



The Organ Grinders

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Bill Fitzhugh strikes again! Following his widely acclaimed debut novel, Pest Control (The *[London] Times* called it "one of the funniest, most off-beat thrillers in years"), Fitzhugh turns his satirical eye to the merging of medical science and big business -- with hilarious and outrageous results.

Paul Symon is an environmentalist who's out to make the world a better place, but he faces too much disjointed information, public apathy, and self-serving talk. Not to mention greedy despoiler Jerry Landis, a venture capitalist dying of a rare disease that accelerates the aging process.

Landis cares only about making more money and finding a way to arrest his medical condition. That brings him and his fortune to the wild frontier of biotechnology, where his people are illegally experimenting with cross-species organ transplantation in California while breeding genetically altered primates at a secret site in the piney woods of south-central Mississippi.

There's also an eco-terrorist on the loose, bent on teaching hard lessons to people who think the Earth and its creatures are theirs to destroy. These forces, together with fifty thousand extra-large chacma baboons, collide in an explosion of laughter and wonder that Bill Fitzhugh's growing league of admirers is coming to recognize as his very own.

The Organ Grinders Details

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Author : Bill Fitzhugh

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From Reader Review The Organ Grinders for online ebook

Jackie Weger says

Bill Fitzhugh's Organ Grinder is funny, but a little spacey for me. However--I love his style and he redeemed himself in Cross Dressing. I loved the story, the plot and Oh! could only feel funny-bone pity for Dan Steele who finally discovers his way. You know you're in for a great read the instant you learn Dan's mother is holding hostage a nursing home with a paint-ball gun. So, five stars for Cross Dressing.

Rebecca McNutt says

I tried, but I really couldn't get into this book. I didn't find it comedic or creative, I thought the environmentalism stuff was really one-sided, the book was very predictable and I didn't like the characters at all.

Sean says

Bill Fitzhugh is a funny-as-heck writer, who bares his (baboon) fangs in this satiric and hilarious mystery/big biz/sci-fi/environmental/thriller. You can read reviews on Amazon, so I'll just give you a couple examples of his writing, one a toss-away joke, the other a wonderful image:

"Have you ever considered the liver, Dr. Gibbs?" Jerry Landis started to count on his fingers. 'Hepatitis. Billiary obstruction. Hepatoma. Cirrhosis. Gilbert's disease. Metastatic cancer. Blunt force trauma. Penetrating trauma. Parasitic infection, and on and on. Hell, there must be fifty ways to leave your liver.' Ba-dum-dum.

And from a tear-jerking scene, to show that Fitzhugh didn't write this just for yucks: "As they held one another against the sorrow a shaft of sunlight reached through the blinds and slowly began working its way up the wall above the bed like a golden spider."

Last note: Fitzhugh puts to good effect a technique for making a villain seem more threatening, namely, give the bad guy a weird sound effect. Think Darth Vader, or Bane from the most recent Batman movie. Here, the villain is Jerry Landis, who has a left ventricular assist device (L-VAD), which makes a whir-pfffft noise. Whir-pfffft. Whir-pfffft. Whir-pfffft.

If you like this book, try out Pest Control, Fitzhugh's first novel--which might be even funnier.

Tracey says

I found out about this book & Bill Fitzhugh in general in an SDMB message board thread about Christopher Moore. While I can see the comparison, this novel felt more like Tom Holt crossed with Carl Hiaasen; the dry humor & clever phrasing of the former and the activism and violence/brutality of the latter. Arty and

Bonedigger in particular would have fit right into the Florida of Hiaasen's novels.

It was an enjoyable read, if a bit gruesome at times, and I think I'll be checking out more of Fitzhugh's novels, assuming the same level of black humour.

Jon Koebrick says

Organ Grinders is a light Carl Hiassen-esque tale. It takes some time for the story to come together with lots of characters and it moves a little slowly in the first half of the book. The second half of the book moves faster and has more absurd humorous situations. This is not as good as Fitzhugh's Pest Control but still an entertaining read.

Nefariousbig says

The year was 1998: (1) "The Organ Grinders" by Bill Fitzhugh was first published; and (2) Viagra was approved (for its current pharmaceutical use) by the FDA. Coincidence? I think not! Fitzhugh researched the biotech industry so thoroughly it seems prophetic, even today.

For me, Bill Fitzhugh is the visionary ring-leader of the latently belligerent, vehemently passive-aggressive activists he has sneaking around in this book. With a cast full of Guerrillas, hillbillies, baboons, vegans, weenies (sorry Paul), vegetarians, orphans, kind-hearted organ donors, and morally depraved organ-harvesters, how can you go wrong? Fitzhugh's writing eco/bio-terrorizes the reader into action: read faster, laugh louder, cry harder, and when you're finished, **DO** something, anything, and do it with conviction.

I'd like to thank Fitzhugh for stabbing my right eye open with a celery stalk and pouring blood-warm pink slime in it. I see now that I should be thinking with two or more eyeballs, at the very least, at the same time, all the time. This book is a poignant reminder that we need to have a social conscience, moral discipline, and most importantly, a sense of humor.

Fitzhugh is not for everyone, but he gives the right reader a great show.

