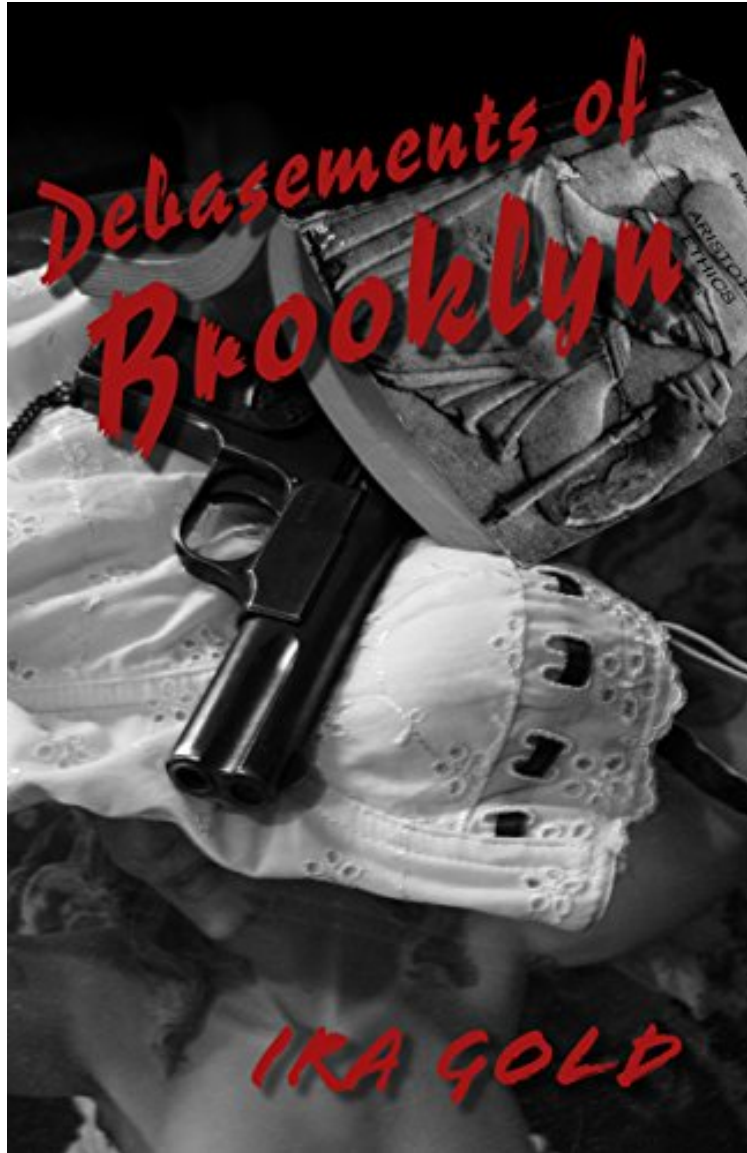


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Debasements of Brooklyn

Ira Gold

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Ira Gold : Debasements of Brooklyn before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Debasements of Brooklyn:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fun and Original!By Jay AreA fun and clever book with original and well developed characters. The story is fast paced, once it gets going (somewhat slow start, but keep reading.) Howie struggles with an intellectual's contempt for the mundane, but lacks a true gangster's lust for violence. That's ok, he has a surprising knack for self preservation, which serves him well!Amidst a low level mob war, a love story

