



Falconer

John Cheever

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Stunning and brutally powerful, **Falconer** tells the story of a man named Farragut, his crime and punishment, and his struggle to remain a man in a universe bent on beating him back into childhood. Only John Cheever could deliver these grand themes with the irony, unforced eloquence, and exhilarating humor that make **Falconer** such a triumphant work of the moral imagination.

Falconer Details

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Author : John Cheever

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From Reader Review Falconer for online ebook

Nathalie Fytrou says

3,5*. Μου φ?νηκε πολ? "κλασικ?" αμερικανικ? μυθιστ?ρημα (με την καλ? ννοια). Επ?σης, ε?χε κ?ποιες σκην?ς συγκλονιστικ?ς. Αλλ? χοντας διαβ?σει το "Μισ? τα πρωιν?" του Ρουιγ?ν [https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/2...] με αντ?στοιχο θ?μα, το οπο?ο ?ταν συγκλονιστικ? στο 90% του, δεν ?παθα και πλ?κα, εν? χλοι φ?λοι το θεωρο?ν ως ?να απ? τα καλ?τερα βιβλ?α που ?χουν διαβ?σει.

Flora says

It was inevitable, I suppose, that Cheever write a prison novel (a compelling prospect, theoretically), but aside from some moments of wonderful prose, this story of an incarcerated heroin addict wallowing in the pleasurable humiliations of jailhouse eroticism came off as banal, even callow. Instead of orienting the novel firmly in its setting, the prison -- the titular Falconer -- feels more like a pretext than a context, and the characters never really emerge from their arid, rambling monologues. Maybe it's an unfair comparison, but "Oz" knocks this one out of the park with its rich characterization, wicked humor, and scary-hot life-on-the-edge-of-death sex and terror.

Kemper says

Falconer Correctional Facility certainly sounds dreary and no place I'd want to spend any time, but it doesn't seem nearly as bad as many fictional prisons. In fact, it seems pretty dull. There weren't any beatings from brutal guards. There's no racial tension evident. No one gets shivved or shanked. The only riot in the story actually takes place at another prison and isn't discussed in detail. There's no escape tunnels being dug through walls. Compared to fictional prisons like Oz or Shawshank, Falconer seems like a Sandals Resort.

Farragut is a new inmate who was convicted of killing his brother. He's a drug addict on methadone, and came from a formerly rich family. In a typical prison story he'd be fresh meat, but the worst thing that happens to him in Falconer is getting his watch stolen and a bad episode of methadone withdrawal. Other than that, Farragut mainly sits around listening to the other prisoner's bitch and reflecting on his life. He falls in love with another inmate and has some tense moments when a neighboring prison has an Attica style riot and hostage situation that makes the Falconer guards nervous, but that's about it.

This is a curiously 'meh' story to me. I was expecting a lot more from a book that was named one of Time's 100 best novels. It's not bad, and I don't think I wasted my time reading it. However, when I was done, all I could think was, "Is that it?"

Stephen Durrant says

More than forty years ago, Joan Didion wrote an important and slightly defensive review of John

Cheever's "Falconer" (<https://www.nytimes.com/1977/03/06/ar...>). She argues that people with no particular minority status, even white "Episcopalians," have a right to their anxieties, particularly a sense of homelessness and nostalgia. Didion regards Ezekial Farragut, the central character of "Falconer" as a powerful and extreme expression of Cheever's concern with just such persons. Farragut is a middle-class professor who has always been adrift and has become a long-term drug addict that his wife correctly brands "a lightweight." For no very good reason he murders his brother and ends up sentenced to life in prison. Didion concedes that many of us, not terribly enlightened in her view, will find him so unsympathetic that we will quite mistakenly ask why we should care. In fact, she seems to imply that he is almost a metaphysical embodiment of the homeless man. I have great respect for Didion, one of the great prose writers our time, but I confess to being precisely the type of reader she excoriates in her review. That I don't like Farragut is irrelevant--I actually prefer characters in fiction I don't much like or who at least unsettle me. The problem is I don't find Farragut particularly interesting or engaging. I suppose he is meant to be one of those rootless, superficial academics that anyone who has worked in a University will recognize, but I see little in him of either the pose or badly flawed "substance" such figures usually possess. To me Farragut is flatter than most of the more hardened criminals around him. His most redeeming and convincing moments are with his short-time lover Jody, who is actually more interesting than he is. Oh well, I won't go on but do encourage readers to turn to Didion whose review, as one can probably tell from my ramblings, is provocative! And then decide whether or not to turn to Cheever's novel, if you have not already done so.

