

## Underrated Reads

Discovering Literary Gems

### The Painted Gun – Bradley Spinelli

Posted on [March 30, 2017](#) by [J.D. Jung](#)

(Reviewed by JD Jung)



*“I was in it now, there was no getting out. But since Ashley was painting creepy snapshots of my life, I guess I was always in it. The fact that I didn’t know what I was into no longer made any difference.”*

It’s 1997 and former San Francisco journalist, current information broker and heavy alcoholic, David “Itchy” Crane is offered a lucrative case from a former acquaintance, a Southern California private investigator. Even with the emergence of the Internet causing his business to become obsolete, he’s not going to take the case. He doesn’t trust this PI, as he still owes him money for a job years back.

David is asked to find a missing twenty-one year old artist named Ashley (last name and recent addresses unknown). After he initially rejects the case, P.I. sends him one of Ashley’s portraits: a man getting a haircut. The strange thing is that the man in the picture looks exactly like David. OK, that entices him to take the case.

But as he gets deeper into it, David walks into murder scenes as new portraits of him are uncovered. Could he be the cause of these homicides? Things get really weird as these portraits are of him inside his own apartment, doing some mundane as well as some private acts. In any event, his obsessive behavior takes over while his reasons for sticking this dangerous case out become blurred.

We’ve all read about the self-destructive journalist or P.I., but *The Painted Gun* is actually quite different. It’s classic noir with a little technology that turns into an international thriller. Though it’s a dangerous leap mixing both genres, author Bradley Spinelli succeeds. Each of the many characters adds depth to the plot and uncovers a little more about our protagonist. Personally, I wish he would have stayed with the noir-esque tone and kept the story local. However, I think that’s just my preference.

*The Painted Gun* will keep readers hooked at every page. I think you’ll enjoy this one.

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