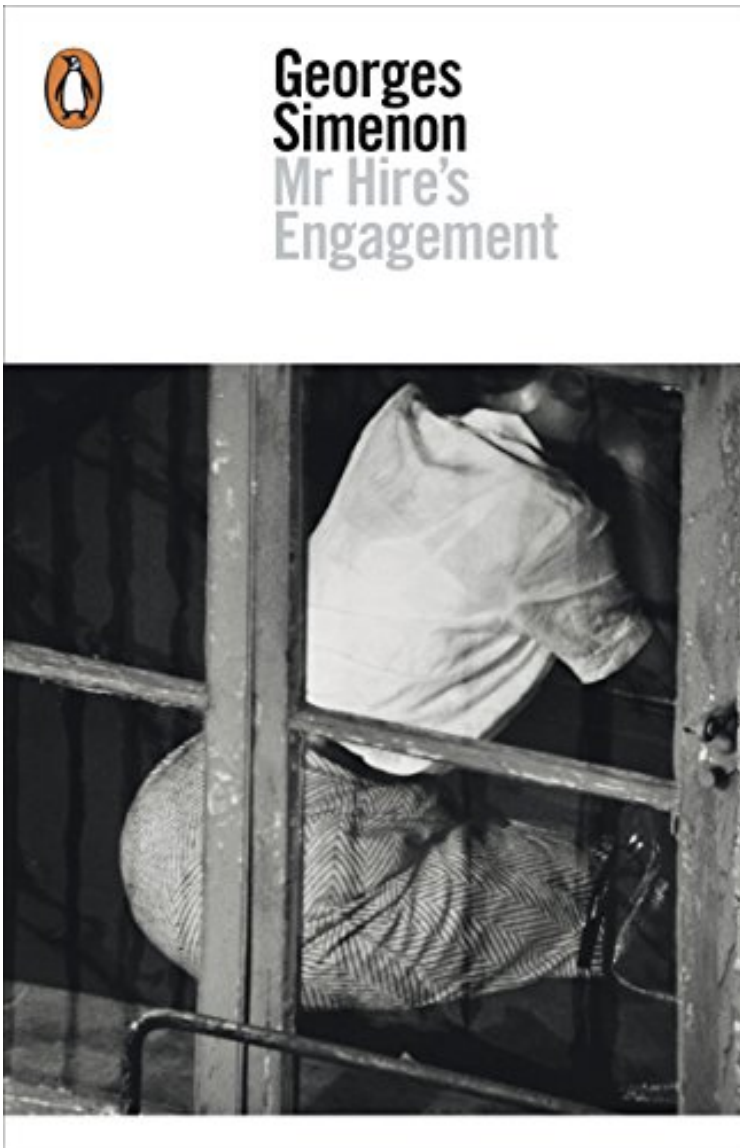


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Mr Hire's Engagement



Par Georges Simenon
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurGeorges Simenon's chilling portrayal of tragic love, persecution and betrayal.'One sensed in him neither flesh nor bone, nothing but soft, flaccid matter, so much so that his movements were hard to make out. Very red lips stood out from his orb-like face, as did the thin moustache that he curled with an iron and looked as if it had been drawn on with India ink; on his cheekbones were the symmetrical pink dots of a doll's cheeks.'People find Mr Hire strange, disconcerting. The tenants he shares his building with try to avoid him. He is a peeping Tom, a visitor of prostitutes, a dealer in unsavoury literature. He is also the prime suspect for a brutal murder that he did not commit. Yet Mr Hire's innocence will not stand in the way of those looking for a scapegoat as tragedy unfolds in this quietly devastating and deeply unnerving

novel. 'The romans durs are extraordinary: tough, bleak, offhandedly violent, suffused with guilt and bitterness, redolent of place . . . utterly unsentimental, frightening in the pitilessness of their gaze, yet wonderfully entertaining' John Banville

