



The Forty First Wink

James Walley

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Marty is having a bad morning. Roused from slumber by a gang of polo mallet-wielding monkeys and a mysterious voice in his wardrobe, he must quickly come to terms with the fact that the world outside his door is now the world inside his head. Lying in wait amidst bleak, gloomy streets, deserted theme parks, and circus-themed nightclubs, lurks the oppressive shadow of a myriad of giggling, cackling pursuers, hell bent on throwing a custard pie or two into the works.

Assisted by a string of half-cocked schemes, a troupe of tiny unlikely allies, and (literally) the girl of his dreams, Marty sets out on a heroic quest to wake up and get out of bed.

The Forty First Wink Details

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Author : James Walley

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From Reader Review The Forty First Wink for online ebook

Emma Lea says

I have been desperate for a new author to capture my attention and this debut novel by James Walley certainly hit the spot. With all the good characteristics of a great fantasy/comedy/supremely odd book, the author is enticing you in to the wonderfully weird and intoxicating depths of his subconscious.

The Forty First Wink sends you through a myriad of emotions and doesn't stop until you turn the last page and leaves you wanting more.

It's intelligent, funny, witty and creepy all at the same time with twists and turns until you are dizzy. Scary clowns, tiny pirates, hangover technicians (monkeys with hammers) and a main cast of characters that you warm to as soon as you start reading, you will not be disappointed.

Marty, the hero of the story, wakes up in his own dream and has to find a way back to reality. The basic storyline of the book allows the author to send his readers on an insane journey into the Marty's deep subconscious which allows anything to happen, and believe me it does.

Many reviews are comparing James Walley and his style of writing to the likes of Douglas Adams and Terry Pratchett and I have to agree. As his first novel is already gaining momentum in popularity, I cannot wait to see what crazy worlds he will take us to next.

Jack Thompson says

The Forty First Wink was quite a bit different from what I've gotten used to in the last year or so and it took me a long time to finish it...

Having said that, it's a heck of a fun read.

It begins with Marty (our hero) waking up with a monster hangover which quickly turns into something quite different. High adventure! Clowns! Pirates! THE GIRL OF YOUR DREAMS! It's great kids, step up and take a peek.

I actually got this copy free in exchange for an honest review and here's a quick and dirty one because I'm new at the review copy game: As soon as I'm done here I'm going to contact Mr. Walley and see if I can pay him for it.

I don't really know what else I can say about it without giving too much away but I can tell you that I'd dig hanging out in the author's imagination for a while.

Gef says

Well, that was weird.

If you wonder who out there might be around to offer the kind of whimsy and weirdness that readers loved from Terry Pratchett, James Walley is a writer you may want to consider.

In *The Forty-First Wink*, Marty is your usual lovable schlub. One morning he awakes with what he believes to be one monster hangover. Why else would there be monkeys in his bedroom wielding polo mallets?

Well, turns out Marty is trapped inside his own mind, or more accurately, his dreams. All of the wacky and whacked out entities now surrounding him have populated his dreams for as long as he can remember, and finds himself aligning with a few to find a way to wake up and stop his mirror-image doppelganger from sabotaging his plans. The tiny toy pirate might be some help. The actual girl of his dreams, too. The psycho clown? Err ... maybe keep looking.

With an abandonment of dry British humor and an embracing of the absurd, *Forty-First Wink* is a mix of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, with some *Robot Chicken* for seasoning. It's madly off in all directions, yet manages to keep a towline of a plot pushing the story forward through the kaleidoscopic dreamscape that is Marty's mind.

It might be a bit rough around the edges, but it's fun and a strong showing from a debut author that has my attention when it comes to his next book.

Kenny Soward says

This book is clever. It's written well. Has some breathtaking action scenes. Kind of a whale of an adventure. Reminded me of the movie *Time Bandits* or *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1988). Only, this adventure included some pretty epic (and evil) clowns. Oh, and pirates! It certainly deserves more than 4 stars but not quite enough for me to push it to the top along with my ultimate favorites ... close, though. In any case (and more importantly) it entertained the heck out of me. I will definitely be waiting for book II.

