



The Girl with a Clock for a Heart

Peter Swanson

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George Foss never thought he'd see her again, but on a late-August night in Boston, there she is, in his local bar, Jack's Tavern.

When George first met her, she was an eighteen-year-old college freshman from Sweetgum, Florida. She and George became inseparable in their first fall semester, so George was devastated when he got the news that she had committed suicide over Christmas break. But, as he stood in the living room of the girl's grieving parents, he realized the girl in the photo on their mantelpiece - the one who had committed suicide - was not his girlfriend. Later, he discovered the true identity of the girl he had loved - and of the things she may have done to escape her past.

Now, twenty years later, she's back, and she's telling George that he's the only one who can help her...

The Girl with a Clock for a Heart Details

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From Reader Review The Girl with a Clock for a Heart for online ebook

Terri Wino says

A decent story, but no where near as awesome as his book The Kind Worth Killing.

This story switches back and forth in time periods, and while I didn't have any problem with that, I found that I really didn't like the characters in either time period. Nevertheless, it was a good enough story that it kept me reading.

This book was okay, but I can't help feeling a little let down because The Kind Worth Killing was just so good. I'm glad I read it first because if I had read this one first I don't know that I would have been impressed enough to read more from this author.

If you read this book and weren't very happy with it, do yourself a favor and don't let it stop you from reading The Kind Worth Killing. If you read this book and liked it a lot then you will absolutely love The Kind Worth Killing.

Jeffrey Keeten says

"I always knew it was temporary. Being Audrey was temporary. I had become this different person, this person I'd rather have been--you know, in school, doing well, with a boyfriend, a boyfriend like you--but it was like I had a secret disease, or there was this clock inside of me, ticking like a heart, and at any moment an alarm would go off and Audrey Beck would no longer exist. She'd die and I'd have to go back to being Liana Decter. God, it's like a dream now...."

With this book title Peter Swanson was paying homage to other noir books.

I have a crazy girlfriend story.

I have an even better crazy stalker story, but I'm not going to tell you about either one of them because George Foss has a better story, a tale of deceit, a yarn woven with woe, a first love that might have lasted forever, and murder most foul.

George is an ordinary guy, maybe so ordinary that you might even think he is extraordinary. He is in his early forties. He keeps the accounting books for a Boston literary magazine. He made himself indispensable, so even when the inevitable downsizing started to leave empty desks and tragically orphaned coffee mugs in it's wake, he survived.

He has a girlfriend named Irene though girlfriend might be imprecise. They have been friends a long time, but somehow in the long arc of their relationship things never quite came together for them to get married. They are more than friends with benefits, more like ex-spouses who still like each other and fool around with each other between attempts at relationships with other people. Although even when they are seeing other people there is no let up with seeing each other. One could say their relationship is complicated, but really it is rather uncomplicated.

George has this rent controlled attic apartment with slanted walls and ~~too many~~, just enough, bookshelves stuffed with...wait for it...books. Exactly what **BOOK**shelves were designed to hold. He goes to the same bar, maybe not everyday but most days, and watches the Red Sox. Irene usually meets him there and they give each other updates on the small matters of their well organized lives.

And then he sees **her**...in his bar.

The girl he'd tried to forget about.

The girl that was unforgettable.

Audrey Beck/Liana Decker or she could have just as easily been Phyllis Dietrichson (Double Indemnity) /Kitty Collins(The Killers)/ Brigid O'Shaughnessy (The Maltese Falcon)

She is a witches' brew of femme fatales. She is the Mata Hari of George Foss's life. He knew her as Audrey first until he discovered she was Liana. It is now becoming nearly impossible to shed our skins and assume new identities. We used to be able to ride the train from Kansas to California and somewhere around Arizona start to call ourselves by a different name. Those days are long past as we are compressed more and more into our own identities. We are stuck with ourselves unable to shake off our past or ever really get a fresh start.

Don't get the impression that I'm feeling any sympathy for Liana because that would be a mistake.

