



The Hanging Garden

Patrick White

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A previously unpublished novel from the winner of the 1973 Nobel Prize for Literature

Two children are brought to a wild garden on the shores of Sydney Harbour to shelter from the Second World War. The boy's mother has died in the Blitz. The girl is the daughter of a Sydney woman and a Communist executed in a Greek prison. In wartime Australia, these two children form an extraordinary bond as they negotiate the dangers of life as strangers abandoned on the far side of the world.

With the tenderness and rigour of an old, wise novelist, Patrick White explores the world of these children, the city of his childhood and the experience of war. The Hanging Garden ends as the news reaches Sydney of victory in Europe, and the children face their inevitable separation.

White put the novel aside at this point and how he planned to finish the work remains a mystery. But at his death in 1990 he left behind a masterpiece in the making, which is published here for the first time.

The Hanging Garden Details

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Author : Patrick White

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From Reader Review The Hanging Garden for online ebook

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Marjorie says

I felt ambivalent about purchasing this book. Before his death, White had wanted it destroyed, and it seems unethical that his agent would subsequently allow it to be published. But in spite of the novel being only a fragment and published against the author's wishes, I loved it.

The novel is set in the Second World War. Two children, Eirene Sklavos and Gilbert Horsfall, have been evacuated from Greece and London respectively. They have been billeted with Mrs Bulpit, a widowed Englishwoman who lives in a house with the hanging garden of the book's title, in Mosman (a suburb on Sydney's northern harbourside). The children form an unlikely friendship, and in creating this relationship White established beautifully the small perceptions and deceptions, the distinctions as to what can be shared and what cannot.

I only wish White had had time to complete the book so that the reader would understand what his bigger vision might entail.

The novel has the usual profound insights, lyrical writing – and occasional unkindnesses - that characterize all White's earlier work.

neil bromiley says

Patrick White's writing is so good I read it forgetting that it was an unfinished work. It is full of his beautifully crafted prose which leads you ever deeper into the minds of the characters. He switches the 1st person narration between characters and back to 3rd person without warning but with such ease that you know which voice you're hearing immediately. They are funny too, some of them, without any intention to be. No one distils Australian characteristics on the page as exquisitely as White. You can hear the drawling speech and feel the heartbreaking efforts to be something better than the battler next door. This was possibly meant to be a trilogy and coming to the last page left me feeling real loss for what he didn't write.

Brittny says

I would give this book 3.5 stars. I think it's important to know that this book is an unfinished manuscript before you begin. Because it is unedited, it can be difficult to follow and not all of the plot points are fleshed out. Even so, I think this book offers a unique look into life during WW2. I enjoyed the story, especially the last 20 pages give or take.

George says

A well written unfinished novel, posthumously published in 2012, 22 years after White's death. Patrick White's last attempt at writing a novel when he was 69 years of age. A recommended read for Patrick White fans, who should not be disappointed. The story of two unrelated young children, Irene and Gil, removed from the war in Europe in 1939 for safety reasons, (a common practise where European families had relatives in countries far from the war), find themselves living with relations in Sydney, Australia. The story follows their experiences over the period 1939 to 1945, making friends and living with their relations. The story is complete in itself. It is surmised that White had completed a third of the novel and was to explore the lives of Irene and Gil after 1945.

James Tierney says

Not quite a recovered masterpiece but a fascinating read nonetheless.

White was such a sure, material stylist & builder of psyche interiors that the sheer strength of his 'unhurried prose' leaves a tremendous impact.

I can't pretend that I don't feel sad for what the novel would have been if White had returned to it & performed another draft or two but I'm also grateful for this glimpse into the vastness of his storytelling.

Tony says

THE HANGING GARDEN. (2012). Patrick White. ***.

This is the only book I have read so far by White. I have been wanting to read "The Eye of the Storm," but have been put off by its length. Maybe I will overcome that some day. This work was meant to be the first part of a two-part novel. The author did not live to complete it. This first part was published after his death, and, thus, was not edited by the author. It is set during WW II, and the story follows the adventures of a young boy and a young girl who were sent to Australia to be looked after by an Australian couple. The intent was to keep them safe from the raging war. I had problems with this book. First off, it is relatively devoid of any action. There is a mass of character exposition, but nothing seems to happen. Although written in a thoughtful manner with what could only be recognized as a deep concern for the absolute correct choice of language, it tended to drag on. The author was earlier awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, and though this work clearly demonstrates the talent for such a prize, it is still relatively devoid of any forward movement. Taking it in big gulps helps, but there was still that constant urge to put it down.

