

Chapter 1 : www.nxgvision.com:Customer reviews: Darconville's Cat

Darconville's Cat is the second novel by Alexander Theroux, first published in 1987. The main story is a love affair between Alaric Darconville, an English professor.

Colin Marshall June 1, 6 books mentioned 13 15 min read Related Books: At the very least, they arm you with a notion of what to expect: Two interpretations of that sentence, both true: Also consider the entirely possible c , that his novels themselves contain all the other forms. Of his four novels within the purview of this piece â€” by themselves a barely chewable bite, I assure you â€” only the latest remains in print. Or, The Sexual Intellectual. Scanning the publishing landscape, as usual, for interesting books to feature on The Marketplace of Ideas , the public radio program I host and produce, I came upon a review of the book from Rain Taxi: But unlike other mega-novels of the past few decades, Laura Warholic presents a fairly straightforward tale: Eugene Eyestones, a near-blind, Bible-quoting, record-collecting Vietnam vet turned journalist, writes a sex column for a magazine called Quink, where he works in the employ of the enormous, revolting, bullying Warholic who throughout the book is only referred to by his surname. The disclosure to be made here is thus that I have interviewed Theroux on the radio a transcript is here and, both in preparation and as a result, have been willingly, inexorably drawn into his sui generis literary world. Is this a collection of short stories? Not exactly, since its pages are divided into only three substantial sections, each of which feels as if it outweighs that label. Is it a set of novellas? Theroux lived in London for a stretch or two of his late youth, and there seems to have tuned in to an ugly psychological frequency. Whatever its official literary form, Three Wogs is a study of the particularly foul flavor of English racism prevalent in the s and 70s. To carve out a small but representative excerpt: A blocky, cuboidal head, faced in pinks and whites and ruled in a fretwork of longitudes and latitudes which showed a few orthographic traces of worry, surmounted a body that made Mrs. Proby look like a huge jar or, when shambling along as she often did, something like a prehistoric Nodosaurus. Though noble, in their way, they act dopey, come from comically deprived and punitive backstories and bounce from solecism to solecism in precisely the manner of a caricature assembled in Roland or Mrs. But the immigrants are as classical heroes compared to the Britons, who crumple under voluminous salvos of precision-targeted satirical savagery. By the end of each tale, nothing remains. Picric, hell; trapfall, gibbet-high, imperscrutable, gulsar, mixt, lugubrious, obligate as an adjective , archistrateges, unction, obol, insurrect, grimoire, sacristan, demulcents and rubefaciens pop off the first five pages alone. You might fear that such diversity of interior form and not-immediately-relatable vocabulary must convey an equally inscrutable story. Both are of French and Italian extraction. Both spent years under a vow of silence in a Trappist monastery. Photos from the early s reveal a Theroux who, at first glance, appears to be cosplaying as Darconville at his own fan convention, long hair, full-black wardrobe, vintage Bentley and all. So, too, do both Darconville and Theroux seem to have been jilted by one of their own students, intellectual bantamweights but brimming with the loveliness of imperfection. Isabel Rawsthorne, the year-old making and undoing of Alaric Darconville, comes from shoddy stock and nurtures the slightest of artistic and educational hopes. She balances her preposterously high self-regard with a preposterously low self-regard that sends her skittering back to a gawky local farm boy as soon as her wedding to the worldly professor looms too close. After relocating from stultifying Quinsyburg to no less august an educational institution than Harvard University, Darconville is forced under the wing of Dr. Abel Crucifer, a reclusive professor emeritus who also happens to be a morbidly obese, woman-hating eunuch. His bizarre lifestyle and the ideas that undergird it allow Theroux to bust out the formal big guns. Crucifer speaks against the female in general and the two-timing Isabel in particular with towering walls of allusion-thick text. Listing the titles in his library of misogyny requires nine straight pages. Rasp her around the neck with a xyster! Theroux cannot seem to keep his sophisticatedly brutal observational powers turned away from these sorry types for long, and we readers are all the better off for it. Yes, its voice is still pitched at quite a high level, and yes, the text contains countless digressions heavy with logic, psychology, intricate verbal reasoning and even essays on visual artistic technique and the history of adultery itself. But it speaks, very broadly, in the manner of the other,

