



And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks

By William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac

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The legendary novel whose true events inspired the film KILL YOUR DARLINGS

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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And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks By William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #210498 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Grove Press
- Published on: 2009-11-10
- Format: Deckle Edge
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x 5.50" w x .50" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

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Editorial Review

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Lucien Carr, college roommate of Allen Ginsberg and friend of both William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac, killed David Kammerer in 1944. Ginsberg began and then abandoned a novel based on the incident; Burroughs and Kerouac collaborated and completed this one, which has remained unpublished until now. Writing alternating chapters from alternating points of view, the eventual Beat icons adopted a hard-boiled voice without adopting the conventions of a crime novel. Where most crime novels start with a murder, *Hippos* leads up to it, and the only tension is generated by the reader's knowledge of what happened in real life. But if it isn't successful as a crime novel, it's fascinating for the glimpses it provides into the authors' lifestyles (the aimless partying is more *On the Road* than *The Big Sleep*) and its indications of the writing styles they would later develop. Interestingly, while references to Rimbaud suggest a parallel to the poet's volatile love affair with Verlaine, the portrayal of Carr, aka "Phillip Tourian," is not romanticized—in fact, he would have been a great character for Hammett, Cain, or Chandler to work with. --Keir Graff

Review

The legendary novel whose true events inspired the film *KILL YOUR DARLINGS*

"A combination hard-boiled murder mystery and existentialist lament— think Dashiell Hammett meets Albert Camus...an essential document of the Beat Generation." –Gerald Nicosia, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"[A] persuasive portrait of *la vie boheme* in all its aimlessness and squalor." –Amanda Heller, *The Boston Globe*

"A literary curiosity, a genuine collectible." –Carolyn See, *The Washington Post*

"Reveals two giants-to-be in the development stages of their craft... With its evocative rendition of now-vanished saloons, bygone diners, and other landmarks of yesteryear, Burroughs and Kerouac may have inadvertently done for 1944 Greenwich Village what Joyce did for 1904 Dublin." –George Kimball, *The Phoenix* (Boston)

"The appearance in print of *And the Hippos Were Boiled In Their Tanks* by William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac is a literary event, not only because it drew two of the three leading Beat writers into confederacy, but because the book told a story – of male friendship, gay obsession, and murder – that came to fascinate a score of American authors... It's a fascinating snapshot from a lost era. If you're looking for the link between Hemingway's impotent post-war drifters in *The Sun Also Rises*, the barflies and Tralalas of *Last Exit to Brooklyn* and the zonked-out kids of Bret Easton Ellis's *Less Than Zero*, look no further." —John Walsh, *The Independent*

"In alternating chapters, Burroughs and Kerouac serve up a noir vision of Manhattan... Of the two, Kerouac, then in his early 20s, is the more developed writer, though Burroughs, an absolute beginner, already shows some of the interests and obsessions that will turn up in *Naked Lunch* and elsewhere, to say nothing of an obviously field-tested understanding of how syringes work... For his part, Kerouac recounts wartime experiences in the Merchant Marine, along with notes on the bar scene that would do Bukowski proud." —*Kirkus Reviews*

“[Hippos] significantly predates Kerouac’s major novels and illuminates his dynamic and productive literary friendship with William S. Burroughs. ... it is very charming. ... The conceit of switching back and forth between narrators every chapter also keeps things speeding along—it creates the illusion that one is listening to a radio broadcast from one station, only to have the frequency changed every few minutes, with the narrative sometimes overlapping and the two voices bleeding into another.”

—Andrew Martin, *Open Letters Monthly*

“Illuminates the links between Sam Spade and Sal Paradise, noir nihilism and Beat exuberance.” —Timothy Hodler, *Details*

“If you care about either of these beat masters ... I don’t see how you can fail to enjoy [And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks]. Slight as it may seem at first glance, it’s an invaluable document of literary history, glimmering with nascent genius.”

—Craig Seligman, *Bloomberg News*

“Naughtily sexual and emotionally grimy, written in a prose style that is deadpan-dry and larded with hardboiled atmosphere. This oddly titled novel is an engaging literary and historical curio.” —Richard Labone, *Between the Lines*

“Spellbinding. ...with spot-on dialogue and descriptions of seedy bars and jam-packed apartments, the authors serve up a fascinating look at a time of late night parties, casual sex and a devil-may-care approach to life.” —Jackie Crosby, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

“An eccentric, engaging, and readable novel... What makes the novel particularly fascinating, however, is its ability to provide a window into the early autobiographical styles of both Burroughs and Kerouac as emerging, unpublished writers.”

—Marcus Niski, *The Sydney Morning Herald*

“As an insight into the formative years of the Beats, it’s fascinating.”

—Nick Rennison, *The Sunday Times* (London)

About the Author

WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS (1914 1997), one of this century’s most influential writers and a member of the Academy of Arts and Letters, was the author of numerous books, including *Naked Lunch*, *Nova Express*, *The Ticket That Exploded*, and *The Wild Boys*. JACK KEROUAC (1922 1969) was one of the most inventive writers of the twentieth century and is considered the father of the Beat Generation. He was the author of *On the Road*, *The Dharma Bums*, *The Subterraneans*, and many other books.

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