Robert Ditterich says

A mature, unfinished work by a great writer. Intellectually I could engage with interest, but reading it simply as a novel I felt dissatisfied and frustrated by the fog of verbal texture that obscured the unfolding of the

narrative. This was clearly written by a mind that had become used to observing ever so closely, but perhaps at the expense of telling a good yarn.

The book has been published without editing in deference to White's death before the planned larger work was completed. It was compelling to imagine this as a manuscript coming straight from his pen, but I often found the syntax clunky and the sentences often required several readings in order to glean their meaning. I feel horribly guilty. I admire the author and his sensitivities enormously but I could not finish the book, because I felt the struggle was wasting my time. There is too much else to read.

John Purcell says

Patrick White's forgotten masterpiece, *The Hanging Garden* will make many contemporary Australian writers hang their heads in shame. It is that good. This is a book by one of the very greats of literature and its greatness is immediately apparent.

Forget what you think you know about Patrick White's writing. It is time to be re-introduced.

Beautiful, dark, deep, erotic, disturbing, funny and evocative, *The Hanging Garden* will delight even the most jaded of readers.

I have read the proof of *The Hanging Garden* twice. And I will keep it near me for I believe I shall read it a third time and a fourth.

You may buy a copy here > *The Hanging Garden* by Patrick White : <http://bit.ly/xmhoOy>

JS Found says

A "mood painting" of sorts. We are in the thoughts and sensory experience of an orphaned girl brought to Australia in the middle of WWII. She stays in a foster home where the only other child is an orphaned boy her age from England. The novel does something interesting with point of view: first, second and third person are used and sometimes fluidly run together. The girl is an alien--half Australian, half Greek--who feels alone, ignored, without compass and meaning in this strange new world. Her interior life is what's important and she keeps it treasured and hidden. White describes things elliptically, using language in a painterly way. It's like a tone poem. He died before he could finish the book, though the ending works by itself. He takes seriously his main character's thoughts and feelings; in fact, this is the reason for the book. The effect is like sunlight coming into a white room.

Lalalah says

"Sospeso". In molti sensi: "sospeso" perché incompiuto (ma, di fatto, lo si percepisce poco, a mio parere - sarà anche solo una parte, ma di per sé è chiusa); "sospeso" come le vite dei protagonisti; "sospeso" come immagino io un giardino sospeso, vale a dire - nella sua leggerezza - incantato. E a trasmettere questa sensazione è soprattutto il linguaggio o, a voler essere più specifica, il modo in cui vengono inanellate e accostate e soffiate nell'aria le parole, perché continuo ad aleggiarvi... sospese.

"Se solo potessi morire ma non muori solo i vecchi o i soldati in guerra o Papà assassinato possono. E così è mattina. E ciò che era bagnato si asciuga. Ma non del tutto. Diventerà comunque una macchia, una vergogna."

Billy O'Callaghan says

For some time now I've been wanting to take on Patrick White, one of the 20th century's most disgracefully under-read major novelists, but have found his style somewhat intimidating. I did read a collection of his short stories called 'The Cockatoos' several years ago, and enjoyed it very much, but wasn't at all sure how I could handle him over a longer and more convoluted narrative. Then I came across 'The Hanging Garden', and it seemed like the perfect solution.

In 1942, with the world in turmoil, two children – Eirene Sklavos, the daughter of an Australian mother and murdered Greek father, and Gilbert Horsfall, whose mother has been killed in the London Blitz and whose father, a colonel, is away at war – are sent as refugees into the care of the alcoholic Mrs. Bulpit. Over the coming years, they are forced to adapt to a new way of life, learning to become Australian, bearing all sorts of misfortune, falling a little bit in love, and bearing up against the sorrow of separation.

