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American Psycho



Synopsis

In *American Psycho*, Bret Easton Ellis imaginatively explores the incomprehensible depths of madness and captures the insanity of violence in our time or any other. Patrick Bateman moves among the young and trendy in 1980s Manhattan. Young, handsome, and well educated, Bateman earns his fortune on Wall Street by day while spending his nights in ways we cannot begin to fathom. Expressing his true self through torture and murder, Bateman prefigures an apocalyptic horror that no society could bear to confront. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 16 hours and 29 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Audible Studios

Audible.com Release Date: August 11, 2009

Language: English

ASIN: B002L7KRY4

Best Sellers Rank: #146 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Horror #1321 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Horror #2635 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Literary

Customer Reviews

Bret Easton Ellis, more than once, captured the essence of America in the 1980's. In his books, most notably "Less Than Zero," Ellis codified the look, sound, and feel of the Ronald Reagan, MTV watching, Yuppie 1980's. Ellis was not nearly as interested in showing the flashy glitter of that time as he was in revealing the dark side of excess in an America spiraling into total chaos. In "American Psycho," Ellis attains the rank of a master satirist, viciously skewering a culture that reduces life to power lunches, Armani suits, personal hygiene, and video stores. Ellis is an American Dickens, holding a mirror up to the face of America and daring us to look deep into its depths. Needless to say, the reflection is not pretty. Ellis's protagonist in "American Psycho" is one Patrick Bateman. Patrick is at the pinnacle of power: he is young, buff, tan, and filthy rich. He works, when he feels like it, at a powerhouse Wall Street firm. Most of his days are filled with parties, dating, dining out, renting videotapes, and buying the best of everything. Why not? Patrick can afford to do whatever

he wants in an America that not only approves of his behavior, but ardently wants to emulate it as well. There is one slight quirk in Bateman's well coiffed persona, one small, minutely unpleasant ritual he feels he must engage in from time to time: Patrick likes to rape, torture, and murder people. His usual victims are prostitutes and homeless people, although he isn't above killing an occasional cop or child. That Patrick is, inside, a raving lunatic of epic proportions doesn't matter as long as he can maintain surface appearances. This he manages to do by keeping up on all the latest fads, doling out fashion tips to those less fortunate, and hanging out with the guys and gals on a regular basis.

Bret Easton Ellis is a master at describing the anomie of end of the 20th century, but nowhere is that anomie more disturbingly brought to life than in "American Psycho". The book raised a firestorm when it was due to be released; feminists condemned it as misogynistic trash, and when it was finally published, it was in a trade paperback version because the publisher which was to publish the hardcover version pulled it to avoid all the controversy. All hell will probably break loose when the movie comes out, if it is in any way true to the book. Ellis gives us Yuppie Manhattan in full effect, where the only things that count are money and designer labels; real people are faceless nonentities with interchangeable names, everyone seems to have a Peter Pan complex, dreading the inexorable approach of the big 3-0, and the defining characteristic of the time is its all-encompassing materialism. The anti-hero of "American Psycho", Patrick Bateman, is a serial killer with a penchant for torturing and murdering young women in a quest to give his empty existence some meaning. Bateman is perfect on the surface; he's young (26), handsome, expensively dressed, lives in a trendy condo on the trendy Upper West Side, makes six figures on Wall Street, and can reel off designer names at the drop of a hat. He can glance at anyone for a split second and tell who designed each item of his or her visible apparel. Bateman's life is so devoid of meaning that he thinks all this superficial knowledge actually matters. He can't love anyone, including himself; he treats friends, lovers and acquaintances with equal contempt; and he is totally devoid of compassion, tenderness, remorse, warmth, or anything remotely resembling a conscience.

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