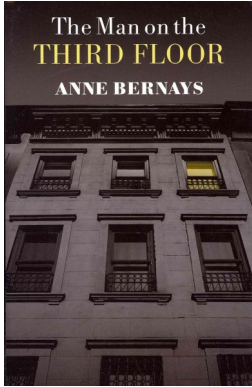


The Man on the Third Floor

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I journeyed back into the 1950s with this novel about a closeted gay editor. It's all here: the strong prejudice against homosexuality, the gender stereotyping, the cold war, the loyalty oaths, friend turning against friend and colleague against colleague. Some accused Communists leap out high-rise windows when their livelihoods are destroyed.

But McCarthyism is just a side issue in this intriguing novel - *The Man on the Third Floor* centers on a very successful editor who has a secret domestic life. When he and his wife, Phyllis, and their two young children move back to New York after the World War II years in Washington, Phyllis decides they can afford a house of their own. They find a nice brownstone with three floors, the top of which was originally servant quarters. But Phyllis is a modern woman, college-educated who worked in radio and journalism until she had children, and she's not keen on having servants live with them.

But one day, a very handsome man comes to measure Walter's office for new carpeting. Although Walter has had only one sexual experience with another male in his life--he was raped at camp as a teenager--he immediately finds himself inviting Barry, the carpet man, to a bar. Almost immediately, he offers him a job as a driver despite the fact the family owns no car, and soon gives him a room on their third floor. For some reason, Phyllis agrees to both ideas. **Read more »**

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