

## Snatch 2&20

**Luke E. Fellows**

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*Snatch 2&20 is a clever, cynical novel about the absurdities of capitalism and the people who prop it up.*

A Wall Street flunky becomes entangled in his boss's machinations in Luke E. Fellows's comedic novel *Snatch 2&20*.

Giles is peeved to discover that his new job as a hedge fund manager requires him to do actual work. Specifically, he must dig up inside information on a mysterious company, Zyxview, by ingratiating himself to its flamboyant CEO. Despite reassurances that this is definitely not insider trading, Giles is uneasy. He tries to toe the line, but that's hard to do when others have already trampled the line into obscurity.

Though shiftless and shameless, Giles is still possessed of something resembling standards. He has used his classical education and blatant lies to get where he is, but the extent to which his new boss expects him to bend the rules falls just outside of his comfort zone. This dichotomy makes him a fun and sympathetic lead. His relationship with his social influencer wife is touching in its unconventionality. Though Giles is not a saint, as he himself admits, his happy marriage further sets him apart from his lewd and disrespectful cohorts.

Giles's narration is filled with sardonic observations about the excesses and hypocrisy of the people he works with. He tries his best to fit in, even adapting to the hilarious, mind-twisting double talk that makes the stock market go round. But it never quite comes naturally to him, and he can't make peace with the fact that the entire industry, and Zyxview in particular, is based on greed and nonsense. Giles's upbringing and continued existence within such environs leads to dubious humor dependent on slurs, sexual harassment, and fatphobia—crude humor that will not suit everyone's taste.

The plot drags Giles from the cubicle where his boss uses mirrors to spy on him into the world of business meetings and conferences—a place he has never bothered to venture. His misadventures prove even more outrageous than he feared they would be, and he finds himself caught between two brash personalities who just want to bilk as much as they can while the bilking is good. The success of these schemes is a ludicrous and depressing—but very entertaining—statement on high finance.

Giles shows resigned misanthropy for almost everyone around him, so he is as surprised as anyone else that the tale ends as happily as it does. The story is just wild enough to support its destructive, incongruously wholesome conclusion. For all the raunchy wackiness that came before, the ultimate message is a simple one: it is never too late to embrace what life is really about.

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EILEEN GONZALEZ (May 27, 2020)

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