As this coming-of-age tale is only a third of what White had intended the entire novel to be, it's inevitable that it should seem to fall short of greatness. Yet the section that does survive, being neatly self-contained (and in no way a first draft), certainly gives ample evidence of his prodigious talent. It is beautifully written, sad and lovely, complex in its winding sentences and frequent unannounced shifts in (first-, second- and third-person) perspectives while still remaining eminently readable, and extraordinarily vivid in its depictions and quietly devastating in its manipulation of the emotions.

Ultimately, 'The Hanging Garden' has given me exactly what I'd hoped for: a fine, absorbing and challenging read, and the impetus now to take on some of his bigger and more polished works (I have on my shelves copies of 'The Solid Mandala' and 'The Aunt's Story' and am determined to get to one or the other of them before the year's end).

Heather says

Oh, my goodness, why was this book ever published? I don't care that the author is dead, nor do I care that he is a two time Miles Franklin winner as well as having won the Nobel Prize for Literature, this was a woeful read. At the halfway mark I finally gave up. It's not often that a book beats me, but trying to struggle through the second half was more than I could endure. Life is just too short!! The writing was all over the place, the characters totally depressing and the plot . . . what plot? Ugh!

Michael says

Patrick White is a two time Miles Franklin award winner and has also won the Nobel prize for literature. His unfinished novel The Hanging Garden was recently published; it feels like an old novel in the sense that, while it's nicely written; nothing ever happens in the book. This is very much a character driven book, focusing on the two and a wild garden. I think I'd be alright with reading a book like this if I didn't have the feeling that the author hated every single one of his characters; he was mean and cruel to them all, not just the key characters. As a general rule I love dark and flawed characters but this just felt mean and even the attempts of trying to being erotic felt awkward. I spent the whole book waiting for something to happen and I

was left disappointed. Also as this is an unfinished novel, I don't know what the overall goal was with this book and I get the feeling that maybe Patrick White doesn't either.

My review and thoughts on an unfinished novel can be found on my blog;
<http://literary-exploration.com/2012/...>

Al Bità says

If you love Patrick White (and I do) you will want to read this posthumous publication of an unfinished work by the great novelist. The 215 pages of this work actually represents only the first part of a projected three-part novel which unfortunately was not completed, owing to other pressing social, political and theatrical work in which White was preoccupied with at the end of his life. This is a draft of that first third of his book, something he had written comparatively quickly, and with which he admitted to friends he was generally pleased.

The setting is WWII, but set in Australia. As usual, his two main protagonists have developed special insights peculiar to themselves (see also my review of *Happy Valley*). Irene Sklavos is the daughter of a Sydney woman and a Greek father, a Communist who has been executed in a Greek prison. Her mother needs to return to continue the struggle in Greece. Gilbert Horsfall's father is a Colonel, fighting in the war. During the Blitz on London, Gilbert's mother and his best friend Nigel are killed. As was common at that time, these 'orphaned' children were despatched to the care of foster parents in far-away Sydney, where it was hoped they would be safe from what was happening in Europe. When the two children meet, despite their differences, they recognise a common affinity to special awareness...

This first part of the projected novel concentrates on the two children, particularly Irene, and how they cope with the people in the new country they have been sent to, their different schooling, and the acquaintances they are more or less forced to make. Both are aware of the Australians cultural 'differences' they need to deal with, and this contributes to their budding common awareness and special friendship. As time passes, Irene seems apparently more self-possessed and self-aware; but Gilbert increasingly appears to need to deny his internal reality and mimic instead what he considers to be his uncouth Australian school companions, at least in his external actions. This first part ends with the announcement of the end of the War, and the presumption is that the two children will be more completely physically separated than they already are, and perhaps forever.

What White might have had in mind for the remaining two parts of the novel are anyone's guess: the only clue appears to be that he intended the relationship between Irene and Gilbert to continue for at least 36 years, and probably to find them back together in Sydney in 1981 — but speculation is pointless. It doesn't matter, really, although what White might have come up with is tantalising, especially for someone who has read and relished his other work. This first part draft still resonates with White's concerns and preoccupations, and his writing, even in draft form, is as powerful, moving, and observant as in his other works.

This book has been transcribed unedited from White's handwritten manuscript. Whether White would have retained this first part as it now stands is a moot point: what we have, instead, is something unique: an unprecedented insight into the workings of a great novelist.