infinitely more prosaic novels about the sexual intrigue of thirtysomething-to-middle-aged northeastern Americans. Much of the difference has to do with the first-person narration. A painter who chose the part of art after being orphaned in childhood, Ford finds himself in adulthood precariously suspended between two ladyfriends. Ford is a more believable human being than Darconville. Farol is the ultimate study of the blandly beautiful woman who, desperately afraid of her poverty of anything else to offer the world, builds around her a crystalline superstructure of self-mythology, cobbled together out of rootless thirdhand knowledge and unbridled fancy, riven with every imaginable variety of ineptitude. She talked by way of remarks and in isolated phrases. I was amazed that her speech effectively allowed her to appear seemingly present while in fact she was totally absent. Since she depended on others for a voice, I thought her inability to do more than this was an indirect confession of her own failure. It was as if her mind had narrowed, congealed, to a hard ten or fifteen or so facts she lived by to get what she could. Her way of trying to be funny – it is often the humor of the non-reader – was becoming fixated with and constantly repeating certain words and phrases she found odd. This is the sort of woman Theroux has made his literary bread and butter, yes, but the words also resonate as a spot-on targeting of a certain sort of modern monster. The doomed heroes of the novels that follow are both wordsmiths: Having renounced most social intercourse, the near-ascetic Eyestones spends his life contemplating humanity through the lens of sexual intercourse. His tool of understanding is – what else? The spent, chaotic, borderline-illiterate Laura Warholic catches his attention as both a singularly fascinating case study in raw, unsublimated Dionysian and self-preservation impulses and as a potentially salvageable symbol of the intersection of decadence and ignorance where, as Eyestones and possibly Theroux see it, civilization has landed. This is so savage! Be it one conveyed through the erudite romanticism of Alaric Darconville, the icy cruelty of Christian Ford, the curious equanimity of Eugene Eyestones or simply the untranslatable language-crazed magpie mind of Alexander Theroux, I laugh, often hard. The volumes lining the interior of his head are undoubtedly more interesting than anything I could offer. Perhaps he sees his finely-wrought works of language and their lack of purchase on the culture as an apocalyptic indictment of that culture, of the intellectually and especially verbally careless society that could corrupt them. Colin Marshall , in addition to his journalistic and blogging pursuits, produces video and sound art and hosts the public radio program and podcast The Marketplace of Ideas.

Chapter 2 : Darconville's Cat by Alexander Theroux (, Hardcover) | eBay

Darconville's Cat is a great novel, because of its moving narrative, beauty and thematic tapestry. There is also its complexity in style, language and allusion which make it considered a professor's novel, but it may be enjoyed without full appreciation of all of these elements.

Most of us have come across books that we adored and worshiped despite their flaws. There are those long books with some boring portions we are willing to forgive. There are books which we find more admirable than enjoyable. There are those where we have to give ourselves a pep-talk to make the difficult journey so we can eventually find the treasure. The Cat demands none of that forgiveness and apology. A pure pleasure to read - from co Gosh! A pure pleasure to read - from cover to cover. There was not a moment when I wished it to be over, not even when it really was over. The Cat is full of riches - from comical satire to sublime emotions to abyssal darkness, all brought to life via eloquent and exquisite prose. All the while, you can imagine a quiet, subdued atmosphere, perhaps dimly lit by candles, with an old-timey smell. There is something haunting about it. The narrative rises in a crescendo with the entry of the antagonist, Dr. Despite his brief appearance, he easily joins the ranks of the most memorable characters to be found in literature. He contributes what must be the vilest and most intense tirade against the woman kind I have and will? Here, take this 20 page long formal oration on the subject. Here are 20 more pages of The Unholy Litany chanting the names of women he wants his soul to be saved from. This is a character fully wrapped in darkness, the kind that can make a reader uneasy. But somewhere he crosses over from serious to ridiculous, to the point of appearing comical. Between Darconville and Crucifer, there is a satirical portrayal of the American South. There are numerous peripheral characters, often painted as hilarious caricatures. There are excerpts from literary works, prefacing each chapter. There is wit and scholarship at display everywhere. And there is that luscious prose swoon! It is the kind of writing that can cause you to drool, and render you speechless, rapt in admiration. There are many a sentences that make you want to read them aloud. It see it more as being about using the perfect word. One can easily read through without knowing the meanings of the arcane words and still be fully engrossed. Immerse yourself in his words and let them wash over you. The portrait of Darconville on the cover was painted by Theroux himself.