Like a moth to the flame he has to go talk to her, after all, she was sitting in **HIS BAR**.

She needs help. She needs the kind of help that at first you laugh about and then she convinces you with glistening tears and a series of beautifully manipulated body signals that she is desperate. Thus, it became perfectly logical that George was going to return nearly half a million stolen dollars to her ex-boss, ex-lover for her.

That is crazy!

Why would you even contemplate such a thing George?

It is embarrassing for me to reveal this, and it is hard to explain it in such a way that it doesn't seem stupid, but ultimately, he did it, because he wanted to get laid. Sex and gasoline make the world go around so don't discount the importance of such a potential event in a forty something man's life. And it isn't as if we are just talking about sex, ordinary sex, this was mind blowing sex...fireworks, brass band playing, howling at the moon sex. This was one of those moments that when we are on our deathbed and the sepia tone memory of this event floats into focus that we will grin. It might even take some of the sting out of dying.

Was it worth the punch to the kidneys compliments of Donnie Jenks?

No, of course not.

Yes, yes, of course it was. So you piss blood for a week. It will heal.

Ava Gardner in The Killers. A man would do a lot of foolish things for a woman like that.

This is a plot driven novel, so I can't talk about the plot. Let's just say that George Foss gets taken on the ride of his life and if he survives it you will buy the beers for him all night long to hear the story. You will remember Liana Decker's name for the rest of your life. Every time she swims into your memory you will shake your head, shiver, and thank all that is holy for your amazingly pedestrian significant other. This was a terrific, perfect Sunday afternoon read. I kept muttering to myself and kept flipping pages. The ending will wake you up in the middle of the night and have you exclaiming...no, it can't be!

Peter Swanson hit the Hollywood lottery. The movie rights have been sold. James Marsh will be directing. Chris Coen will be producing. It should make a spectacular movie.

4.25 stars out of 5 and rising.

If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com>
I also have a Facebook blogger page at: <https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten>

Liz says

I really adore Peter Swanson. Unfortunately for me when I tend to love an author I dig up all their previous novels and devour them. This can prove to be a let down. Authors grow and develop their style through years and years of writing. I need to remind myself just because they wrote something absolutely thrilling and could-not-put-down-for-the-life-of-me...doesn't mean their earlier works will do the same. I found this out with The Girl With a Clock For a Heart. It was kind of a let down for me..because I so love Peter Swanson's other novels. It was good. But that's about as far as I will go. I enjoyed his back and forth through past and present but unfortunately I never connected with the characters in either their past nor present lives. It did keep me reading till the end, but let's just say I am so glad I didn't start with this novel of Swanson's or I may not have gone on to read his more brilliantly thrilling work! **3-unenthusiastic stars**

Victoria says

Ehhh - while on the surface, this is an interesting and fast-paced thriller, it ultimately falls a bit flat. The initial premise - a man reconnects with his college sweetheart after twenty years have passed - intrigues at first. The woman - Liana/Audrey/Jane - clearly has a curious and dangerous history and her current situation embroils George Foss, the milktoast narrator, into her affairs right away. But George's status as the book's hero never feels convincing. While he is perfect for the situation, he never really feels sympathetic. He is downright dull (despite some exciting circumstances) and the torch he carries for this woman from his past crosses the line into sheer idiocy. Even when he believes that he is about to die, he continues to flirt with this femme fatale!

Overall, the plot definitely twists into some unpredictable scenarios, but the George of the flashbacks to his freshman year of college shows no growth to the 38-year-old George of the current plot. It's his general pathetic nature that really spoils the book. Perhaps adding another perspective to this outlandish scheme would have made the book a bit more palatable. My disdain for him just prevents me from finding this to be a truly satisfying read. It's average at best.

Bam says

I'm new to Peter Swanson's books and have read them in backwards order this year starting with his latest, *Her Every Fear*, then *The Kind Worth Killing* and finally this one, his first. I've enjoyed all three--obviously I've been hooked by his suspenseful style or I wouldn't have bothered to read them all, right?

