



Hellraiser - Mother Jones: An Historical Novel

By Jerry Ash

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This historical novel is as significant to the present as it is to the past. As a work of fiction, Hellraiser — Mother Jones: An Historical Novel is a more intimate account of the iconoclastic life and times of Mary Harris Jones, who fought for the rights of the working class and against child labor from the Civil War to the Great Depression. When author Jerry Ash set out to write Hellraiser, he intended to simply gather into one book all that was known and unknown of the 65-year history of Mother Jones' career, telling the story in a more intimate fashion. As the story unfolds, the reader is taken back in time to witness and learn the social, political and economic lessons of the dark side of the American Industrial Revolution. "As it turns out," says Ash, "Mother Jones used the novel to retell her story in a way that gives new perspective, not only to the economic inequalities of the past, but as seen today between the super rich and the working poor." A study in contrasts between the goals and objectives of capitalism and democracy, the book is a journey through some of the most dramatic episodes of American history from post Civil War insurrections and riots, to the historic Chicago Fire and the rise of big business and big labor. "Telling the story through Mother Jones required me to get inside her skin, climb inside her body, see through her eyes, think through her mind, feel through her heart." The novel is an action-packed story being told by Mother Jones during the five months she spends in jail in the southern coalfields of West Virginia, where she faces charges of murder before a military court martial. She raises hell for workers in coalfields from there to Colorado, in the cotton mills of the Carolinas to the textile mills of New York, and with Mexican laborers from Arizona to Mexico. Most importantly, the novel brings the story of Mother Jones full circle, comparing the issues of her time to the social, political and economic troubles of the present.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Jerry Ash has written eight books ranging from histories to business management. Hellraiser is his first historic novel intended for the mass market. A coalminer's son, he is a native of Bridgeport, West Virginia, located in the center of the northern coalfields referred to in this book. Among his published books is West Virginia USA, 1976, which was co-authored with AP feature writer Strat Douthat. It was a chapter written by Douthat that introduced Jerry to Mother Jones. Jerry holds a masters degree in journalism from West Virginia University and was an assistant professor of journalism there for seven years. In the 1970s, he was editor and co-publisher of a small town weekly newspaper in Terra Alta, West Virginia, The Preston County News, which won forty state and national awards during those years. At the same time he co-founded the Pioneer Press of West Virginia. In the 1980s he was elected to two terms as a West Virginia State Senator. After leaving the Senate he became vice president of the West Virginia Hospital Association and then president and CEO of the Nevada Hospital Association. After a stint as executive director of Lifegift Organ Donation Centers in Houston, Fort Worth, Lubbock and Amarillo, Texas, in the 1990s, he worked as an independent business consultant and became known worldwide for his expertise in the field of knowledge management. He was editor of Inside Knowledge Magazine in London, England, before retiring in 2010. Although he prides himself on having had an eclectic career, he says his most satisfying accomplishment has been the writing of Hellraiser and he believes it will ultimately be his most lasting legacy.

Users Review

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