Chapter 3 : DARCONVILLE'S CAT by Alexander Theroux | Kirkus Reviews

Buy a cheap copy of Darconvilles Cat book by Alexander Theroux. The main story is a love affair between Alaric Darconville, an English professor at a Virginia womens college, and one of his students, Isabel.

Follow scale to measure the low point. Now, drive that sixty miles of narrow godforsaken road past old huts and shacks, scrub pines and blasted forests into a desolation the crossed boundaries of which, though not silent to your eyes, one feels more in the depth of imagination, the kind of anxiety, a foreboding, of a guilt within not traceable to a fact without; turn then and trail slowly on a wind across a tableland of fallow weeds and sunken dingles into flat tobacco country where the absence of perspective seems as if offered in awful proof of what suddenly, crouching in a perfect and primitive isolation, becomes a town. Your hesitations are real. You can hear yourself breathing. You are in Quinsyburg. It is immediately a terrible letdown, a dislocation, solitary in the framework of its rigid and iconoclastic literalness, which yet sits in the exact center of the Commonwealth of Virginia, a state commemoratively named--if we may charitably disregard for a moment her biological interludes with everyone from the royal dancing master to the beetle-faced Duke of Anjou--after the twenty-third British sovereign, Elizabeth I, she of the judas wig: The sharp and instinctive disappointment you feel, that this must be the capital city of all failure, wrongheadedness, and provinciality, does not subside--it increases, intensifies, heightens. The approach that announces with sadder and sadder emphasis its sterility leads only to a confirmation of its deeper afflictions: It is infinitely liker hell than earth, the proper place to feel the first hint of the decay of the fall. It appears to have extracted from beauty the piety given to it and, keeping that, dismissed the rest as ignominious accident to build a town. A sign tells you where. The place--nothing surrounded by nowhere--is rigorously confined within its own settled limits, huddled, as if on its knees searching the corners of its rural conscience for some sin of omission or commission whereby, to ratify the truth of natural depravity, every pleasure, every recreation, every trifle scratched out of the dust might then be magnified into a great offense, and less for its severe white churches than a general mood of dissent do you feel that the deepest solitudes of its inhabitants must have nothing to feed on except by what either outraged godliness or gave the devil his due. Crete had no owls, Thebes no swallows, Ithaca no hares, Pontus no asses, Scythia no swine. Quinsyburg had no hope. The old courthouse stood behind a short lawn in the square. It was a little world unpardonably misled by fundamentalist drivel, a stronghold of biblicism, and one drowned in the swamp of its execrable simplicities. Nowhere could be found anything in the way of adornment. It was a place that liked its coffee black, its flapjacks dry, its adjectives few, its cheeses hard, its visits short, its melodies whistleable, and its dreams in black and white--preferably the latter. It was far more dreadful and far less eloquent: The town came to an abrupt halt at both ends, a foolish watertank marking the limits on one side and the other giving way to a region of fat-farms and open fields which, several times a year, suddenly sprouted up tents soon to be all fuffed up with the trivialities of the camp-meeting and the chatauqua harangue, the county fair and the vote-rousing picnic. But these were special events. It was a contingent, down both sides, of shoulder-to-shoulder shops, a frontage dull and repetitious but saved from the blight of uniformity by cute mercantile jingles painted on each window--the poetic effusions of various local struld-brugs and place-proud retailers--which in small towns, for some peculiar reason, become such a rich source of humor: United Dixiebelle Cup Co. Stuart ; a popular delivery boy-cum-halfwit named Willis Foster; and a local NRA enclave that meets upstairs in the gunshop every Friday night to tell lies and make up stories about niggers, nymphomania, and New York City? It was a burlesque subordinating individuality to a constant reference of type.

Chapter 4 : darconville's cat | the evening redness in the west

Darconville's Cat is at once a curdling bricolage of literary experimentations, a wunderkammer of lexicographic prowess and a bubbling cauldron of love and hate. The criticisms frequently levelled against this book're simultaneously reasons to read it"long, challenging, overwrought.

