

Night Shelter by Gil Hogg

3 Stars

Crawling out of the depth of poverty.

Jimmy Morton is about to start the evening shift at St Edith's Night Shelter for the homeless in a rundown part of London when his old landlady, Betty Thrussel, comes struggling out of her flat and asks him to help her. Thinking that it would be something as minor as changing a light bulb, he goes with her only to be confronted by the body of Eva, a young Polish prostitute, lying in the hallway. Betty begs him to help her move the body, but Jimmy refuses, insisting that she call the police. Living in this area of London, people are wary of the police and Betty does not call them. This decision is going to have serious repercussions not only for Jimmy, but other residents in the area and St Edith's Night Shelter itself.

Gil Hogg has used this godforsaken area of deadbeats, homeless and rough sleepers to draw a very depressing picture of how people in power can manipulate their wealth to ensure that they are never implicated in facing punishment for their violent and depraved behaviour and instead, ensuring, thanks to the police not being brave or ballsy enough to arrest them for what they've done, instead using their power to shift the blame onto others in a less fortunate position and fixing evidence so that an innocent person ends up taking the fall for their deviant behaviour.

Gil Hogg is an excellent author. His writing and storyline are impeccable, but I hated this book. I finished reading it feeling utter despair and hopelessness that money really can buy you the right to do whatever to whoever, whenever. All the characters are well drawn and believable and I have to question myself for letting my personal feelings invade my judgement to reward the five stars this novel deserves for its authenticity, unfortunately, this book has left me surrounded by a heavy cloud of despair.

Treebeard

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