



Stigmata

Bill Reed

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‘You have the stigmata,’ his grip firming when she tries to pull her hand away. ‘So have I. The scar across my eye, you see.’ ----- Take a hermit, innocent, Christ-like, withdrawn, foreign-looking, non-English-speaking; then place him where the innocent are getting raped in an insular community. The result is awful predictability amid cries of ‘no more!’. But the rapes continue until the rapist is caught. Remove a hermit, innocent, Christ-like, withdrawn, foreign-looking, non-English-speaking, to the desolate mainland. Let the child of the rapist follow (why?) to the desolate mainland where the neighbours are a half-witted man and his fighting cock of a sister. Add a city detective on the pry, an abattoir, a sometime nightclub entertainer and her squatter husband. Minds on the edge rubbing against each other. Double, double, toil and trouble. In *Me*, the Old Man Bill Reed demonstrated his skill in portraying inhumanity and its often-insanity. Readers of *Stigmata* will not be disappointed with this follow-up work. ----- Originally a well-known and widely-performed and award-winning playwright, Bill Reed began writing fiction in his late thirties. *Stigmata* was his fourth novel and became the winner of the FAW Australian Natives Award in 1981. To date he has written thirteen novels, including *1001 Lankan Nights*, books 1 and 2. He has worked as a publishing director and journalist in Australia and overseas, including Canada, Britain and the Subcontinent. During that time, he became Publishing Director of two major Australian publishing houses, but now mostly resides in Sri Lanka. ----- ‘.... It’s that interaction of innocence and inhumanity that so chills the blood... like certain Samuel Beckett novels, it could have left the reader feeling suicidal but, in fact, the final effect is one of driving elation’ Jill Neville, review, *Sydney Morning Herald*.

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