

BALLANTINE BOOKS

news of

101 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

Chilton 2-9160

August 27, 1956

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BALLANTINE PUBLISHES GENUINE HOAX

In less than a month, I, *LIBERTINE*, by Frederick R. Ewing, has become the most widely recognized hoax in the history of publishing. A full month before publication date, the story of its magnificent deception has been broadcast around the world: radio, newspapers (divergent as *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Puerto Rico World Herald*) have told the story, and what began as a disk jockey's test of "phoniness" has become subject matter this week (August 18) for a *LIFE* editorial.

Your review copy of the paperbound edition of I, *LIBERTINE* has been mailed today under separate cover. I, *LIBERTINE* will be published simultaneously in cloth at \$2.75 and paper at 35¢ on September 13, 1956.

This collaboration of Jean Shepherd, spokesman for the Night People, and Theodore Sturgeon, master craftsman and winner of the International Fantasy and Science Fiction Award, has created a rarity: an astute and witty entertainment.

Lance Captain Courtenay (he has the greatest of difficulties in explaining that Captain is his name, not his rank) operates in 18th century London -- but would be equally at home in Television City or on Madison Avenue. His machinations are marvels to behold; his errors are glorious. It is Lance who, hoping to ingratiate himself with a local squire who has devoted his life to a now nearly completed history of ancient Rome, brings the old gentleman the first volume of a new history by a fellow named Gibbon. And it is Lance who, meaning only to remove a foolish young fellow from his area of highly complex legal operation, sets up Mr. Evelyn Meadows as an amateur alchemist and finds that he has given the world its first Helena Rubenstein.

Handwritten: Bell's
Handwritten: Jean Shepherd

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(Cont'd)

Lance's bible is The Oraculo of Balthazar Gracian, a volume of advice to the worldly invaluable in any era. From Gracian, Lance learns that "The wise do at once what the fool does at last," and as a corollary, "you must learn to put up with fools."

Captain Courtenay is the hero, unquestionably, but he is forced to share the reader's interest with his mentor, Simon Barrowbridge, a formidable barrister; with Elizabeth Chudleigh, the girl in the transparent ball gown who became England's noblest bigamist; with the ever memorable Miss Callow, the instrument of Evelyn Meadow's success, and his partner in the marketing of "Milady Hepzibah Salve: a Hound to the Hairs."

I, LIBERTINE is one of those books in which the reader may find a radio executive who was born 200 years before his time, or a preview of a complacent philosophy that is popular today, or a number of other foibles common to 18th century England and 20th century America. For anyone, it is rich, surprising, moving and sometimes hilarious entertainment; yet it is also a capturing of that elusive character, the "night person" of wondrous ingenuity and unconquerable innocence, whose deft manipulations invariably fail to prevent his success.

The "day people" will find here at least an amusement, at most, a revelation. The "night people" will take from this book the comfort which certain unnameables found in the Kinsey Report: "I am not, after all, alone."