue. I really didn't feel the need for those. Or even Mike's final chapter. You could feel that the purpose of that chapter was to surprise you from its very beginning, and that was kind of disappointing, so when I reached that chapter's last word I couldn't help a 'meh' escaping me.

If you can bear this sort of predictability and forcefulness (and I certainly can), it's a fun, delightful book, with some great scenes and awesomeness flowing all around. A book I can only hope they'll make a film of.

PescePirata says

Divertimento. Ecco cos'è questo libro. Una serie rocambolesca di azioni che si susseguono con ritmo sfrenato. Personaggi fulminati: un nano lanciatore di coltelli, 3 sorelle killer figlie d'arte, una donna cannone a dieta che va in palestra perché stufa di fare l'attrazione al circo, un ex sicario della mala che finisce a fare il viticoltore, e tanti altri personaggi.

Gischler compensa le imprecisioni narrative con un ritmo sfrenato. Tanta azione, tanto divertimento. Un libro da portarsi in vacanza, per staccare dal mondo. Non è un capolavoro, in alcune parti sembra un po' tirato via, ma comunque si legge veramente con molto gusto. Divertente. L'ho già detto? Almeno mille mila volte.

Consigliato ai fan di Portello Pulp.

Gazza998

<http://www.pescepirata.it>

http://www.pescepirata.it/aspiranti_s...

Joseph OToole says

Decent action noir story, but could have used some more expansion of concepts or more time spent fleshing things out, but the pacing is incredibly fast and the book moves as if it were a movie already.

Tim McWhorter says

Yes! Loved this book. There are a lot of characters to keep straight, but each one is dealt with in a logical and fitting manner. All loose ends are wrapped up by the end and none of them seemed forced or contrived

(which sometimes happens with so many characters). Very well written and fun to read. Finished this one last night, and I'm already on to the next Gischler!

Maddy says

PROTAGONIST: Mike Foley, geriatric retired mob guy; Nikki Enders, hit woman

SETTING: Oklahoma

SERIES: Standalone

RATING: 2.75

My first introduction to Victor Gischler was when I read GUN MONKEYS, his debut novel that was nominated for an Edgar. Given the fact that the book opened with a headless corpse rolling around in the trunk of his rental car (and the protagonist bemoaning the fact that he should have lined the trunk with plastic), I had a pretty good idea of what to expect from SHOTGUN OPERA. Dark humor, noir attitude, high body count—cool!

Or so I thought until I got past the first few chapters of the book. Andrew Foley is a college student who needs some money and goes along on an easy score with his two cousins. All that's involved is moving a cargo container to a different location, easily done until the Arab that is encased in said container pops out. Obviously, any witnesses to the Arab's existence have to be eliminated. Andrew's father at one time told him that if he were ever in dire need, he should get in touch with his uncle Mike, a man he's never met who is firmly ensconced in a vineyard in Oklahoma. Mike and Andrew's father were stone cold killers back in the day.

Andrew takes his dead father's advice. From that point on, he is the target of a wide variety of hit groups, including a lovely family of three sisters, two of whom are hit women and one of whom is pretty much crazy – Twisted Sisters, indeed. Anyway, a whole bunch of people are killed; surprisingly, three people are left alive at the end of the book to live happily never after.

In reading a book like this, you know early on that it is going to be Over The Top, that things are going to be pretty implausible. It's almost as if the author establishes an agreement with the reader that they will be entertained enough that they can work their way through the narrative in spite of the obvious exaggerations. However, SHOTGUN OPERA went way beyond that to become completely OVER THE TOP, and that fragile agreement was broken by the bizarre and ridiculous events of the book. For me, that happened when a brutally murdered individual turned out not to be dead. From that point on, I felt like Gischler was just pushing the envelope in trying to come up with ever more outlandish scenarios. It didn't work for me; the book moved from being entertaining to being irritating. Astronomical body count, flat characters, not much plot—there was nothing there to reel me in.

In looking at the title, I couldn't help but compare the book to an opera. Act One opens with an innocent going astray and then taking a journey into an unknown country, sopranos singing sweetly in the background. Cymbals clash – danger is in the air – BAM – shotgun– BAM BAM BAM – the alto section swells and roars; the conductor drops his baton—he's dead; a throbbing crescendo – BAM BAM BAM – the strings have been cut down; Act Two, Act Three – EAAWWWW – the tenor screams her dying notes. And you know that saying, "It ain't over till the fat lady sings"? Well, the Fat Lady died before there was an intermission. There's nobody left to sing the Coda, and the audience members have left the house.

Manuel Antão says

John Woo plus Robert Rodriguez in book formâ€¦

I know, I know, suspension of disbelief is a must when reading one of Gischlerâ€™s books. Nevertheless I kind of got into the book. For the life of me I couldnâ€™t put it down.

As usual there was what I call a Gischler character: the young naïve Andrew Foyle getting mixed up with hard-boiled characters, who clearly belong to this genre world (Foyle doesnâ€™t). This juxtaposition of two different worlds gets me all worked up when reading one of Gischlerâ€™s books. He takes the noir genre and plugs in characters who are completely out of their depth. He gets wonderful moments out of this mix. Thereâ€™s a depth to some of Gischlerâ€™s books that set them apart from the rest.

