



The President's Hat

Antoine Laurain

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Dining alone in an elegant Parisian brasserie, accountant Daniel Mercier can hardly believe his eyes when President François Mitterrand sits down to eat at the table next to him.

Daniel's thrill at being in such close proximity to the most powerful man in the land persists even after the presidential party has gone, which is when he discovers that Mitterrand's black felt hat has been left behind.

After a few moments' soul-searching, Daniel decides to keep the hat as a souvenir of an extraordinary evening. It's a perfect fit, and as he leaves the restaurant Daniel begins to feel somehow ... different.

The President's Hat Details

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Author : Antoine Laurain

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From Reader Review The President's Hat for online ebook

Sara says

Just a few favorite quotes:

"Now she understood Michel Polac's approach: push it as far as it will go until the whole thing explodes, then sit back and survey the damage. Fanny shivered with fear and excitement. She took a step back, perched on the table and tilted her head to one side, all the while keeping her eyes on Edouard. She was about to leap into the unknown and it was a delicious feeling, more satisfying than any sexual position.

'Yes, the hat was a present,' she said softly."

"What Aslan called a 'parallel life' was actually a perfect illustration of quantum mechanics and of applied developments in probability theory, starting from the hypothesis that everything we do in our lives creates a new universe which does not in any way wipe out the previous universe.

Our lives can be thought of as like a tree hiding a forest of parallel lives in which we aren't exactly the same, nor are we wholly different. In certain of those lives, we wouldn't have married the same person, or lived in the same place, or had the same profession..."

I adored this book. I don't really know much about Mitterand, except that he built lots of controversially contemporary buildings in Paris and began cleaning off the layers of gray grime which covered all the old buildings. But if he really was the type who would observe all this without wanting to change or control it, I would have been in love with him.

Emma Iadanza says

[Last year, I l

Corinna says

Daniel Mercier ist Strohvitwer. Seine Frau und sein Sohn sind in der Normandie und nach einem langen harten Arbeitstag gönnt sich Daniel ein Abendessen in einer Brasserie. Gerade als er sich genüsslich über die Austern hermachen will bemerkt er die Unruhe am Nachbartisch. Dort setzt sich der Präsident von Frankreich zum Abendessen hin: Francois Mitterrand. Daniel kann es kaum glauben, er sitzt fast neben dem Staatsoberhaupt von Frankreich. Dieser Moment wird ewig für ihn in Erinnerung bleiben. Als dann der Präsident geht hat er seinen schwarzen Filzhut vergessen. Daniel hadert mich sich nimmt ihn aber schließlich an sich.

Die wichtigsten Ereignisse unseres Lebens sind immer die Folge einer Verkettung winziger Details. Seite 28

Als Daniel mit dem Hut am nächsten Tag zur Arbeit geht hat er das erste Mal den Mut in einer Besprechung seinem Vorgesetzten zu widersprechen und gelangt so an ein neues Jobangebot. Völlig berauscht von seinem Glück, dass er nur dem Hut zu verdanken hat reist er mit seiner Frau und dem Sohn in die neue Stadt, um seinen neuen Posten anzutreten. Doch da geschieht das Unglück. Er verliert den Hut. Doch für den Leser beginnt jetzt erst das Abenteuer. Der Hut wechselt jetzt häufig den Besitzer und doch bringt er allen etwas

Gutes. Er verändert ihr Leben immer zum positiven und fördert Eigenschaften zu Tage, die die Menschen entweder schon vergessen haben oder die sie Tief in sich begraben hatten und nicht mehr raus lassen wollten. Doch der Hut lässt ihnen keine Wahl, ohne aufdringlich zu sein bringt er die Menschen dazu über ihr Leben nachzudenken. Durch die Leichtigkeit des Schreibstils bin ich nur so durch die Seiten geflogen, Antoine Laurain schafft es, dass ich dieses Buch nicht mehr aus der Hand legen wollte. Ich musste wissen, was der Hut noch alles schaffen würde. Wie er diese Person dazu bringt sich zu ändern, altes wiederaufzunehmen, mehr Selbstvertrauen zu sich selbst zu bekommen oder mal einen Blick über den eigenen Tellerrand zu werfen und über festgefahrene Sachen nach zu denken.

