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Little Man, What Now?



Synopsis

This is the book that led to Hans Fallada's downfall with the Nazis. The story of a young couple struggling to survive the German economic collapse was a worldwide sensation and was made into an acclaimed Hollywood movie produced by Jews, leading Hitler to ban Fallada's work from being translated. Nonetheless, it remains, as The Times Literary Supplement notes, "the novel of a time in which public and private merged even for those who wanted to stay at home and mind their own business."****This is a Hybrid Book. Melville House's HybridBooks combine print and digital media into an enhanced reading experience by including with each title additional curated material called Illuminations – maps, photographs, illustrations, and further writing about the author and the book. The Melville House Illuminations are free with the purchase of any title in the HybridBook series, no matter the format. Purchasers of the print version can obtain the Illuminations for a given title simply by scanning the QR code found in the back of each book, or by following the url also given in the back of the print book, then downloading the Illumination in whatever format works best for you. Purchasers of the digital version receive the appropriate Illuminations automatically as part of the ebook edition.

Book Information

Paperback: 345 pages

Publisher: Melville House; 6.9.2009 edition (March 3, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1933633646

ISBN-13: 978-1933633640

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars – See all reviews (44 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #157,621 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #135 in Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > German #203 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Jewish #331 in Books > Romance > Historical > 20th Century

Customer Reviews

I found this book thoroughly engrossing. After what can seem to be a slow start, the plot thickens beautifully and the narrative becomes more and more filled with pathos. I found myself being slowly drawn into the world of these characters to the extent that I wound up constantly fretting over their fate. Emma and Johannes Pinneberg are newlyweds trying to live a decent life in the straitened

circumstances of Weimar Germany. Emma has recently become pregnant, and so a heavy burden of responsibility has fallen upon the shoulders of her young husband. But Johannes is in difficulties: it's virtually impossible for him to find work or decent lodgings, and so he shuffles between a demeaning job - from which he hangs by a thread - and a squalid domestic setting, which his wife (a strong figure) is always trying to make the best of. Three scenes linger in the memory. At one point, the gravid and exhausted Emma has to wander all over Berlin looking for an affordable apartment. But because she is expecting, she is an unwelcome prospect for any landlord, and so she staggers from one disappointment to the next like an Antarctic explorer desperately seeking a depot. As a picture of hostile urban desolation, the rendering is quite powerful. Secondly, there is Johannes' inner thoughts as he walks through the Tiergarten and sees the wretchedness of the unemployed about him: 'Pinneberg had the feeling, despite the fact that he was about to become a wage-earner again, that he was much closer to those non-earners than to people who earned a great deal. He was one of them, any day he could find himself standing here among them, and there was nothing he could do about it. He had no protection. He was one of millions.'

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