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Posted on 03 October 2019 By Ernest Tidyman

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Shaft, based on the novel by Ernest Tidyman Shaft was surely a cornerstone, one of the first films to promote and celebrate an African American hero, an actor in a leading role that was nominated for a Golden globe for Most Promising Newcomer Male. The New York Times Best 1,000 Movies Ever Made list has included this appreciated, groundbreaking film even if

Samuel L Jackson has started in a re make and seems to be intent on making another soon, one may wonder what is so special about this detective, crime thriller. Maybe this should be repeated it certainly opened some roads even today, minorities are not well represented African Americans and other groups are seldom given preeminence, the actors are not awarded, sometimes even nominated women are paid much less than men the recent case of All the Money in the World and the huge gap between the co stars, Michelle Williams and Mark Wahlberg, made headlines. It is also very possible that Shaft was one of the first to present what is now such a familiar story, audiences having seen so many similar narratives that looking at this they would be tempted to say that they know this, they have seen this before, only this d j vu feeling is experienced because others have travelled on the road opened by Shaft. For whatever reason, one could wonder why this is among the best 1,000 Movies Ever Made. John Shaft is different and part in that he is an African American private investigator and we do not really see many if any of those on the big screen, or in literature for that matter, given the aforementioned scarcity of black heroes in general and the now destroyed prejudice actually it seems a racist statement that productions with black stars do not sell well Black Panther broke records and annihilated that premise. The hero is smart, socially intelligent, brave, honest, kind, persistent, wise, curious, creative, has perspective and he is engaged in a difficult and challenging task, to try and save a young woman. Bumpy Jonas is one of the leaders of the underworld, involved in all sorts of illegal activities that bring not just the antipathy, but the hatred and the wrath of competitors who want to eliminate him or, at the very least, kill his business and take over territory and profits. This gangster is looking for Shaft in a vicious manner, sending two hatchet men after him, when a fight breaks out one of the bandits is going through the window of the higher floor and lands on the pavement, killed. The police are taking Shaft at the station to interrogate him and press the witness and the suspect into confessing or at least testifying and informing the law about who the other man was and what happened. The private detective is not a rat and he knows the law very well, the details that are needed for a case to stand in court, evidence that he did something wrong and that he can sue, if they take away his license and livelihood in the process. When Shaft meets with Bumpy, there is a confrontation with the thugs that are keeping the gate and have to search all those entering to see the Big Man, to make sure that they carry no weapons. Bumpy has a first version, in which he says that his daughter had been kidnapped, he has multiple enemies and they should come to confront him, not the innocent child who had had no role in the wars over territory and illegal business developments and the gang leader wants the African American investigator to search for and find his daughter. In order to do that, Shaft is asking his connections and has to trace Ben Buford when they finally face each other, a shooting spree erupts and they all have to run for cover, while five of Buford's men are killed and this leader of Black Nationals has to find refuge that he at first refuses vehemently with the detective. Shaft finds that Bumpy was behind this attack and further, his client had lied that

is he did not give the investigator the information he dad, deceiving by omission and actually knew who was behind the kidnapping the mafia, which wanted to push him out and force his hand. In order to defeat the powerful white criminal organization, John Shaft arranges for Bumpy and Ben Buford to work together in what looks like a race war, on the one side the Italian organized crime and on the other an outr alliance between otherwise antagonistic African American groups. It is not at all easy, the operation requires wisdom, courage, brilliance, self sacrifice, dedication, tactical thinking, astuteness and a good deal of good luck, as shootings and firearm use are not just likely, but only to be expected indeed, they do happen. What is different in all this The race of the protagonists very rarely do we see this prominence of Black Power, the arrangement of the various clashing groups, amusing elements and yet, the final production still lacks some sophistication, refined achievement. Shaft is a deep book Oh, not in the sense that it touches on deep issues and ponders difficult sociopolitical questions, but in the sense that it puts you in Shaft s head and he thinks deep thoughts about everything. Every freakin thing. Reading this book I wonder if Shaft has ever had a happy day in his life The book can be a ponderous read at times because Shaft ponders everything Nothing is just surface, everything is fodder for Shaft s dark and dolorous musings There s a dark cloud behind every beam of sunlight in Shaft s world There s bad intents behind every person Shaft sees in the street, and in every glance Shaft sees the bad behind the good To be fair, Shaft comes by that worldview honestly, and it serves him well in his job, but even when the case is wrapped and Shaft is playing a board game with a child, he s deep in brooding And what is he brooding about How the child beat him in the game, and Shaft will get better and beat him next time, then have to let the kid win after that because, after all, he s an adult playing a kid in a kid s game Even downtime with a young child brings out the rain clouds. Does Shaft ever smile Despite all that, I liked the book It feels like a slice of the seventies and this is a book that could only have been written in that era On the other hand, it deals extensively in stereotypes Every black person is a militant or a drug dealer Every Italian is connected to the Mafia Every white girl wants to sleep with a black man and every white man is afraid of the black man I would stop short of saying there is anything truly racist about this book, but I can see the arguments However, Shaft does have some clearly anti Semitic thoughts about the Jews, making the title of the next book, Shaft Among The Jews, intriguing I read the book because I always like reading the source material behind classic films, and the movie Shaft is an undisputed classic The big question is, of course, is the book better than the movie In this case I have to say no I enjoyed the movie much Even if I was listening to Isaac Hayes soundtrack as I read the book I couldn t help but feel that Shaft is not a character I m in a hurry to revisit, at least in literary form. FREE PDF ? Shaft ? Shaft Has No Prejudices He LI Kill Anyone Black Or White Who Is John Shaft A Black Bogart Who Says The Revolution Is A New Way To Chase Chicksthe Mafia Is A Meatballand Life Is Going To Screw You If You Don T Screw It John Shaft Is A Private Eye John Shaft Is A Black Man