ignites -- is it love or just passion? Meet Ariel, a sprite who bewitches Howie just when he is least available, only to surprise him with her own 50 shades of grey... ahem. *Debasements of Brooklyn* is quirky, fun and literary -- a nice mashup of a sexy mob thriller. Are they good guys or bad guys? Who cares. Fingers crossed for a sequel: *Howie and Ariel On the Lam*, a modern day Nick and Nora but bad guys, so more like Bonnie and Clyde or Whitey Bulger and Catherine Greig... but smart and literary. You get the idea: messy, criminal, but somehow good guys -- fun. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Elevated Mobster meets Twisted Sister By T McI really enjoyed the protagonist in this book and found it an enjoyable and amusing read. I love an erudite mobster!! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Ira Gold's "*Debasements of Brooklyn*" is a fun, fast-flowing By Len Plotkin Ira Gold's "*Debasements of Brooklyn*" is a fun, fast-flowing, often humorous story about Howie, a young, small-time mafioso, whose love of literature makes it increasingly clear to him that he's chosen the wrong profession. Most of us have known Howies in our lives, people with artistic or intellectual inclinations who by chance or circumstance, or because of inertia, find themselves serving gangsters of various sorts, whether of the mafia or the corporate kind. Howie is not just the racketeer who should have been a novelist or a professor of literature; he is also the investment banker who should have been a historian, or he is the corporate lawyer who could have become a classical violinist. Gold has dramatized and give flesh and bones to one of the central existential conflicts that afflicts many people in contemporary society: how to live an authentic and meaningful life. "Everyone loves an oxymoron," muses Howie at one point, "especially one that sums up the main dilemma of life: how do you get what you want without destroying yourself?" There is plenty of action and violence in the book, from murder to masochism. But the most searing savagery that "*Debasements*" describes is not the brutality to bodies but the cruelty to the human spirit that Howie endures, even in moments when he does not fear for his life. This inner violence will be familiar to any reader who has ever found him or herself doing soul-crushing and meaningless work. But for Howie, as for all of us, hope endures. "*Debasements in Brooklyn*" is narrated in the first person, by Howie himself, by a man who, against the odds, has found his path in life and his real calling. "*Debasements of Brooklyn*" is an insightful, entertaining and, ultimately, inspiring story that is very much worth a read.

His father had warned Howie, "You can't ride two horses with one ass." But here he was, living a double life--one racketeering with his crew and the other sitting in cafes reading Penguin classics. To fit in, Howie hides his intellectual interests from his gangster friends, but they still suspect something is not right about him. The real problem is that someone has been bad-mouthing Howie to Vinnie Five-Five, his captain. Howie thinks he could solve all his problems by finding a way to leave Vinnie's crew without anyone thinking he would turn rat. And while he goes about advancing this plan in his deliberate, half-baked way, a war breaks out between the Italians in Sheepshead Bay and the Russians in Brighton Beach. Now, beside his friends, he has enemies who wish him dead. So he must run from the basement apartment he rents from his sister--the one person who truly loves him--into the arms of demure and bookish Ariel, who likes her men rough and her sex rougher. Howie believes it necessary to continue keeping his erudition under wraps lest Ariel lose erotic interest. Will Howie survive the war? Will he survive Ariel's wrath when she finds out she's harboring not a thug but an esthete with PhD level cultural knowledge? Why the hell not? But boy is she mad.

"Howie Fenster, big and mean-looking, is a Mob enforcer who keeps company with guys named Pauli and Scrunchy. Much of his narration has to do with his attempts to stay alive while the Russian and Italian mobsters slaughter one another in a turf war. By chance, he meets and hides out with the lovely, bookish Ariel, who is thrilled by this walk on the wild side. Until she stumbles upon the goon's reading list: Aristotle, Proust, et al. "Who the hell are you?" she screams, disillusioned. A closet intellectual, that's who. A stunningly conceived and executed battle scene almost blends crime-story action with literary introspection, but a feeling of distance remains. This is more of a clever, funny literary exercise than it is a novel about real people, as when, guns on each other, two goons dispute Orwell versus Dostoyevsky. Still, it's good fun for those who enjoy irony and who like to see genre conventions take a beating." -- Booklist "Readers who appreciate well-honed imagery and refreshingly original turns of phrase will find a lot to like." -- Publishers Weekly "In Gold's debut, small-time Brooklyn hood Howard "Windows" Fenster sells weed and collects vigorish for capo Vinnie Five-Five Spoleto, but Howard's passion is the Penguin Classics library he inherited from his mob accountant father... Gold has good fun with amoral mobsters like the psychopathic Irish-Italian called IRA, the gluttonous Frankie Hog, and crazy Pauli Bones. Dialogue seems spot-on, especially if mob guys rely heavily on f-bombs, but the setting's more commentary than descriptive. There's comedy to be had, especially as Howard helps Mrs. Five-Five dispose of a body while contemplating references to Aeschylus's *Oresteia*. Irony too, as Howard mopes through a critique of capitalism versus communism, characterizes mob violence as being 'as meaningless and pointless as... Vietnam and Iraq,' and debates Orwell versus Dostoyevsky with Ivan, the lone Russian mobster who doesn't want to kill him. Fun stuff, this oddball mating of *The Godfather* and *The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight*." -- Kirkus sAbout the Author Ira Gold writes all the time and publishes occasionally.