



Empire State

Colin Bateman

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It's bad enough having a name like Nathan Jones - unless you're a Supremes fan, which Nathan isn't - but when his girlfriend leaves him (for a drag artist) and he gets mugged, then handcuffed to a bed and cut up in a misunderstanding with an S&M hooker, can things get any worse?

Empire State Details

Date : Published January 5th 1998 by HarperCollins (first published January 5th 1997)

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Author : Colin Bateman

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Genre : Fiction, Humor, Mystery, Crime

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From Reader Review Empire State for online ebook

Felix Marwick says

Purely brilliant. Dark humour at its finest. Superbly written and laugh out loud hilarious

Trevor says

not his best overlong and a bit silly

Fiona Fullerton says

Suspend credulity and laugh out loud

Una says

sick, but great fun!

Woodge says

This crime caper was one I picked up in London. It was terrible. I can't believe I bothered to finish it.

Paul Sysiak says

Absolute riot - was the first Bateman I read and became an instant fan.

Give it a go!

Keith says

brilliant book

Jilany says

to-read

Gospodyina says

I say read Divorcing Jack, then read this, then...just move on to another author. No offense to this one.

Susan says

This may be Colin Bateman's best so far. Nathan Young, and illegal from Ireland is not a sterling character. He drifts here and there wondering what life is doing to him. He lands a job as a security guard at the Empire State Building and the President of the United States is coming to visit. In true Bateman fashion, a presidential assassin gets usurped by Nathan through a comedy of errors. Bateman's books just don't stand up to synopsis. You just have to go there yourself and you should - really. He's a twisted tale teller for sure.

Xroldx says

Bateman was ahead of his time with this satirical crime novel about the attempt to assassinate the black president of the USA. As always with Bateman there's a lot of satire and punk rock throughout the book. I loved it.

Samuel Tyler says

Colin Bateman has been writing for a good length of time now and his style has matured over the years. He has always balanced darkness with light, often by having gruesome murders, but very funny main characters. His earliest works were perhaps his darkest, but the setting of Northern Ireland seemed to give the books a reprieve. Surely bad things happened during the Troubles? How would Bateman's dark comedic crime thrillers work if the setting was moved? Not quite as well as it turns out.

Nathan Jones is an illegal immigrant. He and his equally illegal girlfriend have made their way to New York from Northern Ireland and have to work some of the less favoured jobs to get by. Lisa has found herself dancing for money, but Nathan has managed to luck a job as a security guard in the Empire State Building. This normally entails babysitting tourists, but when the President announces a visit, the security team are put on high alert. After all, a known psychopath is out to get the President and the Empire State Building may just be the perfect place for an assassination.

The characters in Bateman's novels are often flawed and not always that nice, but have some sort of redeeming feature – snide comments being the most common. The characters in 'Empire State' do not. The focus of the book is Nathan and he is the least likable character that Bateman has ever chosen to be the protagonist. We are used to lazy drunks, but women beaters? It is hard to side with Nathan. The likes of Lucy are a little better, but her story is not painted in glory either.

The entire experience of 'Empire' is a little grim. The killer on the loose seems to butcher people for little reason, but at least this gives the book some menace. However, there are also other dark parts that have

seemingly no other purpose than to depress the reader. To be fair, this is in keeping with Bateman's other early works, but the likes of 'Cycle of Violence' had Northern Ireland as a setting and it seemed to make more sense. In America, the book is cartoonish, even out doing the likes of Carl Hiaasen.

Throughout the story there are glimpses of the author's better work. Some of the jokes are dark, but very funny. The tension that builds is also good as the killer is someone to be very scared of. A shame then that the ending becomes a little lampoonish. I see 'Empire' as a book from a newer writer finding their feet. There are several exceptional books in the Colin Bateman cannon, but this is not one of them. A decent enough outing, but only for readers with a strong stomach.

Andy Dainty says

Unfortunately I didn't enjoy this book as much as I was expecting, I tend to prefer Bateman's Dan Starkey novels but Empire State is not as funny as Maid of the Mist or his other American set novels.

Midway through Empire State I found myself disliking most of the lead characters which made the book a harder read, I especially found reading the George sections to be horrific. However the most important issue was that I wasn't laughing anywhere near as much as I expected.

Wendy says

Yet another Colin Bateman novel... took me a bit longer to get into than the Dan Starkey or Mystery Man books by Colin. But a page turner once I got into it. Sadly it means that I only have 2 Bateman novels left to read.

It was rather funny that the book revolves around a US president who is black and Obama is currently in office. Made it more fun to read.
