

Chapter 1 : A Writer to the Very End: Remembering the Great "Gatz" | Literary Hub

William Hjortsberg's Falling Angel was the basis for the movie Angel Heart, and, Mickey Rourke notwithstanding, it's a mighty fine adaptation. Even if you've seen the movie, the book is well worth a read, but those of you who haven't seen the movie are in for a special treat.

Log in here Dislike seeing ads? Several of the most brilliant writers of the 20th century, illustrated by the fact that their novels have never gone out of print and are read as eagerly today as when they were first published, are crime writers. Dashiell Hammett, James M. Cain, Raymond Chandler, and Ross Macdonald, even with the difficult plot constraints of genre fiction, have produced examinations of the often complex workings of the human psyche with clarity and insight every bit as profound and intellectually sound as their more acclaimed "literary" peers. Parker, Dennis Lehane, George Pelecanos, and a few others dig deep to explore both the darkest and most noble elements of the human condition, while maintaining the integrity of the mystery story. All these giants of the past and present have elevated an existing genre. Their characters may be unlike any you have encountered before, plot twists may be original, and they may reach a stylistic level so exalted that you are compelled to reread sections and quote them aloud to others. Having said all that, it took the underappreciated William Hjortsberg to produce the single most original private eye novel ever written. This little masterpiece was originally published in and has just been reissued in a handsome and generous trade paperback edition that includes an introduction by Mr. Crumley, a foreword by Ridley Scott, an afterword by Mr. Hjortsberg, and a terrific short story that will remind readers of the classic "Haircut" by Ring Lardner. This magical tale opens in an utterly conventional manner when a nickel-and-dime private eye, Harry Angel, is asked to meet an elegant prospective client, Mr. Cyphre, who wants him to locate a man who has been missing for 15 years. Johnny Favorite real name: Jonathan Liebling was a young singer who enjoyed a meteoric rise to stardom only to see it cut short by being drafted into the army during World War II. Badly wounded, he was sent home an amnesiac, apparently confined to a sanitarium forever. Cyphre tried to see him, he was given the runaround by the hospital, so he hires Angel to clarify the situation. Angel encounters a lush cast of characters as he diligently pursues every clue, no matter how minuscule. An old jazz musician, in spite of his happy, laughing demeanor, clearly is hiding something. So is the beautiful young woman who runs a shop selling herbs and potions that appear to be used in voodoo and obeah ceremonies. And there are no straight answers at all from the astrologist who had once known Favorite. The major difference between the two works of art is that the film shifted much of the activity to New Orleans, presumably for greater verisimilitude in the voodoo scene, and the inevitably richer character development of the novel. A new little publishing company, Millipede Press, released this worthy title, and it is to be congratulated. There are some bright editorial minds at work out there in Lakewood, Colo. And that, in a general sort of way, is everything that had happened to Joe Bailey, up to August 26, The title may not make much sense unless you know the nursery rhyme couplet from which it derives: Here comes a candle to light you to bed And here comes a chopper to chop off your head. Log in here Comment on this item Submission of reader comments is restricted to NY Sun sustaining members only. If you are not yet a member, please click here to join. If you are already a member, please log in here:

Chapter 2 : Falling Angel - Wikipedia

Falling Angel was the basis for the Alan Parker film *Angel Heart*, starring Mickey Rourke, Robert De Niro, and Lisa Bonet. This ebook features an illustrated biography of William Hjortsberg including rare photos from the author's personal collection.