ExtraitPENGUIN CLASSICSMR HIRES ENGAGEMENTI love reading Simenon. He makes me think of Chekhov William FaulknerA truly wonderful writer marvellously readable lucid, simple, absolutely in tune with the world he creates Muriel SparkFew writers have ever conveyed with such a sure touch, the bleakness of human life A. N. WilsonOne of the greatest writers of the twentieth century Simenon was unequalled at making us look inside, though the ability was masked by his brilliance at absorbing us obsessively in his stories GuardianA novelist who entered his fictional world as if he were part of it Peter AckroydThe greatest of all, the most genuine novelist we have had in literature Andr GideSuperb The most addictive of writers A unique teller of tales ObserverThe mysteries of the human personality are revealed in all their disconcerting complexity Anita BrooknerA writer who, more than any other crime novelist, combined a high literary reputation with popular appeal P. D. JamesA supreme writer Unforgettable vividness IndependentCompelling, remorseless, brilliant John GrayExtraordinary masterpieces of the twentieth century John Banville

ABOUT THE AUTHORGeorges Simenon was born on 12 February 1903 in Lige, Belgium, and died in 1989 in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he had lived for the latter part of his life.Completed in 1933, Mr Hires Engagement is one of Simenons early novels. It recreates a scene that the author witnessed as a young reporter in Lige, a scene which continued to haunt him for years afterwards: that of an angry mob, and a man chased on to a roof, clinging to the cornice to keep from falling to his death.Georges SimenonMR HIRES ENGAGEMENTTranslated by Anna Moschovakis 1The concierge cleared her throat before knocking, fixed her eyes on the Belle-Jardinire catalogue in her hand, and announced, A letter for you, Mr Hire.She pulled her shawl tight across her chest. Somebody moved behind the brown door: first on the left, then on the right; first footsteps, then a muted rumpling of fabric and the clanking of pots; the concierges grey eyes seemed to penetrate the wood in pursuit of the invisible noise. At last it drew near. The key turned. A rectangle of light appeared, a carpet of yellow flowers, the marble of a washstand. A man held out his hand, but the concierge didnt see it, or not clearly in any case, she wasnt paying attention. Her ferreting eyes had settled on another object: a towel soaked in blood, glaring deep red against the cold marble.The door swung closed gently, of its own accord. The key turned again, and the concierge walked down the four flights of stairs, pausing now and then to think. She was thin; her clothes hung from her like a scarecrows rags from its skeleton of sticks. Her nose was damp, her eyelids red, her hands chapped from the cold.On the other side of the glass-paned door to the concierges apartment, a young girl in flannel pyjamas stood in front of a chair with a shallow basin of water on it. Her brother, already dressed, was entertaining himself by splashing her; the table next to them had not been cleared.Then came the distinct sound of the door opening. The boy turned around. The little girl exhibited a face drenched in tears.What have we here ?A slap for the boy, and his mother shoved him out the door.You, off to school. And you, if you dont stop crying She grabbed the girl and got her into her dress, tugging on her arms like on a marionettes. Then she hid the basin of soapy water in the cupboard, walked towards the door, turned around and walked back.Have you finished whining?She was thinking, hesitating, her forehead creased, her small eyes worried. She nodded mechanically at the tenant from the second floor as he passed by in the hall; then all of a sudden, she threw on another shawl and hurried out on to the street, first turning down the flame on the stove.It was freezing out. On the Fontainebleau road, which ran through Villejuif, the cars had slowed to a crawl because of the ice, their radiators exhaling steam. A hundred metres to the left was the main intersection, with a bistro on every corner, a policeman in the middle, busy streets stretching from the suburbs to the gates of Paris, trams, buses, cars. But on the right, two houses down, just past the last garage, it was already open road, the country trees and fields white with frost.The concierge shivered, hesitating again. She gestured weakly to a man standing on the corner, but he didnt see her. She ran up to him and grabbed his arm.Revue de presseThe roman durs are extraordinary: tough, bleak, offhandedly violent, suffused with guilt and bitterness, redolent of place . . . utterly unsentimental, frightening in the pitilessness of their gaze, yet wonderfully entertaining.John BanvilleOne of the greatest writers of the twentieth century . . . Simenon was unequalled at making us look inside, though the ability was masked by his brilliance at absorbing us obsessively in his stories.The GuardianI love reading Simenon. He makes me think of Chekhov.William Faulkner The greatest of all, the most genuine novelist we have had in literature.Andr Gide A supreme writer . . . unforgettable vividness.The IndependentSuperb . . . The most addictive of writers . . . A unique teller of tales.The ObserverCompelling, remorseless, brilliant.John GrayA truly wonderful writer . . . marvellously readablelucid, simple, absolutely in tune with the world he creates.Muriel SparkA

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