Carla says

"Falconer", escrito em 1977, é o último romance de John Cheever e por muitos considerado a sua obra-prima.

É um livro tão duro quanto belo, límpido na sua crueza, humano e impiedoso.

Parece-me revelador o que a filha de John Cheever, Susan Cheever, afirma sobre a fase final da vida do pai, fase esta que coincide com a escrita de "Falconer":

"For me, the end of his life is triumphant. He stops drinking. He writes what I think is his best book [Falconer, a novel about a drug addict, serving time for the murder of his brother, who has an affair with another prisoner]. He became the man he meant to be."

Com "Falconer" John Cheever redime-se.

Aprile says

Sembra un romanzo autobiografico, preciso, chiaro, non vi sono esitazioni, si ha l'impressione che l'autore scriva di cose che conosce bene. Al tempo stesso il tono è distaccato, come se i fatti raccontati si riferissero a parecchi anni prima. Sembra che l'autore relazioni l'esperienza fatta da un amico che lo mette al corrente in un'unica seduta, in un intenso pomeriggio, senza dovizie di particolari ma badando solo all'essenziale. Sono giornate, mesi di vita in carcere di assassini, di uomini dimenticati, quasi nessuno ha più un nome, ma solo soprannomi e numeri. Si riesce ancora a stabilire la linea tra giusto e sbagliato, tra il mondo esterno e il carcere qui chiamato casa di correzione, tra caino e abele, ma emergono anche diversi livelli di colpa, alcuni dei quali rimangono impuniti e spesso sono proprio questi a provocare drammi e delitti perseguitabili. A fine

lettura si rimane con l'amaro in bocca, quasi a dire che siamo tutti uguali, che molto dipende dalla maggiore o minore fortuna che ognuno di noi incontra nella vita, dalla famiglia in cui si è allevati, dalle esperienze che ognuno, a volte, è costretto a vivere. Razza, luogo, ambiente

Tasos says

?ξερα ?τι ε?ναι στη λ?στα των Times με τα 100 καλ?τερα βιβλ?α απ? το 1923 μ?χρι σ?μερα κι ?τι γενικ? θεωρε?ται ?να απ? τα αριστουργ?ματα της αμερικανικ?ς λογοτεχν?ας του προηγο?μενου αι?να και ?θελα εδ? και καιρ? να το διαβ?σω. Απ? την ολιγοσ?λιδη, αλλ? διαφωτιστικ?τατη εισαγωγ? της ελληνικ?ς ?κδοσης μαθα?νουμε ?τι ο κεντρικ?ς ?ρωας Ιεζεκι?λ Φ?ραγκατ ε?ναι το λογοτεχνικ? alter ego του Τσ?βερ κι ?τι το βιβλ?ο γρ?φτηκε μ?σα σε χρονικ? δι?στημα δ?κα μ?ν? μετ? την παραμον? του σε κ?ντρο απεξ?ρτησης απ? το αλκο?λ. Ο ηρωινομαν?ς αδελφοκτ?νος Φ?ραγκατ θα ?ρθει κατ? τη δι?ρκεια του εγκλεισμο? στις φυλακ?ς Φαλκ?νερ αντιμ?τωπος με το παρελθ?ν, την εξ?ρτηση, τις ενοχ?ς και την επιθυμ?α, θα γνωρ?σει τον ?ρωτα, ?στω ευκαιριακ? κι απελπισμ?νο στο πρ?σωπο εν?ς καιροσκ?που συγκατο?μενο? του και θα διεκδικ?σει το αδιαν?ητο, την ευτυχ?α, λ?ξη που θα ε?ναι (ειρωνικ? ? χι) η τελευτα?α αυτο? του συγκλονιστικο? μυθιστορ?ματος.