Days before the diagnosis in early March of pancreatic cancer, stage IV, Gatz had finished the long-awaited sequel to his groundbreaking novel, *Falling Angel*. But the end came faster than anyone expected. He was in hospice care at home in Livingston, MT, and feeling strong enough to entertain visitors, including his old friend, Tom McGuane, who told him how much he liked the new book. Gatz was so encouraged that he decided to try a round of chemo to see if it could give him an extra month or so to get the book to a publisher. That was Thursday, April 20th. I live around the corner from Gatz and his wife, the artist Janie Camp, so on Saturday morning I knocked on their door with a plate of fresh banana bread, thinking he might be able to eat a bite or two. He smiled when he saw me, but he was done with food or drink. Gatz's childhood nickname that evolved from his unpronounceable last name had a genius for storytelling that he translated into a large and diverse body of work, including essays, novels, screenplays, and a captivating, encyclopedic biography of Richard Brautigan, a former friend and neighbor. A lot of the ones who survived the gunfire and divorce lawyers stuck around, including Gatz. He lived the high life until his father died when he was ten, leaving no money. His mother worked as a hotel maid to put him through private school while they lived in a transient hotel on Amsterdam Avenue. During the 60s Gatz and his first wife, Marian, bounced between the United States and various exotic locales, teaching, homesteading, and doing what hippies tend to do while bringing up their young daughter, Lorca. During the 70s they settled in the Paradise Valley, south of Livingston, where a son, Max, was born and where the marriage eventually ended. Article continues after advertisement Gatz was an exceedingly original writer, with a passion for history, mystery, and the occult and a flair for twisting it all into elegant plots with a sense of wicked fun. Perelman by way of Disney and de Sade. He was a mischievous presence, a fascinating conversationalist, and the kindest, most generous of friends. The writer who detailed demonic orgies with the glee of an ax murderer was also a doting father and grandfather who patiently taught children to fish for trout. He kept an extensive collection of antique toys. His totem, he said, was the penguin, the most cheerful bon vivant of the animal kingdom. And yet, there was the dark well from which he drew inspiration: He made a good living from his screenplays, but he returned to letters, pursuing the definitive Brautigan biography with the demented zeal of an Ahab stalking his whale. *Jubilee Hitchhiker*, which he labored over for two decades, was well received when it was published in 1974. Gatz started writing immediately. It was easy to be his friend; he was irresistible. And when he fell in love with Janie Camp, who lived practically next door, Gatz became a neighbor, too. The last time we spoke he joked that we should have installed tracks or, better yet, a zip-line between our yards to make cocktail hour more efficient. Maybe Gatz was so adept at fantasy and fairytales because he was childlike himself. A friend who grew up around him told me that children loved Gatz because he never patronized them. Gatz embraced his stepsons, Michel Leroy and Jake Camp, as his own. He was close to his daughter, Lorca, who works for a toy company based in Los Angeles, and Max, a poet and conservationist, who lives in Livingston with his wife, Anna the younger daughter of Jim Harrison and their son Silas. Article continues after advertisement After Gatz was diagnosed with cancer, he and his son Max made plans to prepare the *Falling Angel* sequel for submission to publishers. On Monday, April 17, Tom popped by to visit Gatz and stayed for a couple of hours. When he left, Gatz was elated. I sent McGuane an email to ask him what he thought of the sequel. The book was his only unfinished business. He had no other regrets, he told his doctor, who had visited him the night before and then placed a call to hospice. He was hoping to have a more festive death, he said, one with music and friends gathered around. But there was no time for it. I know he would like you to hear this: His last hours on this planet were peaceful. The drugs worked and there was no pain. He was never afraid. Max arrived, and a few friends and relatives came by to help with what was needed. Gatz smiled at everyone. His grip was strong and he knew us all. The last thing I saw him do was put his arm around Janie to comfort her. Courtly to the end. Gatz died at

9: Because this is a very small town we knew that the undertaker, Colin, was asleep, because he lives with his young family right next door to me and Bill and we saw their lights were out. But when Janie was ready to let the hospice nurse call, Colin answered the phone and came by a few minutes later. It was a neighborly affair. The sad news spread through Livingston before it got out into the world. The whole damn town must have been there that day. Gatz, who never missed a good party, would have enjoyed it.

Chapter 3 : A Devilishly Original Twist

Falling Angel is a horror novel by William theinnatdunvilla.comn in a hardboiled detective style with supernatural themes, it was adapted into the film Angel Heart.. Plot summary.