Something about the eponymous girl, Liana Decter, has haunted George Foss for twenty years. He met her on his first day of college and soon they were inseparable. But after Christmas break, she's gone and his heart is broken. Even after he learns the nasty truth about her, he unconsciously watches for her everywhere, thinks he sees her in crowds, on the street, on the beach.

So when, twenty years later, he sees her sitting on a stool in his favorite Boston bar, looking as beautiful and alluring as ever, he can hardly believe his eyes. He leaves the bar with his date but returns alone and finally gets up the nerve to approach her. She is not there by accident; she has a favor to ask of him. Will he meet her the next day to talk about it? And slowly but surely he finds himself drawn into her web of deceit and lies.

A great page turner! I enjoyed the way the author unfolded the back story slowly while the suspense built in the present. Poor George! I am reminded of the Robin Williams quip: "The problem is, God gave man a brain and a penis and only enough blood to run one at a time."

Michael says

Gillian Flynn's *Gone Girl* has a lot to answer for as it has inspired a whole new type of thriller were you need to put your sense of disbelief to one side before reading and in my case put me in an uncomfortable position of not knowing if I like the book or not. Peter Swanson's debut novel is such a read in that although it has a different story line it has many of the same characteristics.

The story goes of George Foss who for the last 20 years has longed for his first college girlfriend Liana Decter or was it Audrey Beck? Sure she disappeared without an explanation, faked her identity and most likely killed someone but poor old George is smitten anyway. Now 40, George hasn't done much with his life. He has a sometimes girlfriend, a job at a magazine that is failing and for the most part does not expect anything interesting to happen to him. Then his ex unexpectedly walks back into his life after Liana appears at a local bar. Sure she wants him to do something that will put him in danger and is probably illegal but still George can't resist and even with his life spiralling out of control he still does not want to believe she is responsible.

George is really a major dolt and I couldn't help but say "what are you doing man?" Seriously alarm bells should have been ringing off in his head well before they actually started but of course it would have been a short story if they had. As I said I find this book a hard one to rate as on the plus side the story moves along at a rapid rate and keeps the reader engaged to the end. But on the other hand the amount of implausibles is off the chart. The story has been set up for a sequel that I hope will explain things a bit more as although George may well have been on the right track at the end the story made it too easy to put doubt in your mind. Sometimes great, sometimes not but definitely intriguing and a worthwhile read. Just don't expect a master piece.

Lisa says

An enjoyable thriller / mystery. I have liked *The Kind Worth Killing* by this author and this is a similar style.

(Sorry for the rubbish review - this is not a reflection of the book but of my own tiredness...It's always best to go into thrillers blind I reckon!)

Debbie "DJ" says

I'm sure fans of mysteries will really like this one. I think I'm getting an education on mysteries vs. psychological thrillers. I've discovered I prefer the latter, so for me, I was happy to finish this one. I will say the plot was a good one, and the characters were well drawn out. Overall, though, it felt too drawn out, as characters were described right down to the clothes they wore. Also, the story was told to me, instead of giving clues for me to figure out. I suppose that is what a mystery does though. It is an engaging read, but I found the ending to be somewhat lacking. Mystery fans...go for it!

Carla Palmeiro says

Another book suggestion that came to my attention, highly recommended, that I decided to read mainly because of the strange and now after finishing, stupid title. By the way, what's up with all the book titles starting by "The Girl..."? Marketing ploy or lack of imagination? Also, still talking about book titles, what's up with the name Alice, I keep seeing books with this name on the title everywhere.

All rants aside, I must confess that I did not like this at all. I found the plot weak, the characters completely uninteresting and flat, and even the writing somewhat sloppy and unoriginal, lacking some distinguishing quality to it. And that ending, after all Audrey/Liana did to him, almost getting him killed several times, framed, used and so on, he leaves everything and goes after her?? That's why I disliked this George guy so much, makes me want to say, grow a pair of balls will you!!

