

REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS REVIEWS

ENDURANCE AN AGE OF BEIGE

REVIEW
BY
MCNALLY

OF
KAY
EDITIONS

'THEY'
DICK
2022

Holly Coleman

Imagine 1984 if George Orwell had been goth—enter *They* by Kay Dick, a slim, surreal vision of erasure and control. Originally published in 1977 and promptly buried, it's less about rebellion than survival, mapping the slow suffocation of art and individuality with eerie precision. Half fever dream, half warning shot.

The plot unfolds in a fragmented series of encounters between the unnamed narrator and their dwindling circle of artists, writers, and thinkers. Hovering over them is “They”—a nameless, faceless collective bent on eradicating individuality and creative expression. They burn books, whitewash paintings, and crush dissent with smiles so forced you can practically hear their teeth grinding. The violence is subtle but devastating. It's not the kind of dystopia where cities burn; it's the kind where everything slowly fades into beige.

What makes *They* cut so deep is the way it mirrors modern anxieties. In a world drowning in algorithm-driven mediocrity and outrage-fueled censorship, the machinery of embraced conformity isn't merely speculative—it's here. In turn, the characters' small acts of resistance feel both futile and vital, a palpable tension that echoes long after the last page.



Dick's prose is sparse and elliptical, often leaving you disoriented, but that's part of its power. Messy, brilliant, and just self-aware enough to be dangerous, *They* burrows into your subconscious like a bad dream. The novel doesn't offer an escape; rather it demands resistance—and in times like these, what could be more necessary?