



Disorderly Men

Edward Cahill

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Set in the early 1960s, Edward Cahill's intriguing novel *Disorderly Men* concerns the aftermath of a police raid on a Greenwich Village gay bar.

Sophisticated and "gray-flanneled" Roger is a World War II veteran, husband, and father. He spends occasional secretive nights in Manhattan, looking for lovers. Roger dislikes the flamboyant "fairies" at Caesar's bar and prefers virile, discreet types like himself. When Caesar's is raided, Roger fears that his arrest will cause him to lose his executive banking position—or worse: his wife and children.

Julian, a Columbia University professor, is also arrested in the humiliating, abusive raid. Julian's lover, Gus, is an artist who's more at ease with his sexual orientation. Julian, however, tends to hide the fact that he is gay; furthermore, his employment contract has a morals clause to avoid "public contempt."

Danny is from an Irish Catholic family and works at an Uptown supermarket. His brothers mock his fashion choices and lack of a girlfriend; his mother is too timid to defend him. Danny is beaten by the police; his name is then included in the newspaper article "Police Raid Pervert Nest." As a result, Danny is fired from his job. He craves revenge.

These are keen, varied portraits of midcentury gay life. Julian feels sincere affection toward his fiancée, Penelope, but he's relieved that they haven't set a wedding date. Danny's supportive friend Rafael offers humor and café con leche. Danny's other gay friend, Gabriel, is forced into electroshock conversion therapy by his parents. And as the eldest and most closeted of the men, Roger's repressed longing for romantic connection is both poignant and stoic.

Faceted and compelling, Edward Cahill's novel evokes a pre-Stonewall era of subversion, persecution, and growing defiance.

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