



Enderby's Dark Lady

Anthony Burgess

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F.X. Enderby travels to Indiana in order to impress the Hoosiers with his musical script on the career of Shakespeare and falls in love with a nightclub singer.

Enderby's Dark Lady Details

Date : Published 1984 by McGraw-Hill

ISBN : 9780070089693

Author : Anthony Burgess

Format : Hardcover 160 pages

Genre : Fiction, Novels, Literary Fiction, Humor

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From Reader Review Enderby's Dark Lady for online ebook

Shervin Ghiami says

9.3

I haven't read any of the other books in the Enderby series but I am now convinced they are essential literature, for this fourth installation is one of the greatest novels of all time.

We follow the poet Enderby as he struggles in an Indiana adaptation of the life of William Shakespeare and his infamous 'dark lady', who may or may not be a negress. Throughout the book's span, Enderby is progressively mutated into a modern day shakespeare, and he falls in love with the titular dark lady, a one April Elgar (May Johnson). The book is effectively sandwiched by short stories, the protagonist of which is Shakespeare himself in the first, and the time-traveling Paley under the guise of a Norwich gentleman. Both stories add immense depth to the Shakespearean persona, and they serve to mirror him with Enderby, the poet.

Burgess is a masterful writer and constantly defies the logic of literature by speaking in phonetic and alternating narrators at will. A glorious novel. Highly recommended.

Leif Erik says

Probably in over my head when I read this at 17.

Fred R says

I don't really think this one should have been written.

MJ Nicholls says

Enderby ends in an endocrinal novella bookended by two Shakespearean short stories. Taking on that satirical fail-safe, privately funded Indianapolis theatre productions, Burgess wrings the last dribble of mirth from his lumbering alter-ego, taking on the philistine yanks who fail to bring The Bard to the masses in a musically respectful manner. As in the previous novels, once Enderby's lusts take over, the whole book tends to collapse into an intolerable squirming cringefest, and Burgess's depiction of a sassy black actress is as subtle as you might expect from a writer with the textual graces of a JCB hauler. *Inside Mr. Enderby*, the first part at least, is the finest of the amusing and outrageous quartet, and the only one I would recommend.

Avd.Reader says

This short quirky novel by Anthony Burgess is good fun to read. In it Burgess resurrects his fat, lovable, poet antihero Enderby (killed off in *A Clockwork Testament*) who now finds himself employed by a theatre company in Indiana as a librettist for a musical about the life of Shakespeare. The director is famous for his nude *Macbeth*, the composer has an eye on the charts, the male lead is a Hollywood queen, but the 'dark lady' is a beautiful cabaret singer for whom Shakespeare himself might have fallen.

Stephen Hull says

Burgess is always great fun to read and this is no exception. He doesn't give in to the oh-so-common temptation of allowing farce to mutate into cliché. Key to this is the rich character of Enderby: you don't realize how rich until you try to describe him and discover that anything you can say about him (bombastic, insightful, self-deluded, perceptive, a horrible poet, a brilliant wordsmith, a field upon which the apparently opposing forces of education and wisdom do constant battle) is thoroughly inadequate.

My only quibble is with the last chapter, and if you read the book you'll understand why I'd single out a specific section of the book. It's a very unstraightforward end to an otherwise straightforward book and, while I admire the gamble, I don't think it was a wise one. An MBA might say that the ROI was inadequate. Not that you should listen to an MBA.

David Guy says

I actually thought this was the best of the Enderby books, somewhat to my surprise. Burgess had killed off Enderby in the third book, then decided to resurrect him in this fourth one. The plot revolves around Shakespeare, always a fruitful subject for Burgess. He seems to show off less in this book, and just tell a story. Wonderful stuff.

Vanyo666 says

[and eventually player (hide spoiler)]

Cat Noe says

I found this to be the weakest of the series, but then, Shakespeare always seemed a bit too soap opera, public fiction for my taste. It was still enormously funny towards the end, and if you enjoy Burgess it's worth a look. However, it's not among his best works.

Shovon Chowdhury says

While he was in the middle of a novel on the early years of Christianity, Anthony Burgess was constantly interrupted by visions of a fat man on a lavatory, furiously writing poetry. This is the last, and best story about him. If you loved Clockwork Orange, you'll be vastly puzzled by this. Indescribably brilliant. Contains the immortal lyric, 'To be, or not to be, in love with you...'

Neale says

'Enderby's Dark Lady' is the unnecessary sequel that most great series generate. Perhaps it is best compared to the Christmas special of a discontinued sitcom, reuniting old characters for a final sentimental jaunt.

Having killed Mr Enderby off in a perfectly satisfactory manner in the previous book, Burgess obviously wanted to return to his beloved creation, who had effectively become Burgess himself. He could easily have made the new book an episode from Enderby's life between 'Enderby Outside' and 'A Clockwork Testament', but being Anthony Burgess he chose instead to inexplicably resurrect his hero and grant him a new life.

The book is predictably clever and funny, perhaps a little too predictably for those who have read the earlier books, but I would certainly not be without it – its most distinctive aspect is the creation of a strong female character, which was not in Burgess's usual repertoire...

Austin Sheehan says

Excellent conclusion to the Enderby series.

The start was a little slow, would be the only criticism. Overall possibly the most entertaining of the series.
