

Case Study

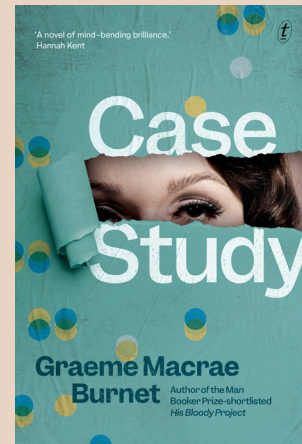


Graeme Macrae Burnet

ISBN 9781922458155

FICTION, TRADE PAPERBACK

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PRAISE FOR *CASE STUDY*

'A thrilling investigation into sanity and identity.'

Alice O'Keefe in the *Bookseller*

'Fun and funny, sly and serious.'

David Szalay

'A novel of mind-bending brilliance.'

Hannah Kent

ABOUT GRAEME MACRAE BURNET

Graeme Macrae Burnet was born and brought up in Kilmarnock and now lives in Glasgow. *Case Study* is his fourth novel. His second book, *His Bloody Project*, was shortlisted for the 2016 Man Booker Prize and won the Saltire Society Fiction Book of the Year Award and the Vrij Netherlands Thriller of the Year, and was shortlisted for the LA Times Book Awards.

ABOUT *CASE STUDY*

When a young woman becomes convinced that her sister's therapist was responsible for her suicide, she assumes an alter ego and presents herself as a client at his clinic, determined to get to the bottom of the charismatic therapist's relationship with her sister. But just who is she convincing with her performance as the deeply troubled Rebecca?

Case Study is a game of cat-and-mouse between therapist and patient, between truth and deception, and between author and reader. It is a novel seething with secrets and teasing questions about the nature of identity itself, an enthralling, playful and layered depiction of 1960s society and the radical psychiatry propounded by R. D. Laing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the protagonist of the novel isn't named? What the effect of this on the way you read her?
2. How do Braithwaite's methods and attitudes align with contemporary thinking and attitudes towards mental health?
3. Do you see Braithwaite as empathetic? Do your sympathies for him change over the course of the novel?
4. 'Perhaps the image she presented to the world was as fictional as the one I had created in my childhood diary.' (p63). Veronica is constructed by her sister and by Braithwaite, but never speaks for herself. Where do you think the truth of her existence lies? Does it matter?
5. What are the ethical implications of the novel? Is Braithwaite responsible for Veronica's death?
6. The diary seems to demonstrate that the protagonist is fully aware of how she might be 'read' by others, so what's to say that the story she has documented in the notebooks is anything other than a fantasy? Do you believe her? What contributes to your feeling?
7. Do you agree with Braithwaite that there are multiple selves that we might inhabit or shed? Which of Braithwaite's selves do you think is the real self?
8. The protagonist tries to reimagine herself as Rebecca Smyth – at first this affectation is to fool Braithwaite, but soon she finds that Rebecca is the more appealing 'self'. Which parts of herself do you think the protagonist is trying to shed as she becomes more and more invested in being Rebecca?
9. In the final scene of the novel, 'Martin' reveals 'himself' as Rebecca. Does this surprise you? What do you think her motivations were in sending the notebooks?