Mykle says

I don't recall who recommended this one, I think some friend from Bizarro Central. Sorry, friend ...

This book is well-researched and traverses fertile, fertile ground for some kind of story about human weirdness. But the characters are two-dimensional and severely clichéd, the language is mostly flat -- occasionally inspired, sure, but just as often hackneyed -- and the brief efforts to comment on the problems of environmentalism are sabotaged by the wacky-screenplay feeling of the rest of it. This guy, I kept thinking, has been in LA too long. I kept getting pulled in, then annoyed, then pulled in, then annoyed ... but at the end I was just annoyed.

(More annoying than all the rest was the author's need to keep slipping Paul Simon references in everywhere, starting with the male lead's name -- "Paul Symon" -- and continuing on with lyric snippets from all the top-

ten hits. Yes, we've all heard them -- so what? I just don't see what the author is communicating there besides fanboyness. Maybe he's saying "look what a better writer Paul Simon is than I!" Maybe someone told him that references made literature deep. I have no idea what he was thinking -- it's exactly the sort of thing his editor should have made him take out.)

Jennww2ns says

I've been a fan of Fitzhugh's since I read Cross Dressing in 2001. I love his sense of humor and the absurdness of his plots but this one was tough to get through. While the plot itself was typical of Fitzhugh, I think he got over-enthused about sharing his research with his audience. I don't want to know the science behind organ transplant and rejection. And if I wanted a list of websites for more information, I would want to look at the end of the book, not the middle.

Susan says

Some time ago, I read Pest Control, Bill Fitzhugh's first novel and liked it. I have no idea why it took me so long to get to his second but this one is even better. This guy can flat turn a phrase - about every 10 pages, his wording alone made me laugh out loud. Medical technology meets big business in this book and the results are really really funny. Plus, Fitzhugh already has 2 more out that I haven't read yet!

Donni Hakanson says

This is a book I have read now two or three times!

Pure comedy with intelligence, a thriller of sorts, twists and turns, megalomania and poignant sorrow, laugh out loud moments and the mental imagery is enough to curl any vegan tree-hugging bookaholic! I LOVE this novel!

My second time romp through the pages of this tome had me just as enthralled as the first time experience. It appeases the intellect's need for information and cognitive coherence, as much as it does the mystery behind the bizarre murders (the landfill manager buried in his own soiled dump, complete with dirty diaper in his mouth) and just how the whole sit com can resolve itself... vivisection, cross-species implants, environmental concerns, greed, revenge, the quest for immortal life, and so many more human conditions and issues are addressed through Bill's lighthearted yet twisted view on the world...

I can't forget Arty, the guy who severs his limbs for the insurance and sells his body organs for huge profit, reduced to just a torso being carted around in a backpack by his biker bud... and I will never shake the scrotal imagery evoked by the description of Mr Landis' testicles when he gets the third one implanted (courtesy of Arty.)

Read this novel - it's funny, thought provoking, and twisted! Highly entertaining escapism!

Reed says

I thought this was a crazy, wild, hilarious, part medical part sci-fi/crime/environmentalist/animal rights/corporate greed story. It made me laugh out loud several times. The characters are people I KNOW, or know Of, and the story line is so interesting while being totally unreal (but "believable"). I immediately ordered two more books by this author... One is "Human Resources" and the other is "Exterminators (Assassin Bug Thrillers)". I expect both to be hilariously dark comedies, and will write my opinion after I've read them. For "The Organ Grinders," I assigned 5 stars, just because of the zaniness of the outrageous story line and the complete insanity of most of the characters.

Alan says

Paul Symon is dedicated to preservation of the environment. He sets up tables to try to get people to sign petitions. He writes hundreds of letters. He joins organizations dedicated to saving the Rain Forest. But there comes a time when a man (and 10,000 giant baboons) has to take action. The story revolves around one man's need to save the planet from another man's need to plunder it. Organ donation for fun and profit.

Rita says

"Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall. He will end by destroying the Earth." Albert Schweitzer

This book's main character was so much like me, it was amazing. "He didn't seem to see the same world that others did. He saw a place desperately in need of help and which seemed to be getting worse by the minute. And no one appeared the least bit concerned about the state of things...the simple physical state of the planet where they lived." (p.277)

This book was deeply satisfying in parts where capitalists who are especially into destroying the planet for their gain are tortured, dismembered or other satisfying ways of being hurt and/or terminated, and done so in particularly fitting manners.

The only thing holding me back from giving this 5stars was the strange attitude towards vegans/vegetarians. The Fitzhugh seems to think that they are deeply undernourished and weak. Obviously not a vegan/vegetarian himself, he is a strange sort of ecology-friendly writer.

Gilberto Tevreden says

Lekker absurd verhaal met veel wetenschappelijke tekst die ook uitgelegd wordt.

Goede humor en dito tempo in het verhaal. Ik heb genoten.??

Katie Hamilton says

This book was really good but I also found it depressing. It touches so much on humanity's inability to think beyond profit and the now and how we're destroying our own planet. But Bill Fitzhugh is a fantastic writer and keeps it light hearted even when talking about this pretty serious subject.
