



Now You See It . . .

Richard Matheson

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Maximillian Delacorte was once the world's greatest stage magician. Now a recluse, suffering from a mysterious disease, he lures his family and associates to his lonely estate for an afternoon of magic, madness, and revenge. Bodies appear and disappear without warning, severed heads speak words of hate, and nothing is ever quite what it appears. As grisly tricks lead to ever more surprising twists, not even the Great Delacorte can tell where illusion ends—and murder begins.

Now You See It . . . Details

Date : Published October 1st 2003 by Tor Books (first published 1995)

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Author : Richard Matheson

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Andrew says

This kept me reading because, like the narrator, I could not get how the insanity could continue. I went to bed after finishing part 1, and just kept thinking what on Earth is going on?

This book should be a movie, preferably around Halloween.

It isn't a slasher type, but it is filled with enough jumps to keep you going. And the shtick doesn't get old, even when you don't believe it.

A simple set, 6 actors, done. The hardest part would be learning the magic.

And the ending, oh the last 20 pages were filled with such amazement.

If this is what his books are like, I may be a convert.

Jean-Pierre Vidrine says

After reading two of Matheson's heavier stories, *I Am Legend* and *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, this book with its lighter tone was refreshing. That is not to say that this is a story with no real weight to it. The novel is an engaging tale with genuinely surprising twists that never fail to deliver the unexpected. The idea of people invited to a big house for a night of murder and mayhem is one that has been done an awful lot. But no one has done it quite like this. In scaling things down to one room and only a few people, Matheson has made an old and tried story idea seem new and great again.

Drew says

In the fiction work "Now You See It..." author Richard Matheson aims to mystify and amaze the reader as he tells the story of events told by a stroke victim and his accounts of a bizarre and mysterious afternoon of unimaginable events. His point in writing this book is in an effort to entertain.

The theme of this book can clearly be understood to be that things are not always what they appear. As the story unfolds it constantly switches paths being very fast paced leaving the reader unable to comprehend what might happen next. The theme is expressed so intensely that the reader doesn't truly know anything until after they understand everything.

The style of this book is a narration. Using this style of writing the author is able to deliver the story in an interesting way, by using the crippled father of Max Delecorte, this allows the reader to watch the events unfold and compare thoughts with the father while allowing Matheson to leave the thoughts of the other characters a mystery which amplifies the intensity and ability for him to grab the attention of the reader. After finishing this book I can say that this book greatly entertained, impressed, and amazed me with its tricks and turns and also with its constant change in direction. I have never read another book with such an astonishing and extraordinary tale of event. There is nothing that I could imagine changing because of how much I enjoyed each page

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Michael says

Synopsis: "Some years ago, the Great Delacorte, a famed stage magician, came down with a stroke that left him in a vegetative state, able to move only his eyes. The entire action of the novel is witnessed through these eyes as Delacorte sits in the Magic Room of his country estate, a room custom-tailored to display stage illusions. Delacorte's son, Max, has taken his name and place as an illusionist in every effort to replace his father. Max is supported by his wife Cassandra and her amazingly identical lookalike younger brother Brian. But for the past year, Cassandra has been trying to break away from Max. She wants the act all for herself--but Max has his own ideas, which include a heaping helping of revenge."

This story does not deliver on its promises. An longer-than-necessary extended short story that gets so convoluted towards the conclusion that all you really want is for the book to end. I was very disappointed in this book. It's not worth your time.

Aras says

With it all taking place in one room over an evening, with a limited set of characters, I suspect this may have been developed from an idea for a play. Most of the characters are unfortunately unsympathetic, and the endless twists (and credulousness of the narrator) get to be a bit much. The end is satisfying and leaves you with a good feeling on finishing this mediocre novel.

steffy says

Richard Matheson seems to have two modes: really fantastic and ... silly. With that said I didn't hate this one (especially not as much as I despised "What Dreams May Come"), but I did find it awfully silly.

It kind of read like an R.L. Stine or a Christopher Pike book, for lack of better description. A stab at being scary and mysterious, but totally missing the mark and just walking up and saying "boo!"

However, it is Richard Matheson, so there's a lot to be said for good writing. At least there's that.

Philipp says

A book about a stage magician from the guy who wrote *I Am Legend*? Sign me up! (found it for a dollar at the Save The Children book-sale)

But it quickly falls apart - everything that happens is later revealed to be at least 2 or 3 twists in one, to the point that you as the reader just go 'meh' when something shocking happens, you learn quickly that nothing really happens, it suffers from the same ennui Shyamalan's career suffers from. Made even worse by the narrator, a wheelchair bound locked in ex-magician - he of all people should know that it's all an illusion, he raised the main guy to be a magician - but he still keeps on being shocked long after the reader has stopped caring.

Thomas says

It's been several years since I've read a Richard Matheson (according to my notes, the last book of his I read was the *Noir omnibus*, back in 2006), and while I still think he has an effective, intriguing style, I have to say, his stuff just doesn't have the same punch as it used to. I don't think it's him, necessarily, but what he wrote earlier in his career seemed to be better than what he wrote later on. *Now You See It...* falls into his later oeuvre, and it's ... well, honestly, it's a little stupid.

