



Everything But the Squeal

Timothy Hallinan

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Robert B. Parker and Robert Crais fans will enjoy 2011 "Best Novel" nominee Hallinan's overeducated private eye, Simeon Grist. In the second book in Hallinan's cult series, originally published in the 1990s, Grist takes a case, that leads him to the phantom neighborhoods of L.A.'s lost children.

Missing thirteen-year-old Aimee Sorrell, who ran all the way from Kansas to be a star. But Aimee's trail soon leads Simeon to the city morgue, the first stop on a perilous journey to find out what happens to America's lost children when they go looking for love in all the wrong places.

*From Publishers Weekly

Simeon Grist, seen before in *The Four Last Things*, is an up-to-date private eye, a hip survivor of the Woodstock Generation bemused by current L.A. life. He's also a bit seedy, drinking too much and backsliding into cigarette smoking, with a wry outlook and heart of gold that keep him squarely in the hardboiled Hammett-Chandler tradition. Hired to find a 13-year-old runaway who left Kansas to become a Hollywood star, Simeon soon finds himself mired in L.A.'s seamy underworld of teenage hustlers, pimps and all-around losers. Using as decoys his teenage godchild Jessica and a young computer whiz smitten by her, Simeon uncovers a vast interstate ring involving a talent agency, a bent cop and high-tech kiddy-sex. While providing a nasty new meaning for a computer "menu" and some scenes not for the squeamish, Hallinan employs skillful pacing, L.A. color and Simeon's attractive persona to grip readers right through the gory climax and somewhat reassuring ending.

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*From Booklist

Hallinan's first novel, *The Four Last Things*, introduced Southern California professor-turned-private-eye Simeon Grist and was notable for its superior plot, dialogue, and characterizations. The second Grist novel is as entertaining as the first, although its subject matter – child prostitution – is hardly light. Hired to find Aimee Sorrell, a 13-year-old runaway from Kansas City who has been kidnapped, Grist attempts to get a lead by hanging out with the young hookers and pimps who frequent the area between Sunset and Fountin Boulevards in Hollywood. His discoveries lead, first, to a strange alliance with the bizarre Mountain (a self-appointed guardian angel who tries to convince the runaways to go home) and, next, to the recruiting of Grist's goddaughter, Jessica, and her computer-nerd friend, Morris, to assist in the hunt for Aimee. Hallinan once again supplies a riveting story, and Grist continues to be one of the most intriguing of the new private eyes. Be forewarned, though: the denouement is grim indeed.

*From Library Journal

Simeon Grist, persistently hard-nosed private eye, searches the draggy side of Los Angeles for a little lost rich girl. The 12-year-old's mother has received obscene pictures and a ransom note of sorts, so Grist, disgusted and enraged, dives into a graphic world of teenage prostitution, drug abuse, instant violence, colorful street people, and odious exploitation. By treating a grimly fascinating subject matter and location with sharp-voiced style and verve, Hallinan rises far above his first effort, *The Four Last Things*.

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"Squeal combines high-octane action, baroque violence, humor, and pathos in a self-assured manner that marks Mr. Hallinan as a capable practitioner of the private eye tale. (Tom Nolan, *The Wall Street Journal*)

Everything But the Squeal Details

Date : Published July 1st 1991 by Onyx (first published 1990)

ISBN : 9780451402615

Author : Timothy Hallinan

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Mystery

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From Reader Review Everything But the Squeal for online ebook

Julier says

I found this audio book hard to get into and follow. Perhaps the print version would keep my attention better. I did, however, persist in listening, and finally got into it enough to want to know how he solved the case to find the missing girl. **Spoiler alert** The intricate and seamy world of selling children for sexual purposes is one I have no personal experience with (thank goodness), but it is a big problem around the world. I didn't really care for Private Detective Simeon Grist. But I did enjoy the frequent colorful (and humorous, sometimes grimly humorous) metaphors used to describe things and situations. I'm not going to try and read more in the series.

Steve says

Just as good as the first time I read it. Hallinan combines tragedy with action and humor in this brilliant novel.

Pamela says

Not as good as Last Four Things. Definitely not as good as any one of the Junior Bender books. The story was there. The characters were there. The observations were there. But the spark was missing. The fizz was missing. Guess you can say it was a typical sophomore effort. I will hang around for the future installments of Simeon Grist, but only because I know how good Hallinan gets.

Chuck Kramer says

Grist, an LA private eye, breaks up a child sex slavery ring. Rather dated and filled with bloated language, the novel puffs diligently along but is a slog. Hallinan's Poke Rafferty novels are much sharper and better plotted.