Made Of Muscle And Ice I got this book as a sort of gag gift and decided to just read it for fun It was uh, something There s a surprising amount of homophobia and antisemitism, than I was expecting anyhow It s also got some, I guess, decent perspective on the black experience in 1971 New York I mean, the book is written by a white fellow named Ernest Tidyman, so I don t know Once the plot finally gets going it becomes a much easier read, but I d probably be better off just watching the movie At the end, the book invited me to read a sneak peek of the sequel, Shaft Among the Jews , but I think I d had quite enough Shaft by that point. Meh Two stars seems a bit harsh, but really, the best I can say is it was okay Tidyman tries way too hard to be tough and edgy, without really being convincing Sure, there is a lot of violence Shaft is willing to be cold bloodedly murderous, which, admittedly, is a bit unusual even for hard boiled detective heroes , and cursing, and racism, and a bit of gratuitous sex this is why you re called Shaft yes, really , but there doesn t seem to be much depth or texture to it Too many scenes just don t seem to carry the plot forward, or offer interesting characterization or social commentary Many passages feel like they re trying to make this into serious stuff rather than just pulp adventure They do not succeed in doing so A year from now, I doubt I ll remember much, if anything, of the plot, despite all the pieces major crime lord hiring Shaft to find his mob abducted daughter, Shaft enlisting a Farrakan style activist and his troops to rescue the girl, much violence and death without much larger purpose or payoff. Ernest Tidyman, Shaft Bantam, 1971 originally posted 12Jun2000 Hollywood pounced on Ernest Tidyman s afro sporting overly brutal private eye, releasing the film of Shaft in the same year as the novel upon which it is based Not surprisingly for a 1971 film, it s toned down John Shaft is a tough talking twenty nine year old tightly wrapped mass of violence waiting to explode He is hired by Harlem narcotics boss Knocks Persons to retrieve Persons kidnapped daughter To that end, Shaft recruits his childhood friend, Black Panther styled activist Ben Buford Buford s militia, Persons money, and Shaft the man behind it all are up against the Mafia, who let the drug trade in Harlem go, assuming a number of smaller operators would pick it up Now that it s centralized, they want it back, and they ve taken Persons nineteen year old daughter as a method of persuasion. Tidyman s writing isn t up to that of the true genre classics, but it s easily on a par with those on the second level of good, hard boiled PI writing, such as Spillane or Thompson And while some of the cultural references are dated it was the seventies in New York, whaddya want , the main storyline and crisp, bloody writing holds up exceptionally well after almost thirty years Take the ride, it s a good one. We read this as the inaugural book for the WTF Bookclub an online collection of misfits who sporadically engage in group reads, of both the serious and the ridiculous. Good lord, was it ever awful Homophobic, misogynistic, racist, anti semetic, and uber violent, John Shaft is a big dick in every sense of the word. and Ernest Tidyman is no better but probably cuts a less dashing figure in a leather jacket I know I m about to blaspheme but BETTER THAN THE MOVIE First, the description of this book calls it the novelisation of the movie. Huh Shaft the novel