But because I'm a reader full of contradictions, my next read will be the author's newest title "The Kind Worth Killing". Maybe this one will impress me more, I sincerely hope so.

Jan says

Oh what a tangled web we weave...

Not my favorite Swanson novel, but still very entertaining.

Full review to come

Hannah says

If you are thinking about reading this book, please, please, *don't* read any of the summaries floating around, because they give away important plot twists.

That said, I would recommend *The Girl with a Clock for a Heart* to anyone who enjoys thrillers with a bit of action, romance, and atmosphere. This debut novel does all these things adequately, but, given the high praise it has received from writers like Wiley Cash and Dennis Lehane, as well as being described as having "shades of Hitchcock," I was a little disappointed by what to me was simply a passable thriller. I think that perhaps the superlative praise used in promotion of this novel led me to have high expectations which unfortunately, were not fulfilled.

The Girl with a Clock for a Heart follows the relationship between George, an ordinary, good guy, and the mysterious and beautiful Liana, his onetime college girlfriend who he lost, but has never forgotten. When Liana reappears unexpectedly in George's life 20 years after he last saw her and asks him for help, he is irresistibly drawn into her dangerous world.

The story takes place in Boston and Florida, and I enjoyed the author's descriptions of the steamy summertime, of dark old pubs, and of abandoned, creepy, houses buzzing with flies. At times, the descriptions reminded me of a movie (which I think this book could be very successfully adapted into) such as *Along Came a Spider*. As well as the strong sense of place, the author also creates a well-paced story that is never boring.

However, although, *The Girl with a Clock for a Heart* was a fun, effortless read, unfortunately, for me, it was nothing more than that. I was especially disappointed by the character of Liana, who was billed as being a deeply mysterious, complex, intelligent femme fatal, but who didn't seem to me much more than a troubled and selfish woman. She wasn't especially brilliant or conniving. So the relationship between George and Liana wasn't psychologically compelling for me. Secondly, after seeing the novel described as "electrifying," "twisty," and "nonstop," I found myself waiting in frustration for a big reveal that never materialized. And third, some of the scenes, while enjoyable, reminded me so much of blockbuster thrillers, that I felt like what made the book work was more that the author was relying on tried and true genre tropes, rather than on new ideas.

So in the end, while there was nothing really wrong with *The Girl with the Clock for a Heart*, for me, it didn't live up to the hype surrounding it. The plot was nothing exceptional, and the characters were not especially unique or complex. It was pleasant to read, but definitely not thrilling.

I would like to thank the publisher for my advance reader's edition of *The Girl with a Clock for a Heart*.

Will Byrnes says

George had imagined this moment many times but had somehow never imagined the outcome. Liana was not simply an ex-girlfriend who had once upon a time broken George's heart; she was also, as far as George still knew, a wanted criminal, a woman whose transgressions were more in line with those of Greek tragedy than youthful indiscretion. She had, without doubt, murdered one person and most likely murdered another. George felt the equal weights of moral responsibility and indecision weigh down upon him.

There are lies, damned lies and then there is Liana Dector, falsehood on feet, the sort of dame who puts the

fatale in femme fatale. Of course she was also George's long lost sweetheart from college, *the one*. George is a decent sort, an unexceptional guy who had the misfortune to cross paths with the wrong woman at a tender age, and never really recovered. She is the one who has been haunting his dreams ever since, the one for whom he would drop all others, the one for whom he would do anything, really, anything. When she walks back into his life what she asks does not seem all that much, really. Of course if it hadn't been all that much, then George might have been spared a whole lotta trouble.

He'd known he was going to say yes to Liana even before he knew what it was that she wanted. He'd known the moment he'd let her into his apartment. He also knew that Liana was as trustworthy as a startled snake.

