



Venusberg

Anthony Powell

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A major early work of the great British satirist Anthony Powell.

Venusberg Details

Date : Published June 1st 2003 by Green Integer (first published 1932)

ISBN : 9781892295248

Author : Anthony Powell

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From Reader Review Venusberg for online ebook

David Taylor says

A little disappointing after The Music of Time.

Susan says

Anthony Powell's Venusberg, written between the wars, is a story of unrequited love and one man's way of dealing with it. It is comic and tragic, but all the time shows the qualities of refinement and gentility with which people of a certain class lived.

Bob says

Anthony Powell and Marcel Proust must suffer from a similar limitation - their grand works are so grand, few people bother to read anything else. I hadn't planned on any further Powell myself, but this one kind of came my way and only took an evening to read. A "comic" novel from 1932 ("comic" in the sense of Evelyn Waugh, which I find less than laugh out loud funny, but amusing in its way) about a young journalist temporarily posted to a fictitious Baltic country, with recently and somewhat insecurely won independence from Russia on the one hand and Germany on the other. You can probably imagine the stock characters that setting suggests; diplomats, fraudulent aristocracy, cuckolded university professors and the like. It ends on a slightly bleak note but is a bit too lightweight to feel actually tragic.

Sylvia says

I just spent some time reading the Wikipedia article on Venusberg.

David says

What impresses me most about re-reading Powell's early work is how much humour I missed in my younger years. It is deadpan, dry, quiet humour, but very funny nonetheless.

David says

What a delight! Old fashioned views of a pre-internet world that I have only seen in movies. In places very funny and dense with great characterisations of some complex individuals all prancing around together in a very ephemeral diplomatic world. Will read more of Anthony Powell when I can. Small book but read it slowly as there are many chuckles.

Alvin says

A light comic romp with bleak undertones. Reminded me of watching an Ernst Lubitsch film. Mildly entertaining but insubstantial.

Cera says

I didn't think I'd like Powell, but yes, he's very funny, and the viewpoint character in this one is fairly sympathetic.

Thinking about it more, this novel stands out for me in his early work because the atmosphere of his fictional Baltic city felt so emotionally real. It's a highly stylised place, not meant to be realistic in the traditional sense, but the way the characters move around each other in the space of the city made me feel like I was learning something true about the 1930s in Europe.

Simon says

I had heard of Powell, but honestly picked this up on a whim, drawn mostly by the striking cover art of the new UChicago Press edition and the description on the back, which made it sound like a more sardonic version of a PG Wodehouse tale. Which is almost exactly what it turned out to be: a genuinely funny, though much darker and more cynical take on feckless young Britons of a certain class. Even just on the strength of this early work, I'm surprised the Powell isn't more well known: a British Stefan Zweig or Robert Walser, as perceptive as either but funnier than both. I can't wait to begin Powell's epoch-spanning *Dance to the Music of Time*.

l. says

quite funny
