

[PDF] Time Was Soft There: A Paris Sojourn At Shakespeare & Co.

Jeremy Mercer - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Time Was Soft There: A Paris

Author: Jeremy Mercer

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Mercer explains his memoir's title this way: "Hard time goes slowly and painfully and leaves a man bitter.... Time at Shakespeare and Company was as soft as anything I'd ever felt." His graceful narrative follows struggling writers as they live on potato soup and dreams at Paris's famous expatriate bookshop. Mercer, a former *Ottawa Citizen* crime reporter, finds himself at Shakespeare one gloomy Parisian day in 1999, in his late 20s, with not much money and no plans for the future, trying to evade some angry newspaper sources back home. With little fanfare, he is taken into the store by its owner, George Whitman, a kindly yet scatterbrained man, who explains, "I run a socialist utopia that masquerades as a bookstore." Mercer begins working as an eager unpaid employee, running errands, acting as a referee between the writers who hang out there and ringing

up sales (it's no B&N superstore: when Mercer asks where the credit card machine is, he's told, "Dude, Shakespeare and Company doesn't even have a telephone. Of course we don't take credit cards"). Mercer portrays the assorted characters and their adventures with an eye for detail and a wry sense of humor. Francophile book lovers will enjoy his finely crafted memoir.

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From As a crime reporter in Canada, Mercer received a threatening call after naming an underworld source in a book. Fearing for his life, he quit his job and flew to Paris. As his funds dwindled, he stumbled upon Shakespeare and Co., a small bookstore on the Left Bank across from Notre-Dame, and spent nine months living rent-free in the upstairs library, along with a rotating cast of backpackers and aspiring writers. Despite Mercer's predilection for melodramatic flourishes, the memoir ably captures a romanticized version of the bum's life, with elaborate schemes to scrape up money (like buying designer handbags on behalf of Asian tourists) and nights spent drinking wine and swapping stories. But the real star is the eccentric and charming bookstore proprietor, George Whitman, who remarks, after losing a stack of two-hundred-franc notes to nest-building mice, "At least it's not the books."

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