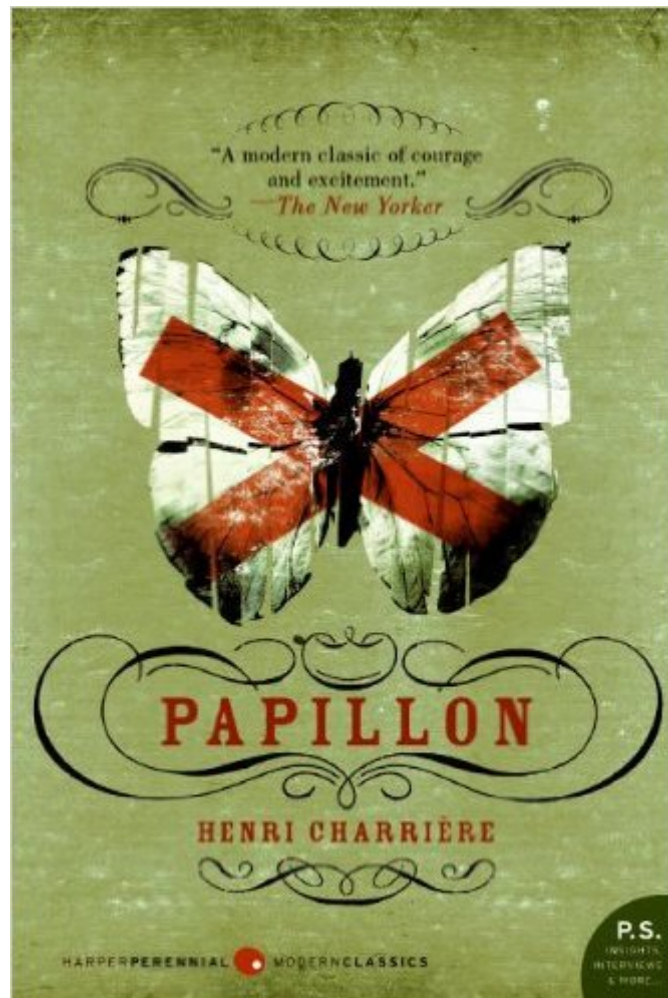


The book was found

Papillon (P.S.)



Synopsis

Henri Charrière, called "Papillon," for the butterfly tattoo on his chest, was convicted in Paris in 1931 of a murder he did not commit. Sentenced to life imprisonment in the penal colony of French Guiana, he became obsessed with one goal: escape. After planning and executing a series of treacherous yet failed attempts over many years, he was eventually sent to the notorious prison, Devil's Island, a place from which no one had ever escaped . . . until Papillon. His flight to freedom remains one of the most incredible feats of human cunning, will, and endurance ever undertaken. Charrière's astonishing autobiography, Papillon, was published in France to instant acclaim in 1968, more than twenty years after his final escape. Since then, it has become a treasured classic -- the gripping, shocking, ultimately uplifting odyssey of an innocent man who would not be defeated.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (235 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

When Henri Charrière finds himself sent to a French prison colony for a crime he did not commit, he makes up his mind to go on a "cavale," literally to beat it and escape the custody of his captors. Like the butterfly (or in French "Papillon") which Charrière has tattooed to his chest, he will live his life in freedom or not at all. When a doctor questions him about his repeated escape attempts, Papillon's reply is matter-of-fact: "I don't belong here - I'm only visiting." "Papillon" takes a while to get started, and Charrière's elusive and terse tone keeps one from feeling too close to the narrator. He tells you he didn't kill the man the police claim he did, but credits himself for not being a stool pigeon by

telling them who did. So he's not exactly Dreyfus here, though he pretends otherwise at times. He mentions a wife and child in the outset almost as afterthoughts, then scarcely refers to them again. No false modesty for this guy - he runs the roost in every clink he is assigned, dispensing wisdom to prisoner and warden alike. No physical challenge is too much for him to overcome, no fellow "mec" too much for him to handle. Let's put it this way: If Charriere is selling bridges, I ain't buying. But if this is more fiction than fact, "Papillon" still makes for one amazing novel. With minimal pretense at craft, Charriere crafts a white-knuckle, plain-spoken suspense tale that finds our hero in every imaginable predicament - and some not at all imaginable - as he makes attempt after attempt to escape the hell on earth that is French Guiana, the three Iles du Salut (literally "Isles of Salvation"), and ultimately Devil's Island.

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