Kate says

The bored author in search of a subject gets himself to Spain and decides to eat his way porkwise across Galicia. This gives him license to attend all-night costume parties of the peliqueiros ("the pelt-wearing ones") in Laza where locals boil pigs' heads, and chase wild-goose style up mountain cliffs in search of pigs' trotters.

His journey is a inversion of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Instead of moving toward a millennium-old goal (the shrine of St James), over hill and dale on foot at tremendous physical and mental cost, the author here drives his porkmobile, his most spiritually shaking experiences induced by a few narrow

rutted mountain roads, in the pursuit of satisfying his gut.

There's something sadistic about the way he delights in ordering a Cockaigne-full of pork stew, and stomaching the great slithering bulk of it, in front of his quiet (and even more bored?) vegetarian girlfriend.

Besides that, the problem with this book is that it's a big fat gimmick. It reminds me of *My Year of Living Biblically*, calculated to boast of a perverse feat (follow the Bible literally, eat an entire pig). Someone with an essentially dull life gives it shape by dabbling in the ridiculous for a year then writes about it.

Ekaser says

This is Mr. Hallinan's second novel, and the second that I've read. It started out a little rough (for me, your mileage may vary) in the first chapter, as he was setting up the setting (as it were) where much of the novel takes place, but from that point on it was literally very hard to put down. I read it in two days (which is fast for me, as I like to read slowly and enjoy every sentence). Well-drawn characters (love-able and hate-able both) and a story line that sucks you from one scene to the next (and sucks the emotions right out of you).

Highly recommended! (But beware: the novel deals with child-prostitution, and doesn't gloss over very much. Keep a well-secured lock on your emotions...)

Bette says

Thirteen-year-old Aimee Sorrell, ran away from Kansas to become Hollywood star, and now she is missing. Mommy and Daddy Sorrell come from Kansas to ask Simeon Grist to find her.

Aimee's trail leads Simeon to the Hollywood city streets where young runaways try to survive by hooking. He visits the restaurant hangouts where they buy some food to survive. His next stop is the morgue when his police contact, Al Hammond, asks him to identify the body of a child, a child that has been tortured.

This is a subject that should not exist, but it does. Simeon Grist, Mountain, Tommy, Jessica and Morris are characters that you will want to meet as they tell this story.. Suspense, terror, horror this mystery has all of these emotions.

Wyckliffe Howland says

The second in the Simeon Grist series, our career student turned detective is hired to find a missing thirteen year old girl. She ran away from home to LA to become a star. Where is she and what happened to her? Her mother receives photos of her, naked and beat up.

This novel looks into the dark world of child trafficking and prostitution. As always with Hallinan, very strong character development, lots of action, and suspense.

Audrey says

[So, Marco told Grist everything about the operation under duress, after vowing never

Ron says

Another early, hard-boiled LA-centric PI novel from Hallinan. All the requisite quips and plotting are there. This one, focusing on child prostitution is darker and grimmer than most but does have some humorous moments. Set in the '90s, some cultural references (especially Simeon's struggle with DOS computers) may seem dated or confusing to some readers.

JDK1962 says

I liked this, but then again, I like pretty much anything that Hallinan writes: I think he's an extremely good genre writer. That being said, I don't see myself coming back to this for a re-read any time soon: the subject matter (exploitation of children) is something Hallinan returns to in his other series, and it's not one of my favorite topics for recreational reading. Also, this second entry in the series doesn't do much to build Grist's character: he still seems somewhat enigmatic in terms of his background and motivations.

Two books in, the Grist character hasn't really engaged me. The full 7-book series is on my Kindle because I read his other two series (Poke Rafferty and Junior Bender) via my local library, and when I finished them, I was enough of a fan that I wanted to throw some money toward the author, so I bought all of the Simeon Grist novels. I hold out hope that the next book in the series will be better.

Ted Lehmann says

In Everything But the Squeal, Timothy Hallinan continues with the third in his (so far) six book series written toward the end of the last century. (Everything but the Squeal by Timothy Hallinan, perhaps best offered as part of this three volume set.) Simeon Grist has decided to take on the task of finding thirteen year old runaway Aimee Sorrell, whose mid-western parents have sought him out. Facing a defensive and obviously dysfunctional family, Simeon is nevertheless moved to accept.

In a wonderful set-piece chapter featuring Simeon's group of aging, perpetual graduate student friends from his university days, Hallinan creates a picture of the family as a social construct based on the need of medieval families to produce a number of children to survive rather than the romanticized family unit of American kids of the late twentieth century. Hallinan's willingness to take his time letting his point emerge combines with his quick stiletto-like humor effectively turns a history lesson into far-from-sober analysis of problem families. This kind of scene is only one of the elements making Timothy Hallinan a master of detective fiction rising to the quality of real literature. His mixture of an action oriented, cerebral hero with twisted, cruel, and dangerous villains provides readers with opportunities to think and to experience the vicarious thrill of the chase as well as plenty of action filled gore and child exploitation.