came first The movie was adapted from it by its author, an award winning screenplay writer, along with an award winning television writer. Second, this is one HELL of a novel Gripping, profane, violent, and frankly sexual with a bi racial love affair, while still passionately well written Ernest Tidyman foreshadowed the contemporary flood of edgy literary fiction by some forty years That s a whole lot of years, people, especially considering he was writing barely a decade after Humphrey Bogart s Sam Spade got racy with Bridgid O Shaughnessy by kissing her before handing her over to the Death Row cops and only a year or two after anti miscegenation laws were finally declared unconstitutional by the U.S Supreme Court in 1967. Forget the TV show and the hype about how Shaft was doin all the ladies of New York Yes, he had sex But in contrast to the uber explicit porn in much of today s edgy fiction, it s only shocking by 60s standards. Read this novel for the intensely straight forward look at the lives of a cross section of black New Yorkers, for the subtle exploration of racism among those oppressed by racism, and for the sheer cojones of an author throwing out on the table everything he can be pretty sure his mostly white, mostly middle class, mostly racist readership doesn t want to hear anyone say this is what these times look like to black people, this is how we see Malcolm X, Harlem, Uncle Toms, family life, street life, white people, each other Ourselves But most of all read it because it s great fiction The scene in the No Name Bar midway through the novel In which Shaft dupes a couple of mafiosos sent to kill him by pretending to be their stereotype of a black man screwing around behind the back of his fake black wife Classic. Stay away from this book STAY AWAY I thought I d read this book for the camp kitsch irony pop culture factor, but it s not even worth it for that The book is 214 pages long and was so tedious and poorly written that it took me a month and a half to get through First thing the book on which the blaxploitation film classic is based was written by a white guy A white guy named Ernest Tidyman , to be exact, which sounds like a neurotic, OCD addled nebbish whose mother dresses him never mind that he also wrote the script for hit movie The French Connection Shaft still sucks. Maybe he is, because this book reads like fanfic written by an angry, impotent rage filled white guy about what he thinks it must be like to be a black badass who doesn t listen to ANYBODY and who follows nobody s rules but his own Thing is, Mr Tidyman tries too hard he tries too hard to write like he s a hard boiled hardass, AND he tries too hard to throw in unnecessary metaphors that will make him sound erudite, in the know, and some hackneyed version of literary Example He took Shaft s arm and started to walk with him around the corner of the drugstore, down Forty second Street toward Sixth Avenue Two men walking arm in arm as scholars might walk through the Sorbonne Oh, and this nod nod, wink wink tidbit, with regard to a girl named Valerie that Shaft brings home from a bar The name bothered him It felt like a spider crawling across his memory Some village broad named Valerie shot up a fruit cake painter a while back It wasn t this one She was in jail HOW CLEVER YOU ARE, MR TIDYMAN, WITH YOUR OH SO SUBTLE REFERENCE TO VALERIE SOLANAS SHOOTING OF ANDY WARHOL YOU CERTAINLY HAVE YOUR FINGER ON THE

PULSE ALSO, THOSE WACKY WOMEN AND ARTISTS, AMIRITE The sex scenes are exactly what you probably think they are unnecessary to the plot such as it is , overly descriptive and graphic without being at all erotic, and way too long P.S Shaft doesn't respect women shocker, I know Again, I get the feeling that Tidyman has a lot of axes to grind, and he's using Shaft as the tool with which to do it Shaft's a big black guy who went to Nam, now works as a private eye, and doesn't take shit from anyone Of course he hates Jews, cabdrivers, black activists, guineas , faggots , and women I've probably forgotten some groups of people who Shaft hates But with lines like this, who cares He couldn't see down the hallway and he had to follow Caroli, who took off up the stairs quickly, half running, one at a time Like one of those prancing faggots who dance up the stairs in the old musicals on television Two fags walked by, heading toward the men's rooms in the twenty four hour movie grind houses between Seventh and Eighth The silly faggot jumped about three inches out of his bright blue raglan sweater and its powder puff sleeves Shaft will, a few pages later, flirt with this faggot to bait him into a false meeting in Central Park, in hopes that the man will be mugged This for no other reason than that the man had the gall to flirt with him first and look at him with lust while serving him coffee Shaft is an asshole And not only all THIS, but the plot of the book, despite the fact that it's rife with drugs, sex, gangsters, beatings, gunfire, extortion, fire, racial tension, and murder, is ANTICLIMACTIC Shaft finally gets to the location where he's supposed to be to do the thing that his employer has hired him to do, and the book STOPS right in the middle of the thing he's supposed to be doing Then cuts to what appears to be several weeks or even several months afterward, after everything's calmed down and the action's long over Christ, for so much dullness, at least let your fucking book have a PAYOFF, Tidyman I have an extremely strong feeling that the task that Shaft was supposed to be doing the whole time rescuing a big time gangster's daughter was a MacGuffin The book's not about that It's about Shaft, walking around NYC being a big black badass, doing whatever he wants to do and not listening to anybody And Tidyman grinding a political axe or ten The only reason I finished this book was that I was too proud to admit I couldn't get through such a short book Wasn't worth it Save yourself the trouble and skip this one.



SHAFT

Shaft | Ernest Tijman

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The Once and Future King
The Night Circus
The Shadow of the Wind
Till We Have Faces
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