

The Third Policeman
- a novel by -
Flann O'Brien



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By Flann O'Brien

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The Third Policeman is Flann O'Brien's brilliantly dark comic novel about the nature of time, death, and existence. Told by a narrator who has committed a botched robbery and brutal murder, the novel follows him and his adventures in a two-dimensional police station where, through the theories of the scientist/philosopher de Selby, he is introduced to "Atomic Theory" and its relation to bicycles, the existence of eternity (which turns out to be just down the road), and de Selby's view that the earth is not round but "sausage-shaped." With the help of his newly found soul named "Joe," he grapples with the riddles and contradictions that three eccentric policeman present to him.

The last of O'Brien's novels to be published, *The Third Policeman* joins O'Brien's other fiction (*At Swim-Two-Birds*, *The Poor Mouth*, *The Hard Life*, *The Best of Myles*, and *The Dalkey Archive*) to ensure his place, along with James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, as one of Ireland's great comic geniuses.

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The Third Policeman By Flann O'Brien Bibliography

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- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .61" w x 5.51" l, .62 pounds
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- 200 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

A comic trip through hell in Ireland, as told by a murderer, *The Third Policeman* is another inspired bit of confusing and comic lunacy from the warped imagination and lovably demented pen of Flann O'Brien, author of *At Swim-Two-Birds*. There's even a small chance you'll figure out what's going on if you read the publisher's note that appears on the last page.

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. If ever a book was brought to life by a reading, it is this presentation of O'Brien's posthumously published classic. Norton individually crafts voices and personalities for each character in such a way that a listener might imagine an entire cast of voice talent working overtime. This is a comic/surreal tale of a one-legged gentleman farmer who participates in a poorly planned botched robbery-turned-murder, only to find himself having a long conversation with the dead man shortly after the deed. In addition he hears from his own soul, who he names Joe. Joe's voice is that of a wry observer with a voice of calm, removed authority, whereas dead man Mathers' voice is completely nasal, at once sickly and droll. Mathers sends the farmer to a two-dimensional barracks of three metaphysical policemen. Here he finds himself in a world where people can become bicycles and eternity is within walking distance. Norton's rendition of the main policeman, Sergeant Pluck, tips the reading into a full-out performance. The enormous blustery fellow with red cheeks and brushy mustache and eyebrows is portrayed like a jolly yet dangerous Disney walrus. Norton's Irish brogue, accentuated to different degrees with the various characters, ties the ribbon on a perfect presentation of this absurd and chilling masterpiece. (Apr.)

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Review

"As with Scott Fitzgerald, there is a brilliant ease in his prose, a poignant grace glimmering off every page."
--John Updike

"A most sardonic novel about life after death with the dead man telling the comic and terrifying story . . . a strange, original comic genius." --New York Times

"Nothing less than dazzling . . . maddening and dizzying . . . heady and exhilarating . . . it is literally funny as hell." --Time

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Milton Jones:

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knowledge can inspire the mediocre, make them reading a e-book.

Paul Blum:

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Shirley Cochran:

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