The story is a suspense/murder mystery novel that focuses on The Great Delacorte, a famous magician. The Great Delacorte comprises two different people: the original Emil Delacorte, who was one of the most famous magicians from the 1920s through the 1960s. A stroke renders him unable to perform, so his son, Maximilian, takes over the role of The Great Delacorte. This isn't a part of the story itself, but it sets the background for why Emil, paralyzed, mute, and confined to a wheelchair, is the witness for the events that take place in the story. The story is about Max, his agent Harry, his second wife Cassandra, and his brother-in-law Brian, and the complicated matter of murder and revenge that take place. Emil is the unwitting witness and ultimate narrator of the entire story.

Now You See It... is one of those stories where you're always one step behind what's actually happening, so you never have all the pieces of the puzzle to put it all together on your own. Parts of it work really well — one of the main characters is an accomplished magician, so the sleight-of-hand and manipulation that takes place is very believable — but other parts of it strain credibility. Early in the novel, there's a scene that illustrates the importance of disguises, but by the end of it all, you'll wonder if Matheson overdid it a bit. At least, I did.

The book (narrative) has a particular style (parenthetical) that gets really aggravating (annoying) since it starts off that way (in the beginning) and then just keeps on going from there (ad infinitum). I won't deny that it gave the novel a sense of immediacy, through stream-of-consciousness, but it certainly took some getting used to, especially when it just never seemed to stop. I don't know what it feels like to get shot in the legs by a machine gun, but I imagine it's something close to being peppered with those parenthetical asides every few sentences.

Like most of Matheson's works, *Now You See It...* is a minimalist novel, without any extraneous symbolism or theme to get in the way of a rapid-fire story. Parts of it are tedious — the animosity between Cassandra and Max is strained to the point of it feeling like a parody of itself — but most of it is there to keep you

reading. There really aren't many points to pause once you get started, as the story keeps building toward its resolution, so if you want to read it, you might want to make sure you don't have anything else to do until you finish it. The novel is a short one (220 pages), so it shouldn't take more than a couple of hours.

The story is strained and, honestly, a bit stupid, but Matheson pulls it off in his usual style. Anyone who likes his writing style will find it here, as well, but it's important to note that it can't compare with his classics, like "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet" or I Am Legend. So long as you're not expecting something at that level, you should be fine.

Anna says

You know those **WritingPrompts** challenges to cram as many twists into a plot? This is one of those in book form. Or a lost Daffy Duck script the way Max hops around...

Here's the thing - it is honestly *exhausting* to read. There's a twist every couple chapters and you can practically hear the dramatic "dun dun duuuuun" as a chapter ends on a cliffhanger before a commercial break

It doesn't make a good mystery (nothing for the reader to grab onto long enuff) and requires waaay too much suspension of disbelief for the finale (either of them?) to work

Lora says

I can't give a stronger reaction than "ehhh". This was basically the grandstanding of an author (and characters) who wanted to see how many things they could pull over on the reader (and other characters). When the book says that from the outset, then it's natural for the reader to doubt everything, so I ended up anticipating every single twist -- even if I didn't know exactly HOW it would work (this character is dead, not dead, etc), I knew it would. By the end you just doubt every word on the page and it's just annoying. The book felt like the author was shouting "ME ME ME LOOK HOW CLEVER I AM!"

If you want that sort of thing done *well* -- reveals, surprises, intrigue, betrayal -- then try "The Prestige" instead. Next to that, this felt like a cheap-thrills circus knockoff. Which is amusing, when you consider that's exactly what the main character wanted to avoid.

I will, however, give it props for the narrator, a man suffering from a stroke, whom everyone assumes is a vegetable but instead has a fully equipped mind. Without him, I don't think I would have bothered reading at all.

Skyesix says

this book starts out kinda slow but once you get into the book it has some really good twists.

Emily says

While I DID enjoy the pov (I DO believe this is the first novel I've read that was first person from the point of view of a mute, paralyzed stroke victim), the excessive amount of twists kind of made my head spin. I feel like, were it not for the last bit of the book, it definitely would have warranted 4 stars from me. As it was, it was a fast read and fairly enjoyable.

Alluka says

Interesting to read and you can finish it in one sitting. I experience while read this that I wanted to know more on what's going to happen as I can't stop reading. It's my first time reading a book from this author and it already caught my attention. I felt as if I'm in the position of the narrator, that it must be tough just by observing on what's going on. A well plotted murder mystery. Although I didn't find it scary but you'll go crazy of all the madness that is going on inside the Delacorte's Magic Room. I find the part funny when Max keeps on distracting Sheriff Plum. How obsessed a magician can be when he wants to achieve perfection in every trick just to entertain the audience.

Bandit says

I love books or movies that have to do with magic and I've been meaning to read more classic genre authors, so I picked this book up at the library. Definitely not a horror as it was shelved, this story is a very entertaining mystery with more twists than a yoga class and, of course, magic tricks. I thought that one of the plot aspects (the gender switch ups) strained the story's credibility as oppose to Prestige, for example, but suspending disbelief has always been the requirement for magic shows anyway. The book sort of read like a fun play due to its amusingly pompous melodramatic quality and would probably make a fun play as it would require a great deal of overacting. I'm not sure to what extent it showcased Matheson's talent as a writer, since this is my first book by him, but it did impress me. I liked the ending as well. Very quick and fun read. Recommended.
