



Dark Side of the Moon

Les Wood

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Full of jaggedly poetic charm and twisted humor, this is a fine novel about a caper gone wrong.

Les Wood's *Dark Side of the Moon* is the painfully funny tale of a jewel heist that never should have happened and a plan gone unsurprisingly wrong.

Set in Glasgow's grittier corners, the novel assembles its motley cast: sadistic crime boss Boddice, unwilling enforcer Davie Prentice, wary Kyle, a pair of twins no one can ever seem to tell apart, and tech expert Boag, who uses the children's game Operation and other "DIY crap" as inspiration for his gadgetry.

Boddice feels that his criminal empire is being encroached upon by foreigners and wants to reclaim power by masterminding the theft of a flawless purple diamond called the Dark Side of the Moon. It may also be the name of a Pink Floyd song, Boddice notes, and not a bad one at that. The diamond will soon be on exhibit at a major Glasgow department store, and Boddice insists that his gang is going to steal it. No one will suspect them, he promises, because their image is one of "strictly drugs" and of not being bright enough to pull off such a sophisticated job.

Wood's creation of this underworld is brilliantly insidious. Whether hardened, hapless, or both, these men are memorable and vivid, caught up in spirals of greed, fear, violence, or just numb confusion. The general running dialogue is a slangfest of Glaswegian argot, keen insight, and profane babble, yet it never seems gratuitous or forced. And at the base of these various misadventures is often a surprising humanity: lost chords of compassion, remorse, and dim flickers of hope.

Wood thoroughly follows the failure of the robbery as it goes from bad to very bad in an irreversible course. The huge violet diamond has become so real to Boddice's crew that they actually feel awe upon seeing it "in the flesh." The complexities of the security system surrounding the jewel case are well contrasted with the group's mismatched efforts.

Full of jaggedly poetic charm and twisted humor, Les Wood's *Dark Side of the Moon* is a fine novel about an unforgettable Scottish demimonde.

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