His parents died when he was He joins first the Franciscan , then the Trappist brotherhood, but does not fit in. Instead, he discovers a passion for words and writing and is further encouraged in his aspiration to become a writer by his grandmother when he moves to her in Venice. Upon her death she leaves him a cat, Spellvexit, some money, and her old palazzo that eventually, after protracted legal proceedings, he will own. He now has returned to the States to earn a living. In his class he encounters a beautiful year old freshman, Isabel Rawthorne, and falls in love with her. The romance blossoms, but there are consequences. Isabel fails in her freshman year and has to leave Quinsy taking a position as a telephone operator in Charlottesville. He ventures to London for research where he invites her for a visit and their engagement takes place. Back in Virginia, she reenters Quinsy and he continues his teaching job. After he has published his book, he gets an offer to teach at Harvard , while Isabel has finished her studies. He wants to accept and move, but she is reluctant and afraid that he might leave her eventually. He offers to marry her. But when he moves to Harvard, she stays behind, postpones the marriage date, and is harder and harder to reach. At this point, Spellvexit runs away. Darconville learns that she does not care for him anymore. She has found a new lover, a son of the well-to-do van der Slang family of Dutch background she had known since childhood. Back at Harvard, he falls under the spell of Dr. Crucifer, a satanic sophist and misogynist who abrogated his sex as not to fall under the spell of a woman. Crucifer works on Darconville turning his love for Isabel into hate. He urges him to seek revenge convincing him that Isabel is not only worthless but needs to die. He realizes the importance of memory. Neglected, coughing blood, and shivering from fever he suffers from a progressive debilitating lung disease. Aware that his time is running out he rushes to finish the work before he dies. The unnamed manuscript boxed in a tin can is handed to his uncaring physician in lieu of payment. The novel contains chapters of all forms of style including essay, diary, poem, sermon, invocation, satire, fable, travelogue, catalogue, meditation, list, precis, and pages mirrored or black. The Best in English Since In his review, Stuart Mitchner also indicates that the book is very difficult to read. Some will love it. Others will hate it. It needs pruning, but would suffer from the shears.

Chapter 5 : Blogtrotter: Alexander Theroux's "Darconville's Cat": Book Review

Darconville is a Masterpiece. A full-fledged Moby Dick masterpiece of a novel. I first read it 25 years ago and still consider it one of the best three fiction books I've ever read (and I've read thousands in my 63 years).