Sveto Manev says

The Forty First Wink is not your average kind of novel. It's a laugh-out-loud, 'glorious romp' of a novel, which offers a delightful mix of humour, adventures, quirky characters and memorable dialogue. It's also James Walley's debut as an author, and another excellent offering by Ragnarok Publications.

The story starts off with a bang (literally) when our main protagonist, Marty, wakes up with a hangover, a gang of polo mallet wielding monkeys and a mysterious voice in his wardrobe. There are also the whistling, can-can dancing birds, the talking pirate doll (Timbers), the crazy reflection in the mirror... In short, it's a dream unlike any other you've ever had. And it only escalates from there. Throughout the pages we get to meet creepy clowns, Jamaican, French and German canaries (the distinction is important), a crew of pirates that rivals Jack Sparrow's, and the so-called League of Fairly Impressive Super Folk... Simply put, the book is a wonderful mosaic of colourful, memorable and fantastic images, glued together by a fast-paced plot and some of the best dialogue in a 'comedy' novel I've read in a while.

To illustrate that, here's a quick glance at one of my favourite interactions between Marty and Timbers, which also introduces a very special... hmm... super hero:

“Well, there's the Tea Lady,” Timbers mumbled, “but I doubt she'd be of much use.”

“No, she doesn't sound it.” Marty rubbed his forehead in anticipation of what would surely be imminently onrushing disappointment. “What does she do?”

Timbers, to his credit, tried to dress it up, “Well, she has this shiny tray that she flings about. Oh, and she can shoot hot tea from her eyes.”

Marty puffed out his cheeks and shook his head skeptically. “That's not massively helpful.”

Timbers was defiant. “Depends if you want a cup of tea.”

And that's just the Tea Lady. Needless to say, the rest of the League is not much better (or is that worse?), but I'd definitely love to see them in their own adventure. In fact, the whole cast of *The Forty First Wink* is assembled brilliantly and will surely stay with you long after the final pages of the novel. That, in my view, is one of Walley's greatest strengths as a writer – the ability to portraiture unlikely heroes.

Another highpoint is the writing style. To be perfectly honest, the first comparison that came to my mind when I started reading the novel was Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and *Through the Looking-Glass*, and *What Alice Found There*. Have you read *Alice*? It's quite a unique experience, the first time ever you open those pages and ‘meet’ the White Rabbit, the Caterpillar, the Hatter, and, of course, the Cheshire Cat.

I felt exactly the same way while discovering and exploring James Walley's world. There was that same sense of wonder, same sense of fascination, that lets you know you've got something special in your hands. The prose, too, reminded me of the lyrical, light and accessible style of Carroll's *Alice*, only it was fast-forwarded to the present, thus sparing us some of those longish, nineteenth century sentences...

Last but not least, I feel that *The Forty First Wink* is a novel that would appeal equally to teens and their parents, and which offers something for everyone, being fans of Terry Pratchett, Lewis Carroll, Fantasy, or good literature in general.

As a conclusion, I'd suggest you take advantage of the summer months and warm, sunny weather, and sit back and enjoy the light-hearted, fun and exciting adventure that is *The Forty First Wink*. Just don't read it too quickly, because you'd definitely want more once you're finished! Personally, I'm eager to see where James Walley takes us next...

Lisa says

When I first got the PR email telling me about this book and asking if I wanted a copy to review, I recall saying that it sounded “too entertaining to say no to”. Happily, I was right!

Admittedly, surreal humour doesn't always hit the mark with me. I absolutely adore Terry Pratchett's Discworld opus, but I was much less taken with Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* - both of which this author's writing has been compared to. In fairness, I think it's a tricky thing to hit the right notes with. You can never know what will tickle someone's funny bone, or be sufficiently creepy when need be. James Walley does both, for me, and does it very well.