Cover

Das Cover ist ein wahrer absoluter Hingucker. Der rote Hut im Vordergrund und dahinter der Eiffelturm. Ein wunderschönes Cover, dass mein Regal bereichert.

Fazit

Gefangen in einer Geschichte über den Hut habe ich wunderschöne Lesestunden verbracht. Die Geschichte hat mich verzaubert

Michelle says

I really enjoyed this. The style with small chapters made this a joy to read and the flow that interconnected the simple sub plots worked wonderfully. The main thing that grabbed me was the great feeling of positivity that emanated from the story. A triumph, and I have ordered the author's other novels as a result.

Fraencis Daencis says

Die große Liebe finden, ein meisterhaftes Parfüm kreieren, der Chef des eigenen Chefs werden: Wer träumt nicht davon, seinem Leben eine neue Richtung zu geben? Und sind Träume nicht reine Kopfsache? Als der Präsident seinen Hut in einer Brasserie vergisst, setzt sein Tischnachbar ihn auf - und schlagartig ändert sich dessen Leben. Doch der Hut wandert weiter von Kopf zu Kopf, um seine ganz besondere Wirkung zu entfalten. Ein Roman voller Charme und Überraschungen, über große Ziele und glückliche Wendungen - und was man dafür drauf haben muss. - Atlantik Verlag

Ein Hut als Hauptdarsteller der Geschichte.

Die Geschichte des Romans dreht sich, wie schon der Titel vermuten lässt, rund um einen **Hut**, den der französische Präsident eines Tages in einer Brasserie liegen lässt. Dieser Hut wechselt einige Male den Besitzer und ich als Leserin durfte bei seinen Erlebnissen dabei sein. Es ist eine *ruhige Erzählung* ohne unnötige, d.h. für die Handlung unwichtige, Ausschweifungen. Antoine Laurains **Schreibstil** ist dennoch beschreibend und gefiel mir auf Anhieb sehr gut.

Die Personen, die in der Geschichte, in dem Leben des Hutes, auftauchen, waren allesamt von Laurain wunderbar gestaltet und hatten ihre *eigene Persönlichkeit*. Bei jeder der Personen konnte ich mir direkt ein Bild von ihr machen und war mir sicher: Ja, diesen Menschen kann es auch so in der Realität geben! Ich war jedes Mal gespannt, wie der Hut dieses Mal das **Leben seines Trägers** verändern - ja, sogar verbessern wird.

Der Hut - er allein war verantwortlich für die Ereignisse, die seinem Leben eine neue Wendung geben. Davon war Daniel überzeugt. Seit er ihn trug, machte der Hut ihn durch seine bloße Gegenwart gegen die Unbilden des Alltags immun. Besser noch, er schärfte seinen Geist und ermunterte ihn, gewichtige Entscheidungen zu treffen.

Seite 44

Ein faszinierender Roman, der mich auch noch nach dem Lesen begleitet hat.

Mehr möchte ich gar nicht dazu schreiben, da ich glaube, dass jeder die Geschichte *selbst entdecken* sollte. Mir hat der Roman außerordentlich gut gefallen und kann ihn nur empfehlen!

Rebecca says

A cosy read. I liked it but didn't love it and sometimes books are just like that.

Danielle Bauter says

What a charming book from start to finish! This cleverly paced novel from a French author is the story of a hat's journey from its original owner (former French president Francois Mitterand) to a number of individuals who also take a turn with it. The magic of the story is the unraveling of how the hat transforms the lives of each of them in different ways. And how everything comes full circle in the end. A thoroughly satisfying read, I savored every page and was sad to have it end.

Demis says

Loved it. A sweet little story, well-realised characters... gave me a real feeling of that magic I used to get reading stories as a kid, except instead of dragons, monsters and knights, it was all about the oysters,

perfumes and Parisian parks I know all too well.

It's a quick read - anyone looking for a wonderful way to waste your afternoon, this one's a treat.

Arash says

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Claire McAlpine says

Another success from Antoine Laurain. Fable-like it follows the subsequent wearers of The French President during the 1980's Francois Mitterand after he leaves it in a Parisian brasserie.

The hat continues to be left and each person who becomes its temporary caretaker experiences something new and transfromative in their lives.

