



Object of Desire

William J. Mann

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“It’s always been golden for you, Danny. You’ve always been the golden boy.”

Danny Fortunato seemed to have it all. He was cute, funny, sexy, smart—the hottest go-go boy in West Hollywood. When he danced on stage, all eyes were upon him and all men desired him. But something always kept Danny from ever really believing he was the golden boy that others said he was...a secret that he'd carried with him ever since he was a teenager.

Twenty years later, living in Palm Springs, Danny is celebrating his 41st birthday—although “celebrating” might not be the right word for how he feels about his life today. To the outside world, he's still golden: he still has his looks, and he still loves Frank, his boyfriend of nearly two decades. But something is missing in his life. Passion. Romance. Adventure. The same something that's been missing ever since that day when he turned fourteen, when his sister Becky disappeared and his whole world flipped upside-down.

Now into Danny's life walks a gorgeous young bartender named Kelly, who becomes for Danny an obsession, an object of desire and fascination. But Kelly's indifference to this onetime golden boy only confirms what Danny secretly believes: that he's “vanishing” into thin air—like his sister, so long ago.

As he reflects on his angst-ridden childhood—the shattering of his family, the sex and drugs of his youth as one of L.A.’s most coveted boy toys—Danny begins to recognize certain patterns. Somewhere along the way, he gave up on his dreams—not only of becoming an actor, but his very lust for life.

And yet—all that's about to change, when a surprising, agonizing connection with Kelly sends Danny on a soul-searching quest to reclaim the things he has loved and lost.

Filled with unforgettable warmth, incorrigible humor, and irresistible charm, *Object of Desire* takes readers through three milestone eras in one man’s life—his youth in the 1970s, his days of abandon in the 1980s, and his more sober, reflective existence today—and reaffirms William J. Mann’s reputation as one of gay fiction’s major narrative powers.

Object of Desire Details

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From Reader Review Object of Desire for online ebook

Anthony McGill says

I wouldn't describe William J. Mann's gay themed novels as literary masterworks but they are always great reads and contain that important touch of authenticity.

His regular portrayals of the glitzy gay life style mainly featuring body beautiful party boys and the like may not appeal to all tastes but his fiction is always entertaining, well written with absorbing plot lines. I didn't like this one as much as some of his other novels, but it is still an immensely enjoyable read.

The plot is interesting and complex with plenty of surprises and the denouement works well even if it stretches the imagination a trifle. Breezy and enlightening.

Scott Drake says

There's something special and compelling about stories that almost mingle the way you feel they will but don't. And that little Oh Damn thought that comes when it all turns sideways. This book does that. Well told story, believable timeline and solid characters. Might even read it twice..

Smith Barney says

Journey of 1000 men inside one man's quest for reconciliation..peace.

I read some of these **life-affirming-kind-of-novels** and can't help but get that hair-standing-up-on-my-arms-heebie-jeebies of voyeurism in on some poor bastard's authentic moments and passages in time. It's just that painstakingly raw and compellingly eerie. Wrenched me.

And I'll just add ..Mann's cover art..as always the epitome of class..and just f'ing exquisite.

Dolphe says

Having read a couple of Mann's earlier works, I expected a novel filled with interesting characters, but I was pleasantly surprised to find a story which moves light years beyond those. "Object of Desire" bombards us with a series of well aimed emotions which the reader is powerless to ignore. I realize that may be only a personal revelation, but the issues which propel this novel are universal enough to speak to a volume of life histories. Insecurities, guilt, boredom, aging and a number of other life destroying evils get the Mann treatment and that leaves the reader with enough of an emotional release to smile when the final page is done.

Mark says

I really love Mann's Hollywood non-fiction books. They're great reads -- captivating and juicy without being gossipy. I hadn't had the same experience with his fiction. (I'd read THE MEN FROM THE BOYS and THE BIOGRAPH GIRL which I didn't finish.) I'd found the fiction too cloying and sentimental for my tastes. This book changed my mind. I'm in a different place than I was when I read the others and I think he's in a different place as a fiction writer. This book was the perfect companion on a trip to see my family in Fox News country -- reminding me that I am indeed part of the general population and that there are people out there that think and feel and experience life the way I do. The characters are always interesting and the story is full of unforeseen turns--and though at times it teeters on the edge of cheesy (more in dialogue than narration) it never gives over to melodrama. And it's very effecting. The ending had me choked up and I'm pretty cynical in the literary romance department. Which is probably why I'm always on the lookout for a good one and this is definitely one! I'm going to back and finish BIOGRAPH GIRL and check out his other books.

La Mala 🌸 says

Esto fue muy "American Beauty" ... gay , por cierto . Ya saben , un hombre en plena crisis de edad que se enloquece por un menor de edad en un claro intento de recuperar la juventud perdida y darle un sentido a la vida .

Entretenido . Bien escrito , entendible incluso para los que todavía andamos lejos de la crisis de la mediana edad y de la picazón del séptimo año .

Es más que nada , el 90% del libro , esto :

Fell in love with a boy

I fell in love once and almost completely

He's in love with the world

And sometimes these feelings can be so misleading

(...)