Barbara Stanwyck and Fred MacMurray in *Double Indemnity* - from filmreference.com

I am sure there are more than a few of us, particularly we gullible guys, who have a page of our private books dedicated to one person in particular, the one who broke our hearts the worst, the ones who came into, or more likely passed through, our lives at a point when the people we were becoming had not yet formed, when the clay was still damp, and left an impression, like a teen tagger in wet concrete. How does that scarring affect the rest of our lives? What directions do we take, or avoid, as a result? Two words work to describe George Foss once Liana returns to wrapping her desires around his dreams, *poor bastard*.

The story is told in two time lines. The earlier covers the time when Liana and George first got together, in college, and George's attempt to find out what was really going on with his gf of a semester when she takes a powder. This includes learning about Liana's life in her Florida home. The latter, and larger stream is contemporary, and includes a crooked ex boyfriend from whom Liana snatched half a mill, an impressively violent enforcer sort, George's on-again-off-again gf, a mysterious house well off the beaten path, and a payload of diamonds.

There is indeed a mystery here. Can anything Liana says be believed? What is the truth of her tales, both now and in the past? What is the nature of her relationship with her erstwhile bf and with the thuggish Donnie Jenks?

Mary Astor and Humphrey Bogart in *The Maltese Falcon* - Image was taken from Oscars.org

A few cops cross the stage but there is no primary PI in this noir tale. This book is less Raymond Chandler, and more North by Northwest. Liana's favorite book is Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca*, and you might extract some value by keeping that in mind. George has a cat named Nora, which might be a nod to *The Thin Man*, which featured Nick and *Nora* Charles. But I expect that one is a stretch. Are the references to hot and cold calculated nods to *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, or are we going all taffy-like again?

Liana is a person with several aliases, and that always makes one suspect there is content in here about identity. How do we become who we are? Can that change? What if people cannot or do not accept us for who we are? Can we ever get away from who we were? Notions of this sort abound.

I had become this different person, this person I'd rather have been—you know, in school, doing well, with a boyfriend, a boyfriend like you—but it was like I had a secret disease, or there was this clock inside of me, ticking like a heart, and at any moment an alarm would go off and [the girl I was then] would no longer exist. She'd die and I'd have to go back to being

Liana Dector.

There are always some hesitations. I thought the notion of the book's title was less than meets the eye. Few of the subsidiary characters come to life, much. But when you are flipping through pages as fast as I did and you will, such things generate as much concern as notions of morality to a sociopath. *The Girl With a Clock For a Heart* is a must-read thriller. Once you pick it up you will not be able to put it down, unless of course, that special someone from that special time all those years back should show up at your favorite reading spot and ask you for a favor. One look in those eyes and you know you won't be able to say "no."

Lauren Bacall - From noirwhale.com

=====INTERVIEW

Peter Swanson graciously agreed to answer a few questions about his book. The responses here have been only minimally edited:

PLACE

How important is place in *The Girl*

What's most important is the difference, class and otherwise, between New England and the fictional Sweetgum, Florida. Liana wants to reinvent herself, and part of that is leaving the town she lived in and never coming back. And when George visits Sweetgum it is important that he is out of his element.

Could it have taken place in locations other than Connecticut, Boston/New Essex, Florida?

The important thing would be the differences between the locations. The book is currently under option by a British film company, and writer/director James Marsh is working on an adaptation. I spoke with him about setting the story in England, which is his plan right now. He wants to substitute Oxford for Boston and a seaside town in East Anglia for Sweetgum. I thought this completely worked.

Why Tulum, and not, say Rio, Cancun, or the French Riviera?

The short answer is that I've been to Tulum and haven't been to Rio or the French Riviera. The longer answer is that I just think there's something incredibly evocative about Tulum, those Mayan ruins hovering above the ocean.

WRITING

On your blogger profile, you list yourself as a writer of crime fiction and poetry. Which came first?

Poetry came first. I've been writing it since I was a kid, and for most of my twenties and thirties I worked very hard at becoming the best poet I could be. I'm not sure that worked out quite the way I had planned, but I wrote a few poems that, when I read them today, don't make me physically ill. So that's good.

Do they get equal time or is one dominant?