Impossible to put down, uplifting and a joy to read, it is wonderful to come across one of those 'turn-to' authors when in need of a literary pick-me-up or just a fun read!

My complete review here at Word by Word.

Susan says

Could a hat absorb the qualities of the person who's head it's been sitting on?

In this delightfully quirky story, the lost hat of the President of France seems to change the lives of those who wear it, making them bolder and more confident, and therefore allowing them to make the choices that could change their lives for the better.

It all begins when Danielle finds himself dining in close proximity to the leader of his country, who leaves behind his hat. The temptation is too great for Danielle, who decides to keep it as a memento of what has been a very special evening.

And so begins a series of events that sees the hat change the lives of those who come, completely by chance, to wear it.....but does the hat have an influence over who that wearer will be.....

Deyanne says

I find it quite delightful to pick up a book and finish it in a quick evening. This is my second book by Antoine Laurain and I find it is like savoring a rich dessert that you know at the start will leave you satisfied. The story line is a simple one...it is the story of the good fortune brought to the people who happen to fortunately find and wear a "lost hat". Laurain's books so far have been optimistic and upbeat. Many of the lives involving the four different stories in this little novel are faltering...some badly. The connection of how the stories are revealed and connected did stretch my imagination, but I gave allowance for a fable of sorts. The story of the power of smell and the artistry of perfume was my favorite piece. Perhaps I cheered for the patient who could rise above an incompetent Freudian therapist. However, by the time I got to the fourth story, I had had enough of the makeovers.

How wonderful it would be for anyone to suddenly have the magical gift of confidence and restored talents. Wouldn't we all want a chance wearing "The President's Hat"?

While I enjoyed this gem of a book, my favorite is still The Red Notebook. This hat book though not quite a four for me, I am scoring up rather than down. The food descriptions and characterizations convinced me to be generous.

I wouldn't have discovered this author had it not been for GR's friends. This venue certainly expands my horizons and options for rich and new experiences.

Jane says

“If you want to get ahead get a hat”

It's a play on words, used as an advertising slogan in the UK in the 1940s. It would seem that those words struck a chord, as they remain in the public consciousness to this day. Maybe that's because they're true.

They certainly were in Paris, in 1986.

Daniel Mercier was an accountant, with a career that was solid but not spectacular.

One evening, when his wife and child were away, he decided that he would treat himself to a lovely meal and a good bottle of wine at a smart brasserie. While he eating a man sat down on the banquette next to him: Daniel was amazed to find himself sitting alongside President Mitterrand, who was dining with a couple of associates.

Daniel was thrilled: he would have a wonderful memory and a fine tale to tell!

The Presidents HatWhen the presidential party left the president left his hat behind. Nobody noticed, and so Daniel tried it on. The president's hat! He rather liked it and so he walked out of the restaurant wearing it.

And then his whole life seems to changed. He was more confident at work, more ready to speak out, and he

impressed his colleagues and his superiors. He won a fine promotion.

But then Daniel lost the hat.

A young woman writer found it. She tried it on, she rather liked it, and as there was no sign of the owner she kept it. The hat gave her the confidence to change her life, but then she lost it.

Somebody else picked it up, their life changed, and then they lost the hat. And so it went on.

Daniel was the only one who knew where the hat had come from, and so he was the only one who chased it. That tied the stories together, making this a proper novel with a beginning, a middle and an end, rather than a series of linked stories.

The story of the president's hat says much about what many things. Big things. Love, work, creativity, recovery, hope, politics It says that small things, random chances, can change the course of a life. And it says that you really should reach out for your dream.

But, of course, the big question is this: does the power lie within the hat, or does it simply awaken the power in each individual who wears it. That question stays up in the air, but I know what I think.

The setting – Paris nearly thirty years ago – was perfect. Long enough ago to be nostalgic, recent enough to be familiar, and could you really imagine this story anywhere else but Paris?

I found it very easy to keep turning pages. The style was light and bright, the stories were charming, and I always wanted to know what was happen enough.

There was just enough substance, just enough to think about.

And the ending was perfect.

Nancy McKibben says

The President's Hat

By Antoine Laurain

A French novel in translation, *The President's Hat* is a sweet bit of whimsy. Daniel Mercier, an everyday sort of accountant, inadvertently finds himself seated next to President Francois Mitterand at a brasserie; when Mitterand forgets his hat, Mercier appropriates it as a souvenir of the evening he sat next to the President. But when he dons the black hat, he feels transformed.

