

The Lady with the Purple Hat

Otilia Greco

iUniverse (Mar 29, 2017)

Softcover \$13.99 (162pp)

978-1-5320-1319-5

The Lady with the Purple Hat is delightfully absorbing in its portrayal of an entitled woman's rise and fall.

Otilia Greco's *The Lady with the Purple Hat* is a hilarious, touchingly redemptive adventure novel with a compelling lead.

Daisy While, donning an ostentatious purple hat as a disguise, is determined to get what she wants: her husband's demise—and his money. When her plan is foiled, she is forced to realize that her obsession with wealth and image has caught up with her.

This extravagant novel details Daisy's move from a starry-eyed lover to a woman ready to murder the man she once loved. Humor, striking images, and a magnificent character transformation keep the novel compelling.

Written in the vein of iconic literary heroines, Daisy While is selfish and superficial, yet resilient and charismatic. She is unsubtle about her extravagance; beautiful attention to detail is given to her decadence, from the patterns of her carpet to her carefully curated outfits. That is partly what makes her so entertaining to watch, and what makes her faults somewhat forgivable.

Daisy enjoys her role as a wife and a mother, but not enough to quell her growing need for status and recognition. She is so wrapped up in fancy pillows and country clubs that she forgets the rewards of personal connection. Her downfall is voyeuristically fascinating, and the familiarity of the story makes it feel like part of something larger.

Some scenes that seem meant to be full of tension—in particular, the opening scene with the purple hat—fall flat from lack of timely characterization, and the plot often seems rushed.

The pace is uneven, hurried in some places and arbitrarily drawn out in others. Most chapters are only a few pages in length, which inhibits character development. A glaring lack of dialogue means that most events are written in summary.

Daisy and Bernard's relationship is not developed well enough. As a result, their marriage and divorce seem hasty, though those events span years.

A too-sobering section is dedicated to Daisy's husband's backstory, including his time as a soldier in World War II. While heartbreaking and imaginative, the tone feels out of place, and it's disarmingly slow. His tragic background and undeniable good heart also make Daisy's murderous plans unsympathetic.

A shocking second part of the novel is touching, and satisfyingly brings Daisy's life full circle.

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PAIGE VAN DE WINKLE (June 8, 2017)

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