Darwin8u says

There is something both unsettling and beautiful about this compact Cheever novel. A novel of punishment and redemption, Falconer is also a story of addiction, of confinement, of an introspective man moving from his isolated past to his very human present. It is hard to compare Cheever's style to anyone, but there were moments where I felt I was floating in the same literary river as O'Connor, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, and Percy. His prose is amazing, his imagination is sharp, and the depth of his soul-searching is absolutely sublime.

Michael says

This isn't your typical correctional facility; in fact Falconer Correctional Facility is very boring, there is nothing happening, just a bunch of lonely men trying to make it through their sentences. No brutality, no abuse and the only riot that happens in the book is just as boring as the rest of prison life. The main character; Farragut is convicted of murdering his brother; he is from a formally rich family and a drug addict. The whole book is about him and his desire for methadone; nothing else really happens.

Ian says

A novel of bracing honesty, above all. Cheever's matter-of-fact reporting and his characters are both frank and entirely convincing. I've heard Falconer described as a tale of redemption, but frankly I found little evidence of transformation in Farragut himself. He is an egoiste in the latter part of his life, whose tastes and desires are fully formed and which he has no intention to change, though in Falconer he must learn to live with infrequent satisfaction. (His libido in particular is reminiscent of... well, a Philip Roth protagonist.) Yes, there are themes of violence, the inhumanity of imprisonment, &c., but mostly there is Farragut's grappling

with his past, and emerging unapologetically, in the sensory deprivation of the penitentiary. And though his crime was almost an accident—the consequence, finally realized by chance, of an old but not unusual hostility—there is an off-handed viciousness to his hedonism which can be more disturbing than the events in the prison itself. It's how close he is to us, or to people we know, that makes this book powerful.

Carlos Azevedo says

Há uma forma "americana" de escrever, é uma ideia muito empírica, mas os escritores do final do séc XX, como Cheever, Donald Ray Pollock, James Salter, David Vann, etc... retratam de forma semelhante a pobreza, a tristeza, a violência, dor e crueza da América.

John Cheever é um deles, é uma escrita por vezes poética, mas muito dura. Excepcional

Το «Φ?λκονερ»θα μπορ?σε να ε?ναι ?να σωφρονιστικ? ?δρυμα δυο χιλι?δων ατ?μων που ?χουν διαπρ?ξει εγκλ?ματα, μια μικρογραφ?α της διαβρωμ?νης αστικ?ς κοινων?ας στην Αμερικ?, ?να κολαστ?ριο βασανισμ?νων ψυχ?γεμ?α σπ?ρμα-χρ?μα-π?νο, ? μια βαθ?τερη αν?λυση της ανθρ?πινης ψυχοσ?νθεσης ?ταν ?χουν ξεπεραστε? κ?ποια ?ρια και κινο?μαστε αν?μεσα σε παρα?σθηση και πραγματικ?τητα.

Ο συγγραφέας κατέφερε να με πείσει μόνο για την τελευταία κφανση, ποιτητα και υφή της αυτοβιογραφίας του ιστορογάφου.

Σε ?λες τις υπ?λοιπες εκφ?νσεις που αναφ?ρεται περν?ει επιφανειακ?,ασυνα?σθητα,υπαινικτικ? και κ?πως ψε?τικα.

Σε καμ?α περ?πτωση δεν αισθ?νθηκα πως ?λη η πλοκ? και η εξ?λιξη του βιβλ?ου διαδραματ?ζεται αν?μεσα σε καταδικασμ?νες υπ?ρξεις μ?σα σε μια φυλακ?. Δεν ?νιωσα συμπ?νια, απ?γνωση εγκλεισμ?ο?, απελπισ?α, φ?βο.

Ἀλειψθεὶς βασικὸν αὐθορπὸν τῶν αναγκῶν καὶ καταστῆσεων.

Δεν συναισθ?νθηκα την αποξ?νωση, την μαται?τητα, την ταπε?νωση και το βαθ? α?σθημα αγ?πης που διατε?γεται πως προσματε?εται.

Ο Φ?ραγκατ ε?ναι ?νας καθηγητ?ς πανεπιστημ?ου που καταδικ?ζεται για τον φ?νο του αδελφο? του και περν?ει τις π?λες του σωφρονιστικο? ιδο?ματος Φ?λκονερ.

