

All My Colors

David Quantick

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Someday, Todd Milstead is going to be a great writer. Never mind that he's in his forties with nothing to indicate this, save the flattery of a local bookseller and the regular gatherings he hosts with other self-proclaimed writers. In this obsequious and jealous company, Todd goes heavy on the booze and affects great sophistication, holding forth on subjects greater, he thinks, than most small Midwestern minds can fathom.

In short, Todd Milstead—bloviator, poser, and womanizer, too—is an asshole. He is declared so from the raucous opening lines of David Quantick's sardonic, self-referential, and hilarious-then-horrifying supernatural thriller, *All My Colors*, in which the sudden fruits of your neglected aspirations should not be trusted.

Todd's vices perfectly poise him to accept his most dangerous label yet: he will become a mimic. His perfect recall of a brilliant novel that, as far as he can tell, exists to no one else compels him to publish the mysterious work himself, resulting in overnight fame. But the specter of the writer to whom his memory credits the novel haunts him, undermining the thrills of his ill-gotten renown.

Bumbling with Todd up to the point of his folly is great, voyeuristic fun. His speech is barbed. He subdues viciousness and barrels home from bars, playing at romances he knows he's incapable of. When the remembered novel—also titled *All My Colors*, but make nothing of it—takes him over, it leads to a fair amount of physical comeuppance. But even the cringeworthy particulars of those discomforts can't prepare you for the nightmares that follow: teeth strewn across floors, mouths ripped out, and the revelation of other mimics who met terrible ends.

All My Colors is by turns a supernatural revenge fantasy, a black comedy, and a self-abnegating parody. It is hysterical, shocking, and propulsive—leave the lights on for its end.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (March/April 2019)

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