

## Wilderness House Literary Review 7/4

**An Affair of Concoctions**  
**Eamon Loingsigh**  
**Shanachie 51 Press**  
**\$10.99 on Amazon**

*Review by Rene Schwiesow*

If you're expecting the usual trite template for a work of fiction, you will not find it in this first novel by Eamon Loingsigh. The work is short, a novella, and offers readers a refreshing change of pace from the tired standard fare. "An Affair of Concoctions" is intriguing. According to Loingsigh in a 2009 interview, ". . . I knew that the story couldn't be told in a traditional format. At least not to the effect I was looking for. It needed to be sparse, obscure and it needed to say a lot with very little words. It needed to be written in a way that would leave a lot to the imagination."

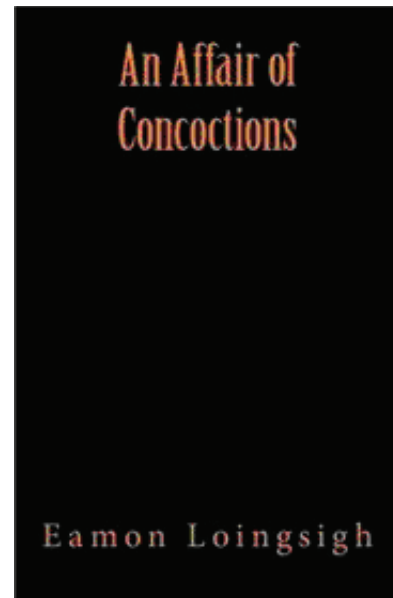
And the work certainly does say a lot with few words.

An Affair of Concoctions bears the fingerprints of many authors, perhaps most poignantly the existentialists. In "The Stranger," Albert Camus writes, "'I looked up at the mass of signs and stars in the night sky and laid myself open for the first time to the benign indifference of the world.'" Loingsigh's protagonist, Jonathan Piltdown, realizes the world's indifference too: "Wasn't it Camus," Loingsigh writes, "who said the horror of indifference is that the universe doesn't care about our struggles?"

Two pages later, Piltdown's daughter dies.

The name of Loingsigh's male protagonist is no coincidence. Piltdown was the name of a hoax perpetuated from bone fragments declared to be the remains of an early human. It was 40 years before the forgery was exposed. Piltdown, a seemingly typical corporate suit, may also be other than he appears. However the reader may interpret Loingsigh's characters and story, it is evident that Piltdown and the female protagonist, Maison, suffer from existential angst. Throughout the book they experience a pervading spiritual fear and a struggle to get back to and be more responsible to God.

The relationship between Piltdown and Maison is the heart of the story. If you are at all interested in the psychology of relationship, the pair will present you with plenty fodder for examination. An online connection leads Piltdown to attempt a real-world tete a tete, which becomes more a game of cat and mouse than functional meeting. From this reviewer's perspective, curiosity ensnares you page by page as Piltdown's motives, psyche and emotional stability are questioned. Exactly what is his attachment to the idea of Maison? Throughout the book we are left to wonder whether the relationship is really as it appears. The subjectivity inherent in "An Affair of Concoctions" will give book club members the opportunity for lively discussion.



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If you swoon to predictable series like "Twilight," "An Affair of Concoctions" may not be the book for you. But if you prefer not to be spoon fed plot and enjoy the avante garde in a story; if you are looking for attention to craft and detail; if you long for something that will feed your desire to delve into the psyche of the characters and, perhaps, even make a connection to this postmodern world, then Loingsigh's "An Affair of Concoctions" is definitely the book for you.

Loingsigh, who at one time was called "New York's shanachie," is an author to watch. Though he no longer appears frequently on New York's literary circuit, he remains a master at telling a tale. Give yourself an early holiday gift, drop by Amazon and order your copy of "An Affair of Concoctions." Loingsigh's story weaves an amazing, intricate web. Become entangled.

Rene Schwiesow is co-host of the popular South Shore Poetry venue, "The Art of Words." She writes a column for the Plymouth Center for the Arts in The Old Colony Memorial and when she is not writing can be found reading, cooking, or searching for amazing shoes.