Clowns in pogo-stick cars, people. You have been warned.

But please don't let that put you off. This story has plenty to shudder about, but it also has a great adventure story to tell. The whole waking-dream approach naturally gives the author free rein to go nuts, and he also does this well. Who doesn't love talking toy pirates, right? His gift for writing comedy is also a credit to him. As it turns out, it is kind of difficult to be terrified of evil clowns when they're bouncing around on a bouncy castle and being fought, cannonball-style, by one of the aforementioned toy pirates.

And part of me now dearly wishes that bouncy castle kung-fu was more of a thing.

As for the adventure part, again Walley hits all the right notes – and comes up with some wonderfully ridiculous modes of transportation while he's at it. Case in point: the Flying Fathom. It's a pirate ship... Carried through the air by a giant mechanical parrot. Because dream. Because why not?

Setting all of the surreal aside for a moment, I've got to say that my favourite part of all this is probably the most normal aspect (and that is by no means a failure on the author's part!) – the sense of camaraderie between Marty, our protagonist, and the toy pirate crew who help him on his quest. Their pirate captain, Timbers, is Marty's favourite childhood toy come to life; naturally, Marty rediscovers along the way why he treasured (no pun intended) this toy so much. And Timbers himself is a fantastic character. The tiny toy knows no fear, launching himself into the adventure and (literally) straight at clown faces with equal amounts of pirate abandon. Quite the role model, for a toy...

Here is where it's got shades of Toy Story, for me. The friendship between a man and his favourite toy is undeniably sweet, but this is a story about daring adventures, and it's the daring adventure that takes precedence. The lessons Marty begins to learn about self-confidence and Seizing Life In Both Hands never derails this, but instead works nicely hand in hand with it. It adds welcome depth to a story that, without it, might well have fallen a little flat.

This book makes an excellent debut effort. It may not have struck me as quite so laugh-out-loud funny as Pratchett's work, but it's definitely on the same scale – and that is nothing at all to sneeze at! It has most certainly put James Walley on my Authors To Watch list.

Vix says

Poor Marty he is awoken by a bunch of monkeys drumming on his head and stealing his pocket change, or maybe it was just a night on the Tequila! And so starts this trip through Marty's hangover morning. However, when the cupboard starts to speak to him I knew that something else was afoot!

Awake in his own dream Marty starts his morning off by losing his Mirror Image and re-friending his old pirate toy named Timbers by splatting him with a slipper!

With an invite to the Giggletastic Carnival Sideshow Spectacular tucked in hand and a quest to find his lost Mirror Image and a way out of the DreamWorld, Marty and his new found pirate friend go off to catch the bus, as you do! Sounds like they were driving through Croydon for most of it!

As they reach dock, just go with it here, Timbers proudly shows off his pirate ship The Flying Fathom and I was so wrapped up in the mayhem I wanted to be on the deck with Oaf and the motley gang; its unique

locomotion just another mad moment exploding from inside JW head.

Finally making it to Stellar Island where Marty spends his (awake) day job dressed as Harvey the Space Beagle, he comes across another random ally and soon the whole gang finds themselves in the Hall of Paranormal Mirrors. It is here that things start to get a little spooky as He is talked about. The “He” is a certain Mr Peepers a freakish, demonic clown with a truly skin crawling aura that JW manages to portray even amongst all this daft jolliness.

When dastardly plot twists start to unfold we are treated to a variety of characters, unforgettable for me are the Jamaican, French and German canaries that are in a desperate search for worms and cheese; I do hope they found some and the superhero “Locust” with his spangly lycra leggings and unending history lesson of fascinating facts.

The funniest part of the book for me was the daring ice cream truck escape, complete with choc ice weaponry and pogoing clowns!