He felt as if his brain was bathed in a refreshing dose of sparkling aspirin. Bubbles of oxygen were fizzing through zones that had slumbered for too long.

In short order, the hat extracts his life from the rut in which it was stuck. But alas (or hélas, in French), Daniel, too leaves the black hat behind him on a train, where Fanny, a young woman becalmed in an affair with a married man, picks it up and puts it on to protect her hair from the rain.

The black felt brim acted like a visor, compressing the space around her and marking out a distinct horizon. In Batignolles, a man did a double take as he passed her. What kind of image was she projecting, walking along in the moonlight in her denim mini-skirt, high heels, silver jacket, and black hat? . . . The hat gave her jaw line a new air of distinction; she had put her hair up in a bun to help keep it in place. Perhaps she should always wear it up like this and put on a new black hat every time she went out. Donning the new accessory had made her feel somehow powerful; it had the same effect as the designer clothes she so rarely treated herself to.

The hat changes Fanny's life, too, but rather than forget it, she generously leaves it on a park bench for the next lucky wearer, a perfumier who has lost his nose . . .

But not to give away any more of the plot. This little book is gracefully done: witty, wry, Gallic, and unpretentious, an enchanting glimpse into the lives of a few Parisian citizens, fortunate beneficiaries of the President's Hat.

Mo says

This was really a series of short stories, cleverly cobbled together by the president's miraculous hat. It started out very interestingly, and got better as it went along and the stories all came together.

Bianca says

"The President's Hat" is another charming novel by the French writer Antoine Laurain.

I loved his "Red Notebook", so when I spotted this on Netgalley, I had to request it. Many thanks to the publishers, Gallic Books, for allowing me to read it.

The President's Hat is about the French President, Francois Mitterand's hat. I've grown up hearing about him. He was the French president for a very long time (14 years!).

The story takes place in 1986. Daniel Mercier finds himself in a brasserie, enjoying a quiet dinner by himself. At the table next to him sits Francois Mitterand and two other people. The President and his entourage leave, but Mitterand leaves his hat behind. Daniel decides to keep the hat as a souvenir.

Unbeknownst to him, things start changing for the better. He gets a promotion at work. The unthinkable

happens: he forgets the hat on the train.

I will try not to give too much away. I will just say that the hat changes owners from Daniel Mercier to a young woman, Fanny Marquant, then to Pierre Aslan, a perfume maker, and to Bernard Lavalliere, an affluent Frenchman, part of the rich, conservative elite.

The hat seems to influence and provoke changes in the lives of all those who have it in their possession. They know it's the hat. Besides Daniel Mercier, none of them knows of its provenance. I'll leave it at that.

This is a short novel that reads like a fable. I especially enjoyed the 80s references. While I'm not French, I recognised many of them.

Antoine Laurain's writing is deceptively simple, but it flows beautifully. Obviously, the translator (I couldn't find who it was) did a wonderful job translating it.

I thought the story was very original and very well written and its conclusion was very satisfying.

Antoine Laurain's writing and stories have a "je ne sais quoi" quality to them that really appeals to me. I read that this novel/novella was turned into a movie. I wouldn't mind watching it, especially since I'm a French movie fan.

Très agréable!

4.5 stars

I've received this book via NetGalley, in exchange for an honest review. Many thanks to the publishers for the opportunity to read and review.

Cover: 5 stars

Leah says

One for lovers of whimsy...

Daniel Mercier is eating alone one night in a restaurant when François Mitterrand, President of France, and some friends settle themselves at the next table. Daniel is thrilled to be so close to the great man, and begins to imagine that he's part of the President's group. When they leave the restaurant, Daniel notices that Mitterrand has accidentally left his signature black hat behind. Succumbing to an overwhelming temptation, Daniel picks it up, crams it on his own head, and scuttles quickly out of the restaurant before Mitterrand notices and comes back for it. The strange thing is that, almost immediately he acquires the hat, Daniel, usually a rather diffident and anxious young man, finds his confidence growing and his bosses appreciating him more. So when he in turn accidentally leaves the hat on a train, he is very upset. But the woman who picks it up suddenly finds the desire and courage to change her own rather unhappy life...

