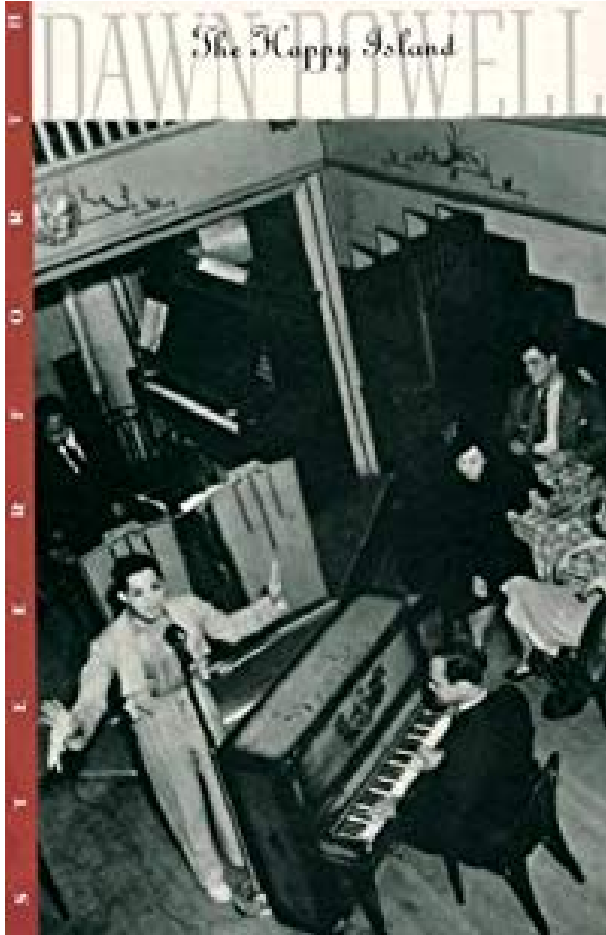


The Happy Island



Pages:	275
Genre:	Fiction
Language	English
Author:	Dawn Powell
ISBN10:	1883642795
Goodreads Rating:	3.89
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IN THIS ACIDIC, provocative, and—for its time—daring novel, Dawn Powell set out to write the story of "the bachelors of New York in the Satyricon style." The time is the late 1930s, and the young taciturn playwright, Jefferson Abbott, arrives in New York by bus from Silver City, Ohio and looks up his childhood sweetheart, Prudence Bly, who has since become a celebrated nightclub singer. When his play flops, the upright and uptight Abbott is undaunted, eventually returning to Ohio and persuading Prudence to join him there to take up a life of drudgery as mate to this always self-serious artist. Prudence, need to say, finally escapes back to the city and her circle of friends, the disparate characters who give the book its true texture and, wrote one reviewer at the time, "are involved in such a series of promiscuities, adulteries, double-crossings, neo-perversions and Krafft-Ebbing exercises as would make the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah seem like mere suburbs of li'l old New York." The Happy Island has had its admirers over the years (Gore Vidal called this one of his favorite Powell novels), and to be found here are surely some of Powell's most biting one-liners. But the book may not be for every taste, and the succinct notice that appeared in The New Yorker upon first publication might stand as a warning to some readers: "Night-club life of New York.

Plenty of heavy drinking, perfumed love affairs, and in general the doings of a pretty worth and ornery lot of people. Miss Powell serves it up with a dash of wit and for good measure throws in a couple of boys named

Bert and Willy, who nearly steal the show from the main characters."