Συμφιλιωμ?νος με τον εθισμ? του στις ναρκωτικ?ς ουσ?ες,θεωρε? πως οι αναμν?σεις της νι?της του ποιν γ?νει οπιοφ?νος ε?ναντι αξιοκαταφο?νητες

Προ?ρχεται απο ε?πορη οικογ?νεια που ξ?πεσε και ?χει ?ναν αποτυχημ?νο γ?μο και ?να α?ρατο -στην ιστορ?α μας- παιδ?.

Ποτέ δεν μαθαύνουμε τα ακριβέα; απότια του εγκληματος εκτός από κάποιες αναμνήσεις παιδικής που δεν διαχωρίζονται ξεκαθαρά από την παρασημηνία γνά κατάσταση

Δεν αναφέται σε λ?γους, αιτ?ες και αποτελεσμ?τα με διευκριν?σεις δεδομ?νων και ζητο?μενων στε για καταλ?βει ο μναχ?στης τους λ?γους που μι?ς ο αποτυχη?νος αλλ? και σταθερ?ς στο

χρ?νο γ?μος του Φ?ραγκατ και της συζ?γου διατηρε?ται σε πολικ?ς συναισθηματικ?ς θερμοκρασ?ες.

Παρ?λληλα υπ?ρχουν αναμν?σεις που εκφρ?ζουν ?ρωτα και π?θος αν?μεσα τους μ?σα σε μια ζοφερ? ατμ?σφαιρα ακαταν?ητη.

Και εν? ο καθηγητ?ς ?γκλειστος πλ?ον και νοσταλγ?ς της ελε?θερης δυστυχ?ας του διατε?νεται πως: «Δεν αγαπ?, δεν αγαπι?μαι, και θυμ?μαι την παραζ?λη της αγ?πης μον?χα αμυδρ?», λ?γο αργ?τερα μας εξιστορε? την ομοφυλοφίλικ? σχ?ση του με ?ναν συγκρατο?μενο και πασχ?ζει να μας πε?σει τα πρωτ?γνωρα που βι?νει μ?σα απο αυτ?v.

Μια τραγελαφικ? σ?σφιξη σχ?σεων αν?μεσα σε δυο τρ?φιμους του ιδρ?ματος, ο ?νας σπουδα?ος γυναικοκατακτητ?ς και ο ?λλος μελλοντικ?ς οικογενει?ρχης εν?νονται με μια απ?στευτα βαθι? αγ?πη.

Η δι?ρκεια της αγ?πης μικρ?. Μετ?, ο Φ?ραγκατ απελευθερ?νει τους δα?μονες του, κ?νει το σεξ με συγκρατο?μενους καθημεριν? αν?γκη και ο ?λλος, αφο? αποδρ?σει, δημιουργε? οικογ?νεια και ?νομα στην κοινων?α αφ?νοντας π?σω του στη φυλακ? αξ?χαστες εμπειρ?ες «αγ?πης» βαθι?ς...

Η σκιαγρ?φηση των υπολο?πων χαρακτ?ρων ελλιπ?ς και επιφανειακ?. Καμ?α σχ?ση με εγκληματ?ες ? χαρακωμ?νες ψυχ?ς φυλακισμ?νες με κοιν? τραγικ? μο?ρα, απ?νθρωπες συνθ?κες διαβ?ωσης και αλληλ?νδετες εξομολογητικ? πορε?ες προς τη λ?τρωση ? την ελπ?δα ? στω την στωικ?τητα της παραδοχ?ς και της εγκατ?λειψης.

Ο Τσ?βερ γρ?φει για σκληρ? και ταπεινωτικ? γεγον?τα με ?να στυλ πρ?ζας σκοτειν? και εντυπωσιακ? σε αρκετ? σημε?α μα στα περισσ?τερα παραπα?ει αν?μεσα σε ποιητικ? κωμικ? και επιφανειακ? απεικ?νιση γραφ?ς.