Carlos Trevino says

Usually Victor Gischler's books hook me from the very first page and don't let go until the end. The fact that this one really didn't should have been a sign. I found most of the dialogue and story pretty cliché and predictable. Whether this has to do with the fact that this is actually one of Gischler's earlier books I'm not sure. I had to give up about two and half hours in when I realized I already knew what was going to happen next. Nobody wants to read a predictable novel no matter who wrote it.

Baldurian says

Un thriller con un tocco pulp e parecchie scene insensate da film di azione di serie B: *Sinfonia di piombo* è veloce, ignorante e fracassone. Particolari che, di solito, mi fanno adorare un romanzo. Questa volta invece qualcosa non è scattato; non so incolpare più i personaggi, assolutamente non memorabili, o lo stile un po' fiacco di Gischler. *Vedi di non morire* di Bazell è molto meglio.

Paul says

Not my favorite Gischler novel, but still very entertaining with his usual brand of ironic humor rearing it's head from time to time, just to remind the reader not to take it all too seriously.

Some favorite quotes:

There was a twelve-gauge shotgun, two revolvers, a bowie knife, an axe handle, and a machete in the Caddy's trunk. When Enrique Mars killed somebody, the motherfucker stayed dead.

and;

The shotgun blast plowed through the highly polished wood, and Sprat's left ankle exploded in blood and fragments of bone and blinding pain. He dropped the knife, tilted and went down screaming, his foot barely attached to his leg with a few strands of skin and sinew. He writhed on the tabletop, scattering the decanters.

He managed to raise his head, still looking for his adversary, rage and revenge boiling up through the pain. None of this was really turning out like Sprat had hoped.

(I love Gischler's attention to grisly detail in the midst of mayhem. It's the little things that count)

Still 4 stars from this reader, even if it's not my favorite Gischler novel.

Ladiibbug says

Crime Thriller

Any book featuring a hitman/hitwoman piques my interest, so with Victor Gischler as the author, this is a double win.

Like his other crime thrillers, the violence is over the top, the action non-stop, with characters that drew me right in, both the good guys and the bad guys. (Most of the people are bad guys/gals.)

Gruesome, high body count, hairpin plot turns that'll give you whiplash. I love his books, but with all the violence and craziness, I don't know why. ;-)

Dale says

I've said it before, Gischler could publish his shopping list and I'd read it. If he was a chicken, the eggs he laid would be hardboiled. And not nice hardboiled either - but the kind of hardboiled you find at gas stations and convenience stores with that scary looking liquid in the package.

Mary JL says

After reading it, I thought it would make a great movie--for 15 year olds. It is all slam bang action. We have retired hitmen; professional lady hitment; hitment who are also circus performers in the off season and so on.

It is the sort of action filled novel adolescents would love with a high body count and lots of chases; escapes and gun battles.

But there are some really improbable things going on here and some large plot holes. The author perhaps hopes the incredibly fast pace will help you ignore them. I found it too unbelievable--too much thrown into one novel.

Also, except for one innocent bystander, all the major characters are criminals. I personally like my "heroes" to be at least somewhat moral; this novel is just killers falling out with one another.

Adequate writing--if all you crave is action, go to it. I prefer novels with a bit more substance and more likeable characters.

Huzefa says

Wow a very fun action packed and blood soaked opera! A pulpy B movie in written form which you could see tarantino or martinez gladly taking on as their pet project and running wild with. lots of fun characters and almost of them bad who get their comeuppance as you would expect. there is a target that needs to be dealt with and one of the best hitwomen is sent for the job when the target gets away she starts thinking about retirement and brings in her sisters to do her dirty for her. this in turn sets off a whole chain of events with violence at every turn. Easy and wild read and highly recommended.

Eric_W says

I've read three Gishler books now, and this, I suspect, may be my favorite. It's a wonderful parody of the hit man novels becoming so prevalent. You have hitmen chasing hitmen, chasing hitwomen, all in a madcap over-the-top set of scenes. Every possible caricature is presented: a dysfunctional family formerly headed by a lunatic CIA operative, his three daughters (Big Sister, Middle Sister, and Baby Sister) the oldest of whom takes on the task of eliminating witnesses to the exit into the United States from a ship's container of an Islamic suicide bomber. Their mother, another CIA operative has settled into dementia and is knitting a never-ending scarf (shades of Madame LeFarge.) At each step along the way, the actors in the soap opera subcontract their jobs to other misfits, including Jack Sprat a diminutive circus performer married to a 420 lb. alligator wrestler on steroids. In one really great scene, Middle Sister, now trying to go more or less straight, dons her uniform as an army major (but putting on the leaf cluster of a light colonel for good measure) commandeers a fully armed helicopter to attack Mike Foley, himself a retired hitman growing grapes for wine in Oklahoma!, and kill Andrew, Mike's nephew, who is the real target. She decides to strafe and while doing so gets a call from her husband wanting to know how to make his supper. I thought it was hysterical. You get the idea.

Very enjoyable and very clever. Gishler is worth reading.

Brandon Nagel says

Gischler at his best. Top notch non stop action from page one. If you are a fan of his other work, you will love this one...
