



Entered from the Sun

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ENTERED FROM THE SUN is the third novel about Elizabethan and Jacobean England by George Garrett, poet, short-story writer, critic, and professor of creative writing at the University of Virginia. DEATH OF THE FOX (1971) dealt with the life and execution of Sir Walter Raleigh; THE SUCCESSION (1983) presented the complex drama whereby James I succeeded Queen Elizabeth. Now, ENTERED FROM THE SUN uses an investigation of the murder of playwright and spy Christopher Marlowe, who was stabbed to death in a tavern brawl, to immerse the reader into the turbulent final years of the reign of the old and childless queen.

The novel begins with the abduction of Joseph Hunneyman, an unemployed actor who is recruited to find out how and why Marlowe was really killed. Though Hunneyman barely knew Marlowe, he seems an appropriate sleuth because as an actor, he is a man of disguises who knows his way around in theatrical circles. At the same time, another unknown party recruits a battered veteran of the wars, Captain Barfoot, to find out the facts about Marlowe's murder. Neither party knows of the other, but as their paths cross, they become aware of sinister possibilities that may lie in wait for them if their courses collide. Neither knows his employer or the reasons why the details of how Marlowe died four years ago are important to the shadowy figures in power. Sharing her body as well as their danger with Barfoot and Hunneyman is the young Widow Alysoun.

As Hunneyman and Barfoot separately explore the case, the reader also becomes a detective, as the evidence is examined and reexamined, the story retold in the imagination of each investigator, and more questions are raised than answered. As befits a mystery involving spying, duplicity, equivocation, and betrayal, things are not always what they seem, and the narrative, as we are frequently reminded, may be unreliable. In style as well as storytelling, Garrett makes demands on the reader, but the novel's complexities are not difficult and draw us into the richness of its poetic language and the ambiguities of the age.

Sources for Further Study

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