As they continue on their hunt/escape/quest Marty and his gang may have found his route “home”. I was pleased to see that JW did not skimp or wuss out on the ending, holding fast to a theme and giving a brilliant ending, whilst leaving it wide open for more fun.

This book was a total riot, I kept finding myself guffawing and snorting at all the odd, random moments and exceptionally clever word play one liners. I’m pretty sure the image of a whale on a pogo stick will stay with me for awhile. As for the Great Badger Invasion and cheeseburger trees, well, just well!

The mental visuals given are a whirlwind of colours and images, it would be amazing to see what Hollywood CGI could do with this mayhem.

Reading the bio’ on JW I understand that this is to be a serious of books, personally I think it could be extended into a massive series, the imagination and writing skill of JW seems endless is this short (a good two hours!) read is anything to judge him buy.

Fantastic attention to detail in every moment of madness, the writing style is an easy read but also complex as so much is packed into each sentence, paragraph and chapter.

All the characters whether human or critter are fleshed out and have unique personalities. I could not spot a single typo or editing error which is outstanding for a first book, but then The Ragnarock team are amazing.

Frank Errington says

Review copy

Bizarre, stream-of-consciousness, fantasy; It's hard to put a finger on James Walley' s debut novel. One thing's for sure, you won't be bored.

Marty thinks he's awakened with a massive hangover, but actually he's still asleep and stuck in his dream with evil clowns, cloth pirates, bodies of water made of paper, mirror images with a mind of their own,

flying galleons, and much more.

"When he had woken that morning, he had not expected to be going to work, and he had certainly not expected to be arriving at work at the helm of a pirate galleon, with a small army of stuffed toys and a massive robotic bird. Even as insane as that concept sounded in his head, it sure beat taking the bus."

With a writing style reminiscent of the late Douglas Adams (while remaining entirely Earthbound, if you don't count a flying Pirate ship), James Walley takes the reader on a rollercoaster ride of an adventure.

True, this isn't great literature, but it certainly is great fun.

The Forty-First Wink will be released on June 16, 2014 from Ragnarok Publications. Set a reminder for yourself to grab this one when it comes out.

Highly recommended.

Bob Milne says

Douglas Adams. Grant Morrison. Dr. Seus. Terry Pratchett. Those four names right there, found in the cover blurb for The Forty First Wink, are what initially caught my interest . . . and what had me so cautious about diving into James Walley's world. If he could live up to that literary legacy, then Walley would have a sure-fire winner on his hands, but were he to stumble even a little . . . well, those are some lofty expectations under which to be crushed.

As it turns out, they are all fair comparisons. This was a fun, imaginative, laugh-out-loud novel that lagged a bit in the middle, as the initial novelty wore off, but which redeemed itself with a madcap climax.

What could possibly be worse than waking up with the worst hangover of your life? Try finding out that you haven't really woken up, but that you are instead destined to suffer with that hangover through a sort of waking dream, one populated by a greedy mirror doppelganger, childhood toys come to life, a Giggletastic carnival, and a very demonic clown. Don't worry, it'll all be okay, so long as you can maintain your sense of humor.

What makes this work so well is the contrast of the slapstick elements in the plot, and the subtle humor of the narration. Walley knows what he's writing is funny, and he trusts the reader to laugh along, without trying to force the issue or nudge-nudge, wink-wink his way into your head. The opening chapters are, in fact, very Prachett-esque, leaving you both amused and confused. The story twists and turns a few times throughout, but even when it hits its darkest moments, there's still a throbbing vein of macabre humor to keep it going.

Whether or not The Forty First Wink every achieves the distinction of a true classic remains to be seen, but I suspect Walley is an author we're going to be seeing a lot more of in the future, and I'm looking forward to it. Humorous fantasy is so very difficult to pull off, but I think he's mastered it here.

Originally reviewed at Beauty in Ruins

Donald Armfield says

An outside reality of what one man's mind. A journey of laughs and almost every child's worst nightmare clowns.