The year was , I was obsessed with Lisa Bonet. Probably everyone else close to my age was too. That year at the age of 13 I discovered that Lisa Bonet was going to doff her clothes and get naked in a movie called Angel Heart! I was so excited I could barely concentrate. I remember making up some educational excuse for having to see the film having nothing to do with my pants exploding , but my mother refused having heard some horrifying things about the film. After having read Falling Angel I can guarantee two things: The mystery begins right there on the first page, as private investigator Harry Angel contracts with an enigmatic new client named Louis Cyphre. The Horror begins almost immediately after Angel takes the case. The myriad characters that both help and hinder Harry are too numerous to list, however there are some amazing standouts. Among the most interesting characters is Epiphany Proudfoot, a mulatto shop owner and priestess who is linked to the Johnny Favorite case more than she can ever escape. Louis Cyphre himself is a conundrum all his own. There is little about him that is directly revealed, but by the shocking finale everything Hjortsberg shows us falls into place like a framed puzzle. So much is hinted at by this behind the scenes character that remains confusing until the end. The same is true for Margaret Krusemark who is an astrologer with a past featuring more divergent paths than a spider-web. This is a very horrific novel, and if you are one to get queasy with detailed accounts of dismemberment and sacrificial rituals this is not for you. As previously hinted, this is a novel with a decidedly surprising ending. This is just about the perfect novel for Mystery and Horror fans, but there are a couple of downsides. For example there is one point that I could not quite rationalize even after the shocks and realizations at the end. A plot turning point in the search for Favorite surrounds one character effectively replacing another in every way. There are a few inconsistent moments in the depictions of Voodoo rituals and satanic masses that only a real geek or an actual voodoun or satanist would get. Hjortsberg certainly seems to have researched the whole thing well, but also takes some liberties. This is one scary, erotic, tragic and detailed masterpiece from the Author of Legend yep, that Ridley Scott movie! The fact that this novel has so many ingredients ranging from Horror to romance to erotica to mystery to drama to action shows what a credit to the writing community Hjortsbeg is because he actually balances all these elements into a tight and engrossing culmination that never seems to become top-heavy or overloaded.

Chapter 4 : William Hjortsberg - IMDb

*But I don't think it was until *Falling Angel* (Fawcett Popular Library edition above) that the genres of hardboiled crime and horror met, thanks to author William Hjortsberg.*

You switch identities with the instinctive facility of a chameleon changing color. Although you are deeply concerned with discovering the truth, lies flow from your lips without hesitation. I would say that you were frequently the victim of doubt. Cruelty comes easily to you, yet you find it inconceivable that you are so gifted at hurting others. Angel is no angel. The last thing he should be doing is having his astrology chart configured or have a gypsy read his palm or have a psychoanalyst. He knows it is bad news. When the attorney Herman Winesap calls him and says he has a job for him, Harry has no idea that he is about to descend into the darkest, most terrifying case of his career. The client, Louis Cyphre, is cryptic with what little information he is willing to share. He is interested in hiring Angel to find a crooner from the s called Johnny Favorite. A debt is owed. Favorite was busted up pretty bad in the war. He came back to the states and was checked into a mental institution. There the trail goes cold, but the case becomes red hot. As Angel chases down the people who used to know Johnny Favorite, they are all ending up dead. The cognac slid like velvet fire across my tongue. I downed it in three quick swallows. It was old and expensive and deserved much better treatment, but I was in a hurry. The problem is the things Angel has seen on this case are casting the type of doubts that lead to belief. He is also further complicating the case by starting to really like Epiphany and her carefree relationship with the beast with two backs. The plot turns completely around one big twist, so it is impossible for me to break down the plot and discuss all the lurid details without giving away the key elements that will lead the reader to the mind blowing conclusion. The movie *Angel Heart* is based on this book, and the writers and directors follow the book very closely, so as a reader and as a movie watcher I hope you all are both, you have a choice to make because you can only experience this snarled bundle of twisted conclusions one time. I think the movie is terrific. Mickey Rourke, before he decided to let boxing mangle his face, plays Angel. Robert De Niro plays Louis Cyphre, and he is suitably creepy for the role. Lisa Bonet, fresh off the *Cosby* show, plays Epiphany Proudfoot. I watched the movie again after reading the book, and the famous sex scene between Rourke and Bonet still makes me uncomfortable. If Bonet was trying to shed the perception of innocence established on the *Cosby* show which seems odd to say this in light of recent revelations, then she certainly accomplished that. Keeten to that list. The prose in this book are lean and mean with some great hardboiled one liners that certainly toss a grappling hook back to Raymond Chandler. The movie disappeared for years. I finally found a blu-ray copy in a discount bin in a mall movie store; literally, it was like finding gold among chaff. Now the movie is readily available. The last I looked, it is available on Amazon with a prime subscription and also affordable to buy. Pick your poison, movie or book, but if you like hardboiled noir, it will be impossible for you to ignore this important addition to the canon. If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://>

