



The Owl in the Attic and Other Perplexities

James Thurber, E.B. White (Introduction)

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A collection of short humorous pieces, most of which appeared in The New Yorker.

Part One: Mr and Mrs Monroe

A number of short stories featuring the Mr and Mrs Monroe and which contain many autobiographical elements.

Part Two: The Pet Department

Inspired by the daily pet column in the New York Evening Post and consisting of a number of short question and answers, each illustrated by a Thurber drawing.

Part Three: Ladies and Gentlemen's Guide to Modern English Usage

Inspired by Mr. H. W. Fowler's A Dictionary of Modern English Usage.

The Owl in the Attic and Other Perplexities Details

Date : Published December 1975 by HarperCollins (first published 1931)

ISBN : 9780060803513

Author : James Thurber , E.B. White (Introduction)

Format : Paperback 113 pages

Genre : Humor, Writing, Essays, Short Stories, Literature, American, Funny, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Owl in the Attic and Other Perplexities for online ebook

John Kaye says

A delight.

Whitney says

Grammar humor! : "Avoid the perfect infinitive after the past conditional as you would a cobra."

Rachel Sonnen says

Part III of this book is hilarious and full of humor. I highly recommend it to anyone who has a deep love for language.

MisterFweem says

James Thurber is a master of the ordinarily absurd, and I would have loved to hear him recite some of his tales, rather than merely have to read them, because, as with all vivid writing, they have a very noise, speaking, joyously clattering quality that makes them stand out from other tellers of tale tales and reporters of the ordinary.

I also love to read the adventures of the timid Mr. Monroe, who lives in a little fantasy world where he is in control until he has to interact with the real world, when he quickly discovers he is in the throes of events, rather than controlling them. Kinda like me. So maybe he's a good bad example, a negative doppelganger whose behavior is to be snickered at rather than emulated. I love him for that.

READ IT AGAIN. And it's still delightful. Mr. Monroe remains completely not in control during the simplest event, even something as simple as taking a shower. I'm glad Mr. Thurber shared this calamitous character with us.

Laura says

2.5 ??

A.D. Morel says

Long a favorite -- there is something about Thurber's style, low key, hang dog, day dreaming in outfield -- I can relate to this approach. The ground is not quite solid beneath his feet. I have to laugh out loud, even snort!

It's old, but not old-fashioned -- an observer from another time, who sheds light on my own time.

Brian says

There is nothing spectacular about this book, but I like it. Right now I am sick and I find the three page long stories (illustrated) entertaining. I make sure to read every single word carefully.

ABC says

This book is divided into three parts. The first (and most interesting) are little stories about a married couple. The second are Dear Abby style letters about animals. The third (and most boring) is supposedly humorous essays about grammar.

Obviously, back in the 1930's, they did not have Dave Barry and American Idol, so they read James Thurber for amusement. ((Yawn))

M. says

Light, humorous, and sparsely written in a deceptively simplistic style. Thurber takes the art of comic writing back to the every man, speaking deep insights lightly and with sardonically common English. His craftsmanship rebels against formality and his tone is inviting and mellow, but his wit and insights lead one to mirth and occasionally even pondering.

Katherine says

I'm rediscovering James Thurber.

Kassie says

I would call Thurber a lighter version of Mark Twain. There's none of those dark undertones in his short stories. He really seems to identify and laugh at our faults like no other author of his time. My favorite part of this book was the "Pet Department." His subtle wit is what gets me. I will be searching for more of his stuff.

Connie says

In 1931, James Thurber published a group of short stories and essays, accompanied by humorous drawings. Some of his works were originally published in The New Yorker magazine. The book is divided into three distinct sections.

"Mr and Mrs Monroe" is a humorous group of stories about the Monroe's marriage. Mr Monroe always wants to feel that he's in charge of a situation, but he usually doesn't have a clue about how to solve a problem. He's a timid accountant who is great at working with numbers, but Mrs Monroe is more adept at practical things. But she loves him and leaves him with his self-image intact. In spite of their differences and squabbles, there is a sense of deep affection between them.

"Pet Department" is the second section, an advice column which answers questions about pets. Some of the drawings were cute, but I really did not find the writing very humorous in this section.

The third section is called "Ladies' and Gentleman's Guide to Modern English." It's a series of humorous essays about punctuation, and grammatical problems. Although some of them seem a bit dated today, I could imagine them running in The New Yorker in the early days of the magazine. It made me smile as he described typing an exclamation point in the early days of the typewriter by "striking, successively, the period, the back-spacer, and the apostrophe." These humorous writings were written in a pseudo-intellectual manner.

The book made me feel like I was transported back to another era. I enjoyed the cute "Mr and Mrs Monroe" stories, but was not as enthusiastic about the rest of the book.
