

Crazy Time: A Bizarre Battle with Darkness and the Diving

L. Andrew Cooper

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In the fantastical novel Crazy Time, a woman who is suspended between life and death contemplates the nature of reality.

A series of traumatic events leads a woman into a battle between good and evil in L. Andrew Cooper's surreal fantasy novel *Crazy Time*.

A night out leads to a violent fight for survival for Lily and her three friends after they are run off of the road. They are confronted by two gun-wielding men who murder Lily's friends and leave her near dead.

Months later, Lily is haunted by the memory of that night. After her brother commits suicide, Lily comes to believe that she's cursed. To discover a means of purging the curse, she embarks on a wild search, encountering Satanists, bureaucratic supernatural beings, and a cabal of untrustworthy ghosts.

Lily's boss, Burt, becomes an unexpected ally for her. He interrupts a second near-deadly assault on Lily, putting himself in peril. And he later grounds her as events seem to detach from reality. His devotion to Lily contrasts with the book's violent horrors well.

Beginning with a horrific act, the novel at first seems to be a psychological thriller about confronting trauma. However, its supernatural twists subvert these expectations. Still, poetic prose is applied in the moments when Lily is forced to stop and reflect on traumatic acts, questioning why events happen as they do, what it means to be a good person, and what the meaning of life is. In reaching for answers, Lily reframes her experiences in terms of nursery rhymes and corporate jingles. The book is both unsettling and absorbing in such moments. However, its tonal shifts lead to jarring reading, too.

As Lily progresses, she transforms. Being faced with difficult topics forces her to grow. But because there is not information about her life before the attacks, it becomes unclear how reliable she is. The atmosphere around her is without a clear center. The book's disparate events—the violent attacks, the curse, and other traumas—are brought together by the book's ending, though. Lily's experiences late in the text are both unexpected and, on reflection, in keeping with what came before them. She is forced to make a tough decision that could have uncomfortable ramifications for the rest of humanity; her ability to make that decision is wholly informed by what she's experienced.

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JOHN M. MURRAY (February 21, 2022)

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