Right now, fiction is entirely dominant. I only write poetry now when I get an idea for a poem, and that happens very infrequently. I think I'm tapped out on poems. I don't really write confessional poetry—e.g. Grandpa's funeral, running into ex-girlfriend, etc.—so I sometimes feel like I've said all I can say in poetry form. This is one of the reasons I decided to do *The Hitchcock Sequence*, a sonnet for every Hitchcock film. It gave me a subject matter

You have written a lot of short crime fiction. Have you considered other genres, say police procedural, or horror or sci-fi?

I've written some horror short fiction and a little bit of sci-fi. It's a matter of ideas, more than anything, and almost all of the ideas I get fall into the realm of mystery/crime. I like the idea of writing a solid police procedural but that involves a lot of research, and I'm pretty lazy about research.

When did you decide you wanted to write novels?

I started writing novels about ten years ago. At first, I just wanted to see if I could do it. I wrote a classic whodunit in which the amateur detective is a visiting writer/poet at a university. It was hard work, but more than that, it was a lot of fun. I loved spending a year in one fictional world, and I loved the feeling of finishing the novel, getting to the last page.

When did you start working on this one? Was it a prolonged gestation?

The Girl with a Clock for a Heart began life as a novella. It was essentially the college-years section of the book. My agent was the one who suggested that it could be turned into a book. The whole process probably took about two and a half years.

You are writing sonnets for all of Alfred Hitchcock's films. Is that project complete?

All the sonnets are written, although a few of them definitely need to be tweaked, or even re-written. I've been sending the poems out individually to journals and online magazines, and several have been published. At some point I'll see if I can find a publisher for the whole sequence.

What impact did Hitchcock's work have on your writing in *The Girl*?

Hitchcock is my favorite filmmaker, and he's a big influence for that reason alone. Out of his 53 films there are at least ten or so that I re-watch frequently so they just seep in. James Marsh commented to me that he thought there was a real *Vertigo* vibe going on in *The Girl with a Clock for a Heart*, and that was news to me, although maybe he's right. Definitely Irene is based on Midge, the Barbara Bel Geddes character from *Vertigo*.

THE GIRL

What was the spark that started your engine in writing *The Girl*?

I was thinking about the difference between going to college now and going to college when I did, back in the 1980s. Nowadays, most teens have an established online identity. When you arrive as a freshman and meet someone new you probably run back to your room and look them up on facebook and find out everything about them. But in the olden days all these kids

arrived in college, and they had a real opportunity to reinvent themselves. No one knew anything about anyone. That was the spark that led me to wondering how far a freshman year re-invention could go.

When you were writing did you have particular faces in mind, people you know, relatives, neighbors, actors?

I do and I don't. Usually, when I start writing a character, I picture what they look like, often using actors, but as I keep writing that connection seems to fade. As I said before, when I pictured Irene in this book I was picturing Midge from *Vertigo*. Short blonde hair, glasses. But she's the only character in the book that I had a real specific person I thought about.

Barbara Bel Geddes as Midge in *Vertigo*

I heard that there is a sequel in the works,

There actually isn't. The book I'm working on right now is a new standalone thriller. I would write a sequel but I would need to come up with an idea first that would get the characters back together, and that hasn't happened yet.

TECHNIQUE

What is your physical writing methodology re when and how long?

I work at home in the morning, on my computer. I write 500 words a day on whatever it is I happen to be working on. That makes it sound like I'm incredibly disciplined but I do a whole lot of procrastinating before I start to write. Sometimes it's reading, and sometimes it's looking at mindless stuff online, or playing Candy Crush on my phone, but after doing that for a while, I eventually settle down into writing. I write my 500 words and then I quit. The most important part for me is that I'm writing every day, plus I think it's important to read what you've written that day before you fall asleep. A lot of work can get done during a good night's sleep.

In that case there are a lot of us who are incredibly productive. Thanks so much, Peter, for so generously offering your time. Best of luck with *The Girl*. I hope a lot of people get a chance to read it.