Can't keep away from the boy

The two sides of my brain need to have a meeting

Can't think of anything to do

My left brain knows all of love is fleeting

He's just lookin for somethin new

I said it once before but it bears repeating

Can't think of anything to do

My left brain knows all of love is fleeting

He's just lookin for somethin new

I said it once before but it bears repeating

Y no vayas a decirle más mentiras a Frank

Chuck Rankin says

Mann...is one of those authors that I have stumbled on one or two of his books....and then I picked this one up for my pleasure.

Great plot...great storyline....great characters....Totally enjoyed this book and the nuances that DANNY dealt with. It is nice to read a book where DANNY actually seemed to be the NON-CRAZY one of the family....and gay!

I see and hear about so many crazy familial situations and it is refreshing that I could pick up the book and read about an experience with the gay main character....lands on top.

Neet says

Danny Fortunato feels as if he never gets the guy he falls in love with to fall in love with him. He still thinks his husband (who he has been

with for 20 years and married to for sever years) was in love with a man that has been dead for years and not him. Frank (his husband) is 14 years older than Danny, he's also a teacher and more grounded. Danny constantly tells anyone, especially his BFF that Frank and he are in an open relationship. This seems to give Danny, who just turned 41 to gawk, flirt, and go after men half his age. Also, the fact that he seems to be going through a midlife crisis. He still loves Frank, but misses the excitement, passion, and fun they had. Frank knows he's not what he used to be. He's slowed down, even sexually he sometimes wants to just cuddle. So, when out celebrating his birthday, Danny sees a handsome, young bartender. He doesn't get his name or give him anything but his drink order. Imagine his surprise, when he begins to see this same young man tending bar and finally at a dinner party. The young man is named Kelly and he becomes a friend and a potential lover

This is another book (thank goodness not a series) with another of the author's self-absorbed MC. Danny Fortuna is 41 and looking for more in life than he already has. Instead of counting his blessings, he's looking for young men to conquer. He's been in a relationship with Frank (his husband for several years) for 20 years. We lead We learn the history of Danny. Sorry, but I still found him unlikable.

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Jon says

Exceptional!!! By far the best fiction novel by WJM I've read (my fourth) - a departure in plot/style - Mr. Mann creates an amazing world transversing over 20 years - and yet, switches between the decades in such a way that each decade could stand on its own; I LOVED this novel, in many ways seeing myself, especially dealing with aging, past and present. The last 100 pages will be a roller-coaster ride of emotions as the protagonist, Danny, must look more inward, blaming less of those around him - and finally, coming to terms with a tragic circumstance that happened in his family more than 25 years before; if you love great gay fiction, you'll absolutely love Object Of Desire - and ending will knock your socks off - in a good way!!!

David Allen White says

Great story. Held my interest all the way.

Maicie says

I wanted to love this book.

Danny, the main character, has a complicated life. His sister disappears, his mother becomes obsessed with finding her, Danny screws, father starts drinking, grandma suffers from dementia, Danny becomes a go go dancer, screws some more, falls in love, screws, has a mid-life crisis, screws. Interesting, right?

The love making was hot but distracting. I was more interested in Danny's pathetic attempts to recapture his lost youth. The scene where he is dancing with Jake is heartbreaking.

And the ending was just too cheesy.

Still, I liked the writing and will read more of this author.

Gavin Stephenson-Jackman says

[Just as Danny is entering his teens his sister Becky goes missing. His mother's grief drives the early half of the novel as she tries everything possible to find her missing daughter. In the process Danny is lost as he struggles to acknowledge his sexuality. Years later he flees the family home looking for stability and a career in acting.

Settling on the west coast w

Eric Swanson says

This story of Danny, a golden boy forced to take stock of his life in his early 40s, starts off well but soon loses momentum. Mann's decision to alternate scenes from Danny's childhood and early adulthood with chapters from his current life provide some insight into his character but slow the pace of the book considerably. Worse, a supposedly shocking plot twist in the last few chapters is utterly preposterous and almost derails the book.

I was more interested in the lives of Mann's secondary characters -- most notably, Danny's husband, Frank, and his current obsession, Kelly -- than in Danny himself. That's a serious problem in a book that I wanted to like but fell far short of my expectations.

Joe Scholes says

I really enjoyed this novel. Its general tone seemed doggedly downbeat for much of its narrative, with slight ups followed by major downs. The distant flashbacks of growing up in Connecticut interspersed with the flashbacks from 10 years ago in Los Angeles and the current-period life in Palm Springs was originally a little distracting. But once the separate stories began to stitch themselves together, it worked rather well. The author has a knack for dialog that sounds natural, and the style of writing is pleasantly grammatically correct for a modern-day author!

The story of a 13-year-old boy growing up gay in Connecticut in the 70s in a small town, in a family oppressed by tragedy and dysfunction, moves along at a fairly steady pace. As a reader, I longed for the main character to rise above his circumstances faster, and to slough off his own insecurities, but the self-doubt was relentless. He eventually achieves some success as an adult, but is still anchored in feelings of inadequacy. It demonstrates how, no matter how successful you are at overcoming your past, it is always with you and can affect your outlook on life from this day forward.

Cecil says

Strangely, it's about the lessons you learn in life. A great book with a vibrant ending.