Chapter 5 : Too Much Horror Fiction: Falling Angel by William Hjortsberg (): Damned Damned Damned

In , *Falling Angel* by William Hjortsberg was published in hardcover, but it didn't make a really big splash until the following year when the paperback edition came out. This novel quickly cemented Mr. Hjortsberg's fame as a horror writer, giving him a solid fan base.

Rogers In , horror fiction was starting to establish itself as a genre where writers could actually make a living. Robert McCammon had already seen *Baal* published in , and though there were no novels in , he had two different ones come out in Grant and Ramsey Campbell were also starting to come upon the scene with Dean Koontz and his novel, *Phantoms*, just around the corner. It was a great time to be a reader and to be a writer of horror fiction. This novel quickly cemented Mr. I, and other fans, eagerly awaited a second horror novel by him, but it never came. As it turned out, *Falling Angels* was Mr. Though he wrote a few other novels, none of them made a lasting impression like *Falling Angel*. This was an original. No one had ever written anything like it before. As the author is quick to point out, *Falling Angel* has been in print in one format or another for the last thirty years, which is quite an amazing accomplishment, considering this was his only bestseller. Having read the novel first in and then again two years ago, I can say it definitely stands the test of time. Make no mistake, *Falling Angel* is still an absolute winner thirty-three years later! Unlike the movie, the novel stays in New York State during the year A down and out private investigator, Harry Angel, is hired by a rather strange elegantly dressed gentleman, Louis Cyphre, through the law firm of attorney Herman Winesap. It seems that Mr. Cyphre needs a missing crooner found, Johnny Favorite, who disappeared during World War II after been drafted during his swift rise to success, seriously wounded, and then returned to the states in a somewhat vegetative state. Johnny sang with the Spider Simpson band and was the first real singer to hit the big time before Sinatra came along. He supposedly is still there. When Cyphre attempted to see Favorite, the staff said no. It seems that Favorite was a practitioner of the dark arts and supposedly conjured up the devil during a Black Mass. Johnny Favorite also had a girlfriend on the side, which was heavily into Voodoo and owned an herbal store. The thing that really scares Angel is the fact that bodies are starting to turn up wherever his investigation takes him. Before the novel is over, however, this will turn out to be the least of his worries as Angle discovers the truth about Johnny Favorite and where he is. One thing that *Falling Angel* does, besides entertain you, is to give you a close look at New York City in The author provides the reader with a detailed tour of the town that adds authenticity to the plot. The novel was also written with precision and clarity that offers a detailed image of the cultural times and the individual characters. This enables the reader to get close to the fictional personas and to feel some measure of surprise as more and more of the truth slowly reveals itself. A Highly recommended classic in the field of horror Rating:

Chapter 6 : William Hjortsberg ~Falling Angel™ Review ~ Horror Novel Reviews

Buy a cheap copy of Falling Angel book by William Hjortsberg. For New York private investigator Harry Angel, it's just another job for the missing persons file. An enigmatic client wants him to track down famous 40s crooner.

Chapter 7 : William Hjortsberg (Author of Falling Angel)

Falling Angel by William Hjortsberg () An incredibly creepy and detailed horror-mystery! The Basis for the Alan Parker film Angel Heart starring Mickey Rourke, Robert De Niro, and a very naked Lisa Bonet.

Chapter 8 : Falling Angel by William Hjortsberg

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Chapter 9 : William Hjortsberg - News - IMDb

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William Hjortsberg was an acclaimed author of novels and screenplays. Born in New York City, he attended college at Dartmouth and spent a year at the Yale School of Drama before leaving to become a writer.