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=====EXTRA STUFF

Peter Swanson's web site has a cornucopia of samples of his Hitchcock poems, other poetry, short fiction and non-fiction, and is well worth checking out

Armchair Audience is Swanson's site for writing on "Books read. Movies seen. TV Watched"

A fun site that deals in you-know-what, noirwhale.com, which includes a lovely list of further links

A short story by Swanson, *With the Lights Out* - This link has gone dark - I will restore when they do

j e w e l s [Books Bejeweled] says

FOUR STARS

Peter Swanson is one of my favorite psychological suspense/thriller writers working today. Two of his books have been optioned for film, including this one. His newest book *All the Beautiful Lies* is due out April 3, 2018. I have the galley sitting on my Kindle and cannot wait to dive in! Before I start that one, I wanted to go back and read the only Swanson I've missed: *THE GIRL WITH A CLOCK FOR A HEART*, his first novel.

Swanson tends to write very strong female characters into his tightly woven stories and this is no exception. Hooray! In this case, we have a kind of bumbling, sleepy protagonist, George Foss, who somehow has to get himself out of a messy entanglement with his ex-college girlfriend.

Liana Decter is no ordinary ex either. You might look at her as a black widow who changes her appearance and her identity whenever necessary and uses men for her own gain. Or is she really a misunderstood, hot date that our boy George has always dreamed about meeting again?

George does, indeed, get caught in Liana's web of lies and it is so much fun trying to figure out this sticky story. The even pacing of the mystery had me flipping the pages like fire.

I've read some interviews with the author and he says that Hitchcock films are one of his great loves. You can really feel the Hitchcock vibe in this timeless story with a definite Swanson twist.

Totally engrossing, I inhaled this book. As with all Swanson books, I adore the cleverly worded title . I can't give it 5 stars though due to THAT ENDING!

I literally was reading the end over and over...saying NO, NO, NO. Rats! I'm really not a fan of that kind of ending. Curious, now? No more hints, you gotta check it out yourself!

Colleen Fauchelle says

George (main character) What were you thinking .Ok so you meet this girl in your first term at university , you get on and have fun together and that is great. Then after holidays you come back to Uni and find out something had happened to her and you go and find your own answers,(sure why not, you liked her, I understand that) which brings you a whole heap of trouble (You do remember that dont you.) You come back to Uni and get on with your life.

What the fish were you thinking!!! To let this woman, who caused you so much stress the first time round, back into your life. She gives you the runabout again and gets you into all sorts of trouble again. (you crazy George, you should have kept on enjoying your quiet life)

Christine says

Peter Swanson's *The Girl with a Clock for a Heart* grabbed me right away because of the cool title and the

fascinating blurb. When it came up for a group read in one of my Goodreads groups, I happily jumped it ahead of 1000 others on my to-read list.

It took me a few chapters to get into the book, as I wasn't initially connecting with the protagonist, George. He seemed rather phlegmatic and downright boring. I guess that was because that is how George felt until things started to click. It soon became clear that George was really a decent soul who bit off more than he bargained for. It was imperative that I liked George as there were not a lot of likeable characters in this novel. His friend Irene and Roberta James, who was a woman detective, were also appealing, but they were minor role players. I never connected with Liana, but maybe the reader wasn't supposed to, I'm not sure.

Once the story got going, I was really enjoying it. I couldn't wait till it was time to read. I was engaged by the author's strong character study of George, and there were some good creepouts along the way. As things built to a crescendo in the second half of the book, I kept reading just one more chapter, one more chapter, one more chapter. In the last 2 chapters, however, the story fell apart for me. I ended up being really disappointed. I do not want to ruin this for anyone so will leave it at that. The reviews are all over the place on this book, and many readers really loved it. For that reason, I encourage people to read it for themselves if they find the blurb enticing.

Would I read another book by Mr. Swanson? I would consider it as I was very entertained by the "meat" of the book. Because of that, I struggled between 2 and 3 stars. I would have given it 2.5 stars if possible. I ended up grading it a 3-star read as it is really better than a 2.
