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The Color Of Money



Synopsis

After 20 years of hibernation, former pool champion "Fast" Eddie Felson is playing exhibition matches with former rival Minnesota Fats in shopping malls for prizes like cable television. With one failed marriage and years of running a pool hall, Eddie is now ready to regain the skills needed to compete in a world of pool that has changed dramatically since he left it behind. The real challenge comes when Eddie realizes that in order to compete successfully, he must hone his skills in the game of nine-ball as opposed to the straight pool that had once won him fame. With a new generation of competitors, fear and doubt and the daily possibility of failure arise, giving Fast Eddie a new challenge to overcome. The Color of Money is the source of the 1986 film starring Paul Newman in the role he had originated in The Hustler.

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Customer Reviews

I have to admit I'm a fan of Scorsese's film sharing the same title, but these are two completely different stories. I was shocked at how little the two have in common, which is almost nothing. Tevis's book paints a very different picture of Fast Eddie in the 80's. Tevis shows us a dejected man who let years of his life just pass by idly while he ran a small pool hall, as opposed to Scorsese's Fast Eddie who had become a successful liquor salesman (ironically, Tevis's Felson failed as a salesman). Not only that, the Vince character (and his t-shirt) does not really exist in Tevis's book - Felson does not take on a prodigy at all. Even Fats is back in the book. All this drive I've written here is to encourage you to read the book. A completely different story than what the movie offers, but one more plausibly in line with The Hustler (the book). As usual, Tevis is deft at

writing the intricacies of pool and the psyche that surrounds it.

The color of money is, as a novel, far superior to the filmed version starring Cruise and Newman. The film is underrated, and has many fine points but when compared to the book it is very, very disappointing. The novel starts slowly, retracing the last 25 years of hustler Eddie Felson and him building a new future for himself. By the last chapter the book is absolutely galloping along. The final tournament scenes show off probably some of the best writing on pool that has ever been accomplished, really taking you into each game and feeling what Eddie feels, from his jealousy at the young stars to his own self-realization at and through the green felt. Not only a book for pool enthusiasts, rather for anyone who enjoys good pacey writing and literature as art.

Don't let the movie fool you, this novel (completely different!) is vastly more enriching, entertaining and exciting. Bear in mind also that this novel was written years before the film. The author Walter Tevis was sorely disappointed with how Hollywood completely butchered his original story. The film was really just a vehicle to showcase Tom Cruise with Paul Newman and nothing much else. The book on the other hand is a deeper exploration of "Fast" Eddie that includes his childhood, a reunion with Minnesota Fats (yes, Fats is back!), and a desperate plan to come out from under a mountain of bills and broken dreams. The "Tom Cruise" character is actually a cocaine-sniffing, hyper-manic badboy/nemesis NOT PROTEGE to Fast Eddie. And the pool action is many times more riveting than anything in that very often boring movie. This is not about glitz and glamor Hollywood style, it's about a desperate, aging man trying to reclaim what was lost and what was denied in order to redeem himself. I first read this book as a teenager and was enthralled. If you liked the original Hustler, you'll love this, and if you didn't care all that much for the movie then by all means check it out!!! I also recommend Tevis' The Queen's Gambit. After back to back reads of Tevis chess and Tevis pool, you're guaranteed to be left reeling, drained, jolted, and then clamoring for more. But then of course sadly, Walter Tevis is a writer deceased. If only Hollywood could've gotten it right!

This book is an interesting character study of a middle aged man coming to grips with who he is and who he wants to be. I usually avoid books that can be described as "a story of redemption" But this story is done so well, with great honesty and without pretense or being overly romanticized. Many of us make it to middle age without really examining who we are or become something we never intended. This is a story of a guy who wakes up in his early 50's and doesn't like what he sees and isn't exactly sure how to fix it. Ultimately, this is a story of his interesting journey. I am not

sure what else to say except that I really enjoyed the book. It is well written and the characters are multidimensional.

If you enjoyed the movie "The Color of Money" try the book from which it is loosely based. Not giving anything away, there is no Tom Cruise character, nor his movie girlfriend. If you are an "early to mid-boomer" you may especially relate to this work even if your eyes glaze over at the mention of "pool". If you read/saw "The Hustler", even better.

20 some years after Eddie Felson beat Minnesota Fats, he is struggling to make a living. He persuades former arch-rival Fats for the TV show of the rematches against two legendary pool players just for money. He realizes how much he lost touches of pool ability and he cannot beat the former rival. Fats gives advice that you can make money in nine-ball and straight pool is the thing of the past. Then he decided to join Nine ball tournament. That's how the story goes and it develops differently from the film version. There is no Vincent in this book and the book is more like Rocky 3 and 4. Fats sounds like Apollo Creed giving hands to Rocky Balboa. The last part is a fine showdown. It may not be for every Hustler fan but if you must face midlife crisis, this book may give you some boot. Verdict: Eddie Felson facing his midlife crisis Rating: 75 out of 100 Recommended for: Eddie Felson fans.

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