As the story emerges, a missing thirteen year old girl, an unhappy twisted, family, a body in the morgue, and a long weary search, so do the themes that Hallinan chases in each of the three series he's written or writes – the difficulty of developing and maintaining healthy relationships, particularly family ones, in a world gone wrong in so many ways. His children spark with mordant humor, quick wit, lively intelligence, and deep wounds. His heroes would be knights in shining armor if they weren't a part of the world they wish to drive out of the dangerous perimeter they inhabit between themselves and a strong, solid family. Whether its Junior Bender, Poke Rafferty, or Simeon Grist, the hero is smart, witty, resourceful, and gifted, but always flawed in ways that make sure he will get himself into trouble.

This is the third Simeon Grist novel I've read, of six published at the end of the last century. It contains more suspenseful violence than either of the two newer series do, while setting the stage for both the succeeding characters. Grist is a perpetual student holding several advanced degrees which do him absolutely no good in terms of his ability to earn a living, but make his insights into the dark world he often inhabits more likely to tweak the mind as his adventures stimulate the fear and horror hormones. Meanwhile the mordant, literary wit flies, and anyone who can enjoy the wrenching dislocation will glory in Hallinan's prose as well as his taught plots and quick moves. In *Nothing but the Squeal* another Hallinan concern is strongly on display, child sexual exploitation. It has struck me that Hallinan's treatment of children, especially the dialogue, reminds me of Robert A. Heinlein, the great science fiction writer. His adolescents, too, are smart as whips, courageous, adventurous, and trouble prone. Hallinan's are more haunted by the dangers for children present in today's world.

Hallinan's writing is highly cinematic. In fact, given the breadth and quality of his writing and the almost script-like dialogue and description he writes, it surprises me that none of his characters have made it to the big screen, let alone today's always voracious television market. His writing meets my primary criterion for excellence, it has what musicians call "drive." It draws the reader's sensibility onward fully engaging all the senses and managing responses without too obvious writerly tricks. He's a master of character reveal through taught dialogue. He's patient enough to linger over setting, using plenty a descriptive passages to capture local atmosphere without ever allowing the tale to drag, vulnerable, and powerful. From *Space Cadet*, a young adult novel to *Stranger in a Strange Land*, an important book to the counter culture of the 1960's, Heinlein dominated my adolescence and later. I think that his writing still animates much of my own thinking. Like Heinlein, Hallinan creates his own world, peoples it with sometimes outrageous, but always believable characters, and creates highly memorable situations in which to test their mettle.

Reading in the Simeon Grist series not only provides bang-up thrillers a little more rough and raw than Hallinan's later books, it also shows shadows hinting of the characters to come, in the two later series. Both Poke Rafferty and Junior Bender, a writer of travel books and a thief, have their genesis in Simeon Grist, a private detective caught in perpetual land between his yearning for action and his capacity for deep thought. What better intellectual and emotional place to put a private detective could there be?

Jennifer Taw says

Hallinan has written so many good books that it would be wise to give this one a pass and read the others. Poorly written, terribly edited, truly ugly, and requiring an enormous suspension of disbelief, this book disappoints at every turn. There are very few signs of the effective storytelling, clever writing, quippy dialogue, humor, and pure intelligence from his other novels; this one is a clunker and because it's dealing with a horrific subject, it is all the worse. The characters are never established; the places don't come to life; the tale feels forced; and there are some really disturbing moments when Grist, the protagonist, seems just

not different enough from those Hallinan is excoriating. That could even be provocative and disturbingly interesting if it seemed deliberate, but Grist's/Hallinan's righteousness at every turn belies acknowledgment of the touch of evil he clearly shares with the bad guys. Truly disappointing.

Glen U says

"Everything but the Squeal" is Hallinan's third entry into the Simeon Grist series. A hard boiled crusader of right, Simeon is a precursor to the likes of Lee Child's Jack Reacher. Wise cracking and tough, Simeon takes us into the sordid and disgusting world of child prostitution in this story. A well paced novel, this book is eminently readable, filled with action, a credible plot, and an entertaining dialogue, as we follow our hero through the streets of the late 1980's Los Angeles. A very good read.

Carly says

Hallinan really gets classic hardboiled, from the grey morality to the colorful phrasing. Also, the adventures with ancient DOS are kind of hilarious. However, given the unthinking racism, sexism, and homophobia, I'd have put the time period as the '70s, not the '90s.
