Repetition: A Novel

One Of Robbe-Grillets Best

Alain Robbe-Grillets novels -- groundbreaking works combining suspense fiction, high literature, and philosophical exploration -- have made him one of the most influential writers of the last half century. Repetition, the first novel he has written in twenty years, is a triumphant accomplishment, an extraordinary tale of violence, espionage, and tricks of perception. Set in the bombed-out Berlin of 1949 and rendered with an atmosphere reminiscent of Orson Welless The Third Man, Repetition follows Henri Robin, a special agent of the French secret service who arrives in the ruined city, to which he feels linked by a vague but recurrent memory. The real purpose of his mission has not been revealed to him, and nothing is what it seems. There is a shooting, a kidnapping, druggings, encounters with pimps and teenage whores, police interrogations, even torture. As Robin slowly becomes aware that he was in Berlin before -- as a child, with his mother, perhaps looking for his father -- bits and pieces of the Oedipus story resonate through the books elegant labyrinth. Repetition may be the most revealing and triumphant novel the French master has yet written.

My Personal Review:
This is the kind of book that, after a writers death, turns out to be a masterpiece which just happened to go unnoticed, and How is it possible?, Sunday literay supplements will ask, and blah, blah, blah...
Its one of Robbe-Grillets best three books (the others being Jelousy and The Voyeur).
Ill make it short: just read the excerpts available here at Amazon.com. If you like it, there you go. If you dont: read it again.
(Oh, if you find it, buy the hardcover edition. In the paperback one they gave the notes the same font size as the actual text, calling to much attention to them, and weakening the effect - for, you have to know, at some point the notes start contradicting and incriminating the narrator, and claiming more and more space...)

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