And so the story progresses, with the hat being passed from one person to another. In each case, we learn a bit about their story and then see how the possession of the hat leads them to make fundamental changes for

the better in their lives. The book is well-written and quite entertaining, though undoubtedly a little on the twee side for me. The stories vary in their interest level. One that I enjoyed tells of a 'nose' – a man who used to have a glowing reputation for creating lovely and highly successful perfumes, but who in recent years seems to have lost the knack. The descriptions of how he finds himself inspired by various smells that he comes across and how he then goes about recreating these is done well, and I enjoyed the idea of him being able to identify the scent each person he met was wearing. Other episodes were less successful for me – like the man who found his entire political outlook on life changing as a result of wearing the hat. Even whimsy must have some basis in reality, and the idea that one shows one's conversion to socialism by buying up lots of expensive art to hang around one's home seemed a little odd.

It's not a book to over-analyse, but... well, when did that ever stop me? ;) I found it intriguing in an irritating kind of way that all the men in the book were inspired to change either their working or political lives, while the solitary (beautiful, of course) woman's story is one of breaking off a romantic relationship where she's being used, and then finding true love. The book was written, I believe, in 2012 – have we really not got beyond these stereotypes? I also didn't much care for the portrayal of Mitterrand – a man I know almost nothing about, so it's not that I have a bias. In the book he comes over as rather creepy, misusing his position as President to use the Secret Service for personal rather than political purposes, and lasciviously drooling over a photo of the woman who briefly has his hat. For all I know, this might be an accurate portrayal, but even if it is, it didn't feel right in a book as frothy and fanciful as this one is.

Still, it is quite readable and lightly enjoyable for the most part, so I'll stop criticising now. Not one that worked terribly well for me, as you'll have gathered, but I'm sure will work better for people who are more skilled than I am at immersing themselves fully in a bit of whimsy...

NB This book was provided for review by the publisher, Gallic Books.

www.fictionfanblog.wordpress.com

Pamela says

"Sometimes life carries you in different directions and you don't even realise (sic) you've gone down a fork in the road; the GPS of destiny has not followed the planned route and there has been no sign to indicate you've passed the point of no return. Life's Bermuda Triangle is both myth and reality."

IF.... A mighty little word with mammoth implications.

Daniel Mercier is an average bloke. A vanilla sort of cube-farm guy not likely to get promoted, let alone become company partner or rub elbows with notables anytime soon. At least, not until the 'if' factor' came into play. That little serendipitous word which makes dreamers dream, writers write, and poets wax.

"The important events in our lives are always the result of a sequence of tiny details."

It is a rare "bachelor's evening" for Daniel Mercier. His wife and child are out of town. On a whim, he decides to dine-out in an upscale brasseries with luxurious white tablecloths. But alas, he hasn't made a reservation. As fortune would have it, a last-minute cancellation occurs and Daniel is seated promptly. Shockingly, in the most awe-inspiring way, President Mitterrand and his men are seated at the table next to Daniel's. Two-hours later, the presidential party leaves. Daniel soaks in the afterglow; he just dined within

eavesdropping distance of THE MOST powerful man in the land.

But What's this? Mitterrand has forgotten his hat? What's a bloke to do? Turn it in to the matric d' or keep mum and claim it as his own? After short debate, Daniel dons the hat and heads out the door into the night. And thus, the fortuitous 'lost-and-found' journey of the hat begins.....

Akin to clipping on a company badge, or donning a uniform, or sporting Oakleys, or stepping out in Prada, the caterpillar becomes a butterfly:

"As he walked briskly . . . he could feel a profound change taking place within him. More than a change, a metamorphosis."

Delightfully fun!!! A delightful sort of fun that leaves you smiling; feeling like there's a dream-come-true with your name on it just waiting around the corner. And it's a timeless tale; a universal story appealing to a wide array of readers.

Four ***** Serendipitous ***** Stars. (If not for the translation being a bit wonky, I'd probably go five stars.)

Also highly recommended: The Red Notebook.

Ruth says

Eine sehr süße Geschichte darüber, was Glaube alles bewirken kann. Auch wenn es der Glaube an einen Hut ist. ;-)

Paria says

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