Ωστ?σο αξ?ζει να σημειωθε?- κι αυτ? ε?ναι το μ?νο πλεον?κτημα του βιβλ?ου- πως καταδ?εται στην ανθρ?πινη ψυχ? μ?σα απο τα παραληρ?ματα του Φ?ραγκατ και χαρ?ζει βαθι? με την π?να του ?να κειμενο ρεαλιστικ? με χα?νουσες πληγ?ς τις ?ννοιες ζω?ς, θαν?του, μ?σους, αδιαφορ?ας, αποξ?νωσης,

εγωισμο? και ματα?ωσης.

Υπ?ρχουν περιγραφ?ς ανθρωπι?ς και απανθρωπι?ς που αναλ?ουν ε?στοχα την πανανθ?πινη ψυχ?.

Η ειρωνε?α στη γραφ? του ε?ναι ?ριστα συνδεδεμ?νη με τον χλευασμ?, τις απατηλ?ς αναμν?σεις και ελπ?δες, την αλλοτρ?ωση και τον αγ?να για αλ?θεια και λογικ? που αναζητο?ν δεσμο?ς με το παρελθ?ν και τον ?ζω κ?σμο.

Οι δα?μονες των ουσι?ν δημιουργο?ν χ?μαιρες και ?πιαστα ?νειρα.

Που ε?ναι η ιδανικ? πραγματικ?τητα και η λ?τρωση;

Η ελευθερ?α του πνε?ματος νικ?ει τη σκλαβι? της σ?ρκας.

Τελικ?, η εντυχ?α που φθ?νει στο τ?λος ε?ναι απο?λεσμα υποσυνε?δητης ενδοσκ?πησης ? λ?τρωση μ?σα απο το θ?νατο;

ΦΑΚΛΟΝΕΡ: «ρομ?ντζο εν?ς ναρκομαν? και εν?ς απατε?να μ?σα σε μια φυλακ?»
CHEEVER JOHN.

Τα συμπερ?σματα δικ? σας.

Καλ? αν?γνωση!
Πολλο?ς ασπασμο?ς.

Randy says

So here, then, is a John Cheever's great penal novel. Or should I say, penile novel. Yes, yes, the pun is too obvious to be anything but unfunny. But it's just shouting from the eaves to be thrust into the spotlight.

This is primarily because one cannot turn a page without finding cocks, balls, erections, ejaculations, peckers, dicks, tumescences, foreskins, pissings, and yes, at least one anal intrusion by a phallic object.

What would I expect, I suppose, from a prison novel. I've heard that song by Tool. I've seen Oz. I know what goes on there (or so I've heard).

But to be fair, Cheever writes of all of this stuff candidly, not pruriently. Even so, I can only assume that it was intended to be shocking and I suppose it was at the time of publication. Reading it now, however, these details, these celebrations of the male body and libido, come across as tired and sad. Reductive, even. And the allusions to Christianity don't help. As though the author intends to boil male experience down to God and cock and the spiritual turmoil that thus ensues. (In fact with Cheever this might have been the case...in more than one private musing he cursed his libido, his sexual predilections, and his penis.)

Those aspersions aside, Farragut is a complexly drawn and intriguing character. An addict and professor whose intellect and conscience are compromised by his desires (he both rationalizes and expounds upon his addiction and sexual recklessness). He's killed his brother and needless to say his family history is troubled. His marriage is superficial: a sham and a trainwreck. Also in the book's favor is the fact that it is written in Cheever's marvelously fluid prose which, unlike, say, Hemingway's chop-chop or Henry James's clockspring sentences, encourages the eye to glide across the page and seems to pour itself into the mind.

In summary, I felt quite a bit short of feeling "the ecstatic confidence of finishing a masterpiece" that Newsweek promises with its blurb on the emporurpled back cover of the edition I possess. And the book has done little to dispel my predisposed disinterest in engaging the 'Great White Masters' of mid-to-late twentieth century American prose (Updike, Roth, Bellow). But I feel that I ought to at least confirm or change that opinion by basing it on some actual reading of some breadth of their work. So, on I plod.

Dan says

While I enjoyed Cheever's writing (as a thing in itself), the subject matter of this particular work may be a bit "over-the-top" for more reserved / conservative / thematically sensitive readers (or somewhat age-inappropriate for folks less than 16-18). Cheever explores some interesting aspects of institutional imprisonment, drug abuse, psychology, homosexuality, and violence in such a way (and with such detail) it is difficult to imagine that Cheever is not speaking from personal experience... which is in a sense, the culmination of quality writing.