They flee from me, that sometime did me seek,
With naked foot stalking in my chamber. I have seen them,
gentle, tame, and meek,
That now are wild, and do not remember
That sometime they put themselves in
danger
To take bread at my hand, and now they range,
Busily seeking with a continual change. I lay broad
waking. But all is turned, through my gentleness,
Into a strange fashion of forsaking;
And I have leave to go of
her goodness,
And she also to use newfangleness. But since that I so kindly am served,
I fain would know
what she hath deserved. There are certain elemental emotions that touch upon powers other and larger than our
own discrete wishes might allow – for every consciousness is continuous with a wider self open to the
hidden processes and unseen regions created in the soul by the very nature of an opposite effort – and while,
taken together, each may prove the other simply by contrast, considered separately neither may admit of
various shades in the law of whichever whole it finds reigning at the time. That which produces effects within
one reality creates another reality itself. I am thinking, specifically, of love and hate. We cannot distinguish,
perhaps, natural from supernatural effects, nor among either know which are favors of God and which are
counterfeit operations of the Devil. Who, furthermore, can speak of the incubations of motives? And of love
and hate? Are they not too often, in spite of the comparative chaos within us, generally taken to be little more
than a set of titles obtained by the mere mechanical manipulation of antonyms? I have no aspiration here to
reclaim mystery and paradox from whatever territory they might inhabit, for there is, indeed, often a killing in
a kiss, a mercy in the slap that heats your face. There is, nevertheless, a particular poverty in those alloplasts
who, addressing tragedy, seek to subdistinguish motives beyond those we have best, because nearest, at hand,
and so it is with love and hate – emotions upon whose necks, whether wrung or wreathed, may be found the
oldest fingerprints of man. A simple truth intrudes: But who knows when or where or how? For the answers to
such questions, summon Augurello, your personal jurisconsult and theological wiseacre, to teach you about
primal reality and then to dispel those complexities and cabals you crouch behind in this sad, psychiatric
century you call your own. It is the anti-labyrinths of the world that scare. Here is a story for you. Delirium is
the disease of the night. The single tree, however, that shanked out of the front yard he now crossed in long
strides showed even more distinct a darkness, a simulacrum of the dread probationary tree – trapfall of all
lost love – for coming upon it, gibbet-high and half leafless in the moonlight, was to feel somehow disposed
to the general truth that it is a dangerous and pagan notion that beauty palliates evil. It had always seemed
axiomatic for him that he be alone: The imperscrutable winds of autumn, blowing leaves across the porch, had
almost stripped the tree, leaving it nearly naked and essential against the moon that shone down on the quiet
little town in Virginia. It was late as he let himself into the house and walked up the creaking stairs to his
rooms where, pulling a chair to the window, he sat meditatively in that dark chamber like a nomadic gulsar
– his black coat still unbuttoned – and was left alone with those odd retrospective prophecies borne in on
one at the start of that random moment we, for some reason, choose to call the beginning of a new life. The
night, solemn and beautiful, seemed fashioned to force those who would observe it to look within themselves.
He watched awhile and then grew weary. He took a late mixt of some rolls and a bottle of ale and soon
dropped asleep on his bed, dreaming out of fallen reason the rhymes received with joy he shaped accordingly.
No, I imagined it. The shutters were open. Darconville stared out into a small empty street, touched with
autumnal fog, that looked like the lugubrious frontispiece to a book as yet to be read. He looked at his watch
which he kept hung on a nail. The afternoon was to have been spent, as the morning had, writing, but
something else was on his mind. There was an unfinished manuscript, tentatively called *Rumpopulorum*,
spread out there, a curious, if speculative, examination of the world of angels, archistrateges, and the archonic
wardens of heaven in relation – he appropriated without question the right to know both – to mortal man.
The body of material, growing over the last few months, was formidable, its sheets pied with inky corrections
and smudged with the additions that overheated his prose and yet brought it all to test. How had they come to

be here? What reason, in fact, had they to be in this strange place? The young man, however, continued leaning by the window and reviewing what he saw. He felt no particular responsibility to memory but accepted his dreams, to which, living altogether as a twin self in the depths of him, he could speak in inviolable secrecy. It had long seemed clear, commandmental: He sought the obol of Pasetes, the mallet of Daikoku, the lamp of Aladdin. There were difficulties, often, in the way of carrying out his plans. But he overbore them and, hoping to fall prey to neither fascination nor fatigue, sought only to stem distraction, to learn the secrets beyond the world he felt belonged to him, and to write. It was the Beatitude of Destitution. Alaric Darconville "insurrect, courteous, liturgical" was twenty-nine years old. His mind was like one of those Gothic cathedrals of which he was so fond, mysterious within, and filled with light, a brightness at once richer and less real than the light of day, flashing accompaniment, on occasion, to the long satirical tirades of which he was also capable and yet wakefully aware, in gentlen

Chapter 6 : Darconville's Cat by Alexander Theroux

Alaric Darconville teaches English to the young Virginia women of Quinsy College. He writes fiction, is considered eligible by the co-eds, and soon enough gives up his rather ingenuous, un-modern heart to one of them: Isabel Rawsthorne, she of the hillbilly-background, angelic face, and elephantine.

Chapter 7 : Darconville's Cat ,

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Chapter 8 : Darconville's Cat : Alexander Theroux :

Apparently there was a real-life Isabel who actually abandoned the real-life Alexander Theroux at the altar, which motivated him to take revenge by writing the novel that became Darconville's Cat, or so he claims in a New York Times Magazine article.

Chapter 9 : Darconville's Cat - Wikipedia

Contemporary Literature Darconville's Cat is a novel by Alexander Theroux /en/darconville's_cat; Edit; Darconville's Cat is a novel by Alexander Theroux darconville's cat by alexander theroux cell darconville's cat by alexander theroux poems Detail Of: Darconville's Cat.