

Book review

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Charlie came to life with a terrible roar. Shouting, «You've killed him!» over and over and crying like a baby, he grabbed the young guy and pulled him out into the road. Then he beat and pounded and stomped and clawed and gouged, all the time shouting, «You've killed him!» The guy didn't have a chance. All he could do was hug Charlie's legs and try to hide his pulpy face, but Charlie went on and on like a machine.

All at once he stopped and looked up frowning. Somewhere along in there the headlights had come on so he could see what he was doing. He strode to the car. His voice was accusing: «Carlos, you're not all right, are you?» The backseat was all comfortable with cigarette smoke: «You think I didn't expect something like that? Man, you hurt my feelings.» Charlie stood there and swore at him for a long time. There was a feeble rustle in the bushes as the late passenger crawled off somewhere in the night.

Driving back, Charlie spoke once: «All the same I hate violence.» Carlos shrugged: «So do I. But surgery is violence, too.»

As if in a movie, all the young guys in the neighborhood became very respectful of Charlie. The hazing stopped. At first he felt more outside than ever when no one interrupted his reading; on the other hand, he didn't have to grin so good-naturedly any more because they spoke to him man-to-man now. It was a new experience. He didn't read so many westerns now; the heroes no longer seemed quite so amazing. He knew he was being silly as hell but the fact remained he'd never felt so self-satisfied.

BOOK REVIEW

McCAFFERY

a novel by Charles Gorham (Ny: Dial Press, 1961: \$ 3.95)

Vincent McCaffery is sixteen when his frail mother dies, worn out by the sexual desires of his powerful bull of a father.

The boy's belief in Catholicism dies too, replaced by a rage to spit in the face of his Yorkville slum environment. Jackrolling in Central Park provides an outlet for the rage, with Vincent turning himself into a lure for homosexual victims. One of these victims leads him to a call house where he becomes available to customers of either sex. But here he meets a «clean young whore» named Doreen, and love is born.

Yet Vincent is also made part of the household of a rich homosexual. If you think that all this reads like the life of Fanny Hill, you are not far off the well-worn track.

The violent ending can be foreseen, after the young lovers try vainly to escape from what they call the life of the «Nursing Home» where they work.

The tale is a tragic one. The reader feels pity for the central character, but the cards are so neatly stacked that there is an air of predestination, of déjà vu, about his fate. Vincent McCaffery is a pallid cousin of James Farrell's Studs Lonigan.

Diego De Angelis