Clearly, Cheever is a masterful short-story writer... my only "complaint" (more of an observation, really) from a construction oriented perspective is this: Falconer feels like several interesting short-stories cobbled

together. In a sense, most novels / books are built this way, but there are usually more connective tissues fusing the "episodes" together.

As a device (a prison setting), Cheever's positioning is nothing short of brilliant. How else could a writer juxtapose so many disparate personalities and get away with it? By using prison as an apparatus / explanation for fusing these aberrant stories/people together, Cheever has free license to do what he does best; tell us interesting short stories rife with palpable details and descriptions. Where else (but prison) would you find such a ripe, unusual, oftentimes revolting cast of players? Cheever has no need to waste time justifying their relationships... he can just "go" and write.

Farragut's nonchalance toward the themes of addiction, sexuality, and freedom (hey, being a prisoner does guarantee 2 hots and a cot!) leaves us with much to ponder.

If you couldn't deal with watching "Brokeback Mountain", leave this on the shelf. Some folks need a happy ending. Falconer is an articulate and interesting nightmare (that you can happily wake from).

mao says

Το πιο δυνατ? βιβλ?ο που δι?βασα φ?τος. Οι λ?ξεις δεν περισσε?ουν στον Τσ?βερ. Γρ?φει σαν να κ?βει με το νυστ?ρι, βαθι? και με ακρ?βεια, την ?παρξη, τις διαπροσωπικ?ς σχ?σεις, την κοινωνικ? συνθ?κη. Ε?ναι σκληρ?ς, οικον?μος και φλυαρε? μ?νο ?ταν η σκην? το επιβ?λει. Η φυλακ? ε?ναι το εργαστ?ριο για να απλ?σει τα υλικ? του και να συνθ?σει ?να ?ργο που μιλ? για την ελευθερ?α ?χι απαρα?τητα ως αγαθ? αλλ? περισσ?τερο ως λ?τρωση απ? την ανθρ?πινη υπ?σταση. Καλ? μετ?φραση αλλ? θ?λω πολ? να διαβ?σω το επ?μενο Τσ?βερ στα αγγλικ?.

Lark Benobi says

This is the ~~third~~ fourth time I've read Falconer. It's a remarkable and perfect novel. It's one sentence following the next of words that are exactly right for the moment they appear on the page, until you get to the most beautiful, hard-earned, elegiac ending of all time. The above might be hyperbole. Not very much hyperbole, though.

Rachel says

Saul Bellow called *Falconer* elegant, pure, and indispensable. John Updike said it gives us back our humanity. Newsweek calls it a masterpiece. I would also like to sum it up just as succinctly, but I don't know how to spell that farting noise you can make with your armpit.

Ezekial Farragut is a wealthy upper-class heroin addict imprisoned in Falconer Prison for killing his brother. The narrative shifts back and forth between the day-to-day realities of prison life (which seem to aim for Kafkaesque but land on cliched) and Farragut's internal monologue, which is both self-pitying and deadly dull. I don't have much else to say about it, since I can't remember the last time I was so unengaged by a

novel. I give it two stars for the elegance of the prose, but *grudgingly*.

Hadrian says

Curious book. I'd never thought *Cheever* would write his prison novel.

Not so much of a plot here, so much as there is an evolution of characters. Sumptuous prose style, only very rarely boring. You'd expect a prison novel to be about freedom, and it is, but it's nimbly done.

Vit Babenco says

“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?” *Genesis 4:9*

God cursed Cain and sentenced him to a life of wandering.

Falconer is a modern fratricide story.

The state condemned Cain and sent him to prison.

“Long ago when they first invented the atomic bomb people used to worry about its going off and killing everybody, but they didn't know that mankind has got enough dynamite right in his guts to tear the fucking planet to pieces.”

We've learnt to suppress our primordial murderous instincts but somewhere, deep down inside, the beast is dormant and it can be awakened so easily.

Ana says

A relatively light read about a prisoner, his life behind bars and the thoughts and feelings of convicted felons who are forced to live imprisoned. It has some deep lines and some very well constructed moments. I feel like I should've read this in english, I might have enjoyed it more.
