

The Bedevilments

John Gay

Outline

'Right.' She flicked the thin dress straps off her shoulders, then reached behind her back for the zip. 'Let's get started, mister.'

Anthony is barely present in his own life. A failed academic career, a call-centre job he hates, an Alcoholics Anonymous group he resents attending: he's checked out from all of it. He spends the Sydney summer trying to avoid the sun, and lives only for the evenings when he can visit Emma, a sex worker at a local brothel. He can afford an hour with her once a month, maybe every two months. He's got it down to once every two weeks, or ten days.

Then Emma disappears, and there's nowhere left for Anthony to hide.

By turns appalling, funny and touching, *The Bedevilments* is a compelling story about addiction, sex and anonymity.

Selling Points

- A very funny, deeply moving and somewhat provocative novella from John Gay, who is writing under a pseudonym due to the sensitive and personal subject matter
- John Gay's (pseudonym) recent books have been reviewed excellently in publications including The Guardian, The TLS and The Scotsman
- Explores the idea of anonymity across multiple settings: the sex work industry, Alcoholics Anonymous and a call centre
- Explores male loneliness, sex and addiction in a way that is unflinching but hopeful and compassionate
- A unique take on the sex work industry, depicting it from the client's perspective in a way that is nuanced, sensitive, and honest - opening a wider conversation about an important issue
- A short book that packs a big punch
- Striking cover design using work by cult artist, Harry Dodge

Author

'John Gay' is the pseudonym of an author who wishes to remain anonymous.

Praise

'Reading this book is like walking through one of those discreet doors that lead to a low-lit room full of barely clothed strangers who act as if they know you, offer you a drink and invite you to sit on a velvet couch. John Gay knows the brothels of Sydney, the way intimacy and anonymity dance there, the mental rasp of urban life meeting fake-silk sheets and body wash, and how forlorn souls seek company in the closest of conjunctions and tidiest of schedules. He knows the desolation of a young man's modern life in gig-economy fragility, and he knows the sweet reek of alcohol coming off lonely skin. This book brings the sharp observation and hard light of grungelit into a modern fable of alienation, setting beautifully observed exchanges and young-man perplexity in the lonely world of modern Sydney, all the way to a satisfying end. Clever, touching and captivating. I worked in brothels and lived in grungey apartments; I've been there myself, but still I couldn't put *The Bedevilments* down.'

Kate Holden, author of *In My Skin* and *The Winter Road*

'Hardcore, rueful, weirdly romantic; the spirit of Patrick Hamilton presides over this close-up tale of sex addiction in an obsessive world of unforgivable sins and anonymous virtues. A story that refuses to give up on hope.'

David Flusfeder, author of *Something Might Fall* and *John the Pupil*



Author	John Gay
Subject	Modern and contemporary fiction: literary and general
THEMA Code	FBA
Format	198×129mm PB
Illustrations	5 b/w photographs
Extent	160pp
Approx.Text	33,000 words
Rights	World
Pub Date	10th September 2026
Price	£10.99
ISBN	978-1-7384667-8-8
Website	www.ortacpress.com

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