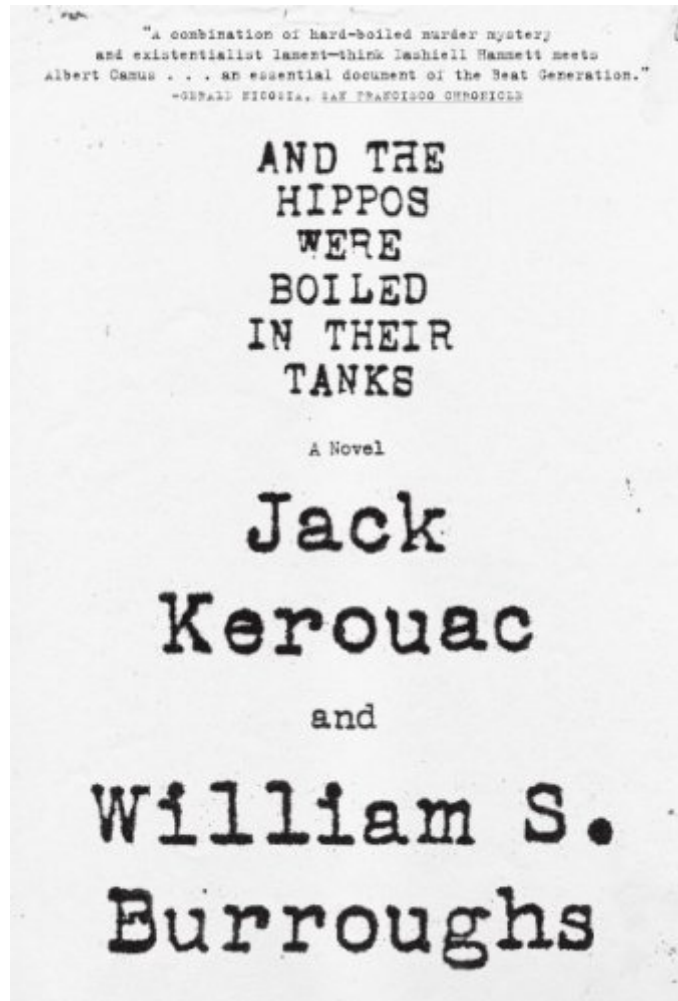


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And The Hippos Were Boiled In Their Tanks



Synopsis

In the summer of 1944, a shocking murder rocked the fledgling Beats. William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac, both still unknown, were inspired by the crime to collaborate on a novel, a hard-boiled tale of bohemian New York during World War II, full of drugs and art, obsession and brutality, with scenes and characters drawn from their own lives. Finally published after more than sixty years, this is a captivating read, and incomparable literary artifact, and a window into the lives and art of two of the twentieth century's most influential writers.

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Customer Reviews

First off, the release of this book is nothing short of a literary event: two literary icons known for their convention breaking novels collaborating in fiction and basing their book on a real life murder that happened within their circle of friends. "...HIPPOS..." is not as amazing as Kerouac publicly recalled it being, nor is it really the "minor work" that Burroughs dismissed it as. 64 years after it was written, this book takes on a new importance outside of its literary merits. The work is instantly fascinating to me (as I think it will be to any fans of these writers) because it is an important early step in these

artist's development. We can really get a sense of the early Beats relationships in the book, their wild energy and their literary fascinations. Kerouac and Burroughs wrote this book from two points of view. The Kerouac is the character Mike Ryko and Burroughs character is Will Dennison. For those of you acquainted with the circle of the Beats, Lucien Carr is the character Philip Tourian, David Kammerer is Al Ramsay, Edie Parker is Janie and Celine Young is Barbara....and so on. A note to the Kerouac fans....This was written before *TOWN & THE CITY* and has neither TCs sweeping Wolfean images or *ON THE ROAD*'s spontaneous bop prose. One can barely detect Jack's love for words in this book. His writing at times is a little wispy (which hints at his Wolfean tastes) but Jack never dives into the full breadth of nostalgia of which all Kerouac fans know he's capable. His writing is more clipped and economic.

In 1944, Wm Burroughs was part of a group of friends who would eventually be known as the Beat Generation. One of these men was Jack Kerouac. Lucien Carr, another friend, was going to ship out to France as a merchant marine with Kerouac. When that failed, Carr's friend Kammerer (who was obsessed with Lucien and had followed him from St. Louis to Chicago and then Chicago to New York) resumed his stalking and it ended in an attack in Riverside Park where Carr stabbed Kammerer with a pocket knife, bound him, weighted the body, and tossed him into the Hudson River. Carr went to Burroughs and confessed. Burroughs told him to get a lawyer and turn himself in. Carr then went to Kerouac and with Abe Green, they disposed of the knife and some of Kammerer's things. Carr eventually confessed to the DA and Kerouac and Burroughs were arrested as material witnesses. Carr plead down the 2nd degree charge to manslaughter and served two years. The other two men were not charged. They wrote this book in 1945, but it was not published until 2008. Admittedly, I have no affinity for the Beat style of writing, so reading this story was very rough. I think if I had seen "Kill Your Darlings" first, it would have been a lot easier to follow the story especially since the novel changes all of their names! I want to love the book because the whole story fascinated me. Torrid affairs, homosexual stalker, super-intelligent young men (Carr was at UChicago until a suicide attempt and others were at Columbia) and a constant state of uncertainty. This was war time, yet none of these men were fighting. Still, they all lived from day to day, as if they understood the temporary nature of all of their lives even at such young ages.

"And The Hippos Were Boiled In Their Tanks," by Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs, with forward by James Grauerholz (220 pgs., 1945, 2008). This is the first novel written by members of what became known as the Beat Generation. It was written by Kerouac & Burroughs near the end of

World War Two & was never published. They each wrote alternating chapters. The novel is closely based on the murder of one of their circle of friends by another of their circle of friends. In real life, Lucien Carr IV, then 19, stabbed to death David Eames Kammerer. David & Lucien met in St. Louis, MO when David was 25 & Lucien was 11. A strange mentorship grew between them. David & Burroughs were friends since they were just 9 & had met in elementary school in St. Louis. Kerouac met them when he was a freshman at Columbia University in NYC. This book is about the normal day-to-day meanderings of a group of young men & young women seemingly just hanging out. Kerouac keeps waiting to ship out on the merchant marine vessel, but never does. Burroughs is the only one with a job. Women are always around. They are all jumping in & out of bed. Yet, in a seemingly chaste sort of way. Kerouac's first wife, Edie Parker is here. All the names have been changed. There is always tension whenever Lucien & David meet. Lucien wants David out of his life. They still always get together. David loves Lucien in a purely chaste way. Bisexuality is always present in this book. In this novel, Lucien kills David with a hatchet in a drunken stupor. In real life, Lucien stabbed David to death with a knife. Lucien was sent away for a couple of years. Later, he became Louis Carr, the top writer & editor for UPI. This novel was never published.

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