Marty think he has woke up but his journey has just begun. With a cast of likable characters that take on a fight with clowns over sea and in the streets. A rip roaring journey that will have you flying through pages.

Walley's concept of a dream state is very interesting. Clowns and pirates have never been better.

Escheresque says

James Walley's debut is a roller-coaster through a dream, and never once does the tone drift from a neat blend of adventure and surreal. I was lucky enough to be given a review copy, and boy am I glad. It's unique, but has echoes of Groundhog Day and Alice in Wonderland. The best news? It is the first in a new trilogy.

Go forth and read.

Clay Sanger says

The words "glorious romp" are accurate - but just too dry to do James Walley's incredibly impressive debut "The Forty First Wink" justice.

I cannot recall the last time I had so much gleeful, ghoulish, surrealistic, garish FUN reading a novel.

You know that feeling you got as a child on Halloween night? The first year that you were old enough to really absorb all the childish mayhem, fun mystery, and underlying creep between your excited giggles?

That was "The Forty First Wink" for me. The magical butterflies, carnival of the dreamy and bizarre that I recall from being a ten-year old child about to set out trick-or-treating as the sun slipped from the October sky.

Walley puts forth a debut effort that is astoundingly imaginative and wonderfully witty --- giving the reader a true treat of depth, wit, color, and even some creep --- bordering some on the psychedelic, while painting a canvas that is utterly and convincingly a dreamscape.

One part merry madness, one part heroic tale, one part fantastical journey through the mind's eye --- James Walley's "The Forty First Wink" is a novel people will be talking about --- and one YOU should be reading.

Marvelous. Take a copy home with you. Send a copy to a friend.

Becca Butcher says

The Forty First Wink plunges you into a strange world that's a gloriously weird hybrid of Labyrinth, Legend and Who Framed Roger Rabbit with a fast pace that doesn't let up. Characters are strong and distinct, keeping up with the action and keeping you turning pages. This debut novel is funny and terrifying at the same time, making you relive your own hellish nightmares and wish for companions like Walley's characters. With flying pirates, talking canaries and deranged clowns The Forty First Wink is a wonderful roller coaster of a read. I look forward to much more from James Walley.

Seth Skorkowsky says

I've been reading a lot of very dark, very serious books lately and was about to reach for one I was in the middle of reading when I had the thought, "Yeah, I'm just not in the mood for bleak right now. Let me try something light." It was a very good idea.

James Walley's debut can be summed up in one word. Fun. This book is a fun read.

After being rudely awoken inside his own dream, Marty begins his epic quest to escape his own surreal dreamscape and wake up. His companions include the toy, stuffed pirates he had as a child, the girl of his dreams (who in real life he had only one date with and it was a bad one), and a geriatric superhero that devours books (as in eats them).

Pacing was good and it didn't drag. The voice was a strange stream of conscious style, full of weird and humorous clauses and tangents, much like Douglas Adams. Some might find that style a bit awkward to get used to, but once you do, it's a lot of fun.

M.C. O'Neill says

Ragnarok Publications does it again. The Forty-First Wink is a delightful journey into the realm of dreams and beyond. Right from the first page, a reader will be immersed into author James Walley's fertile imagination and given no break. The adventure is relentless and quick, rendering this novel a solid choice for summertime reading for consumers of all ages.

Imagine rediscovering Douglas Adams all over again and injecting his works with the likes of Grant Morrison and Dr. Seuss. As I devoured the advanced copy, I could not stop thinking how wonderful this tale would be as an animated film. I dearly hope this marvelous work is merchandised one day with toys and video games. When reading this, one could not deny craving to have a scale-model of Timber's pirate ship complete with Whipstaff, Oaf and the twins on their shelves. Read this and you'll know what I mean. A tight narrative packed with remarkable imagery, The Forty-First Wink will be that book which opens the Bizarro genre to wide markets. Good job, Ragnarok!
