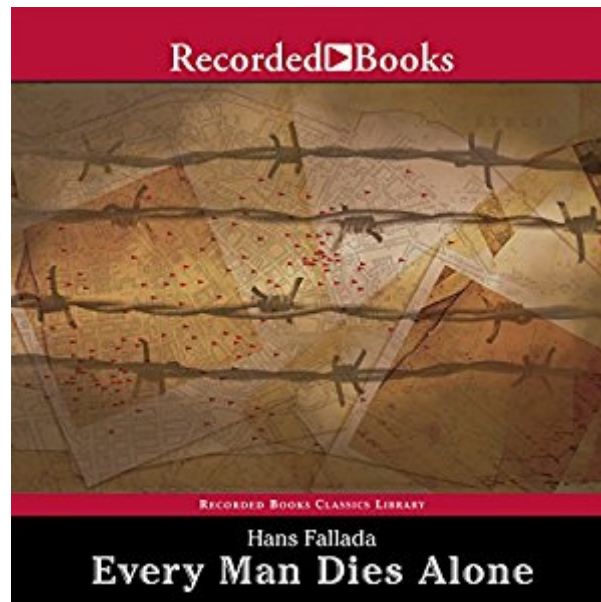




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Every Man Dies Alone



Synopsis

This never-before-translated masterpiece—by a heroic best-selling writer who saw his life crumble when he wouldn't join the Nazi Party—is based on a true story. It presents a richly detailed portrait of life in Berlin under the Nazis and tells the sweeping saga of one working-class couple who decides to take a stand when their only son is killed at the front. With nothing but their grief and each other against the awesome power of the Reich, they launch a simple, clandestine resistance campaign that soon has an enraged Gestapo on their trail, and a world of terrified neighbors and cynical snitches ready to turn them in. In the end, it's more than an edge-of-your-seat thriller, more than a moving romance, even more than literature of the highest order—it's a deeply stirring story of two people standing up for what's right, and for each other. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A must-read. Fallada lived during wartime Nazi Germany. I never knew it was considered a privilege to become a member of the party. He wasn't, and suffered for it. There are moments of hilarity. The characters are well drawn. He describes one man, a minor gestapo agent, as rat-like, then goes on to say things like 'the rat's nose quivered. He smelled drink, and cigarettes, and pocketed several packets of schnapps-soaked cigarettes (from a drunk he attempts to terrorize). The rat gets his come-uppence when neighbors catch him sneaking out of the man's apartment with a suitcase full of stolen goods (alas, much of it linens 'confiscated' by the drunk's horrible son, a Hitler Youth

member who has gone off to Napola(?) school from the apartment of an old Jewish woman who threw herself to death out of her window rather than 'disappear' as her beloved husband had done.

I can't remember having read anything more compelling in my life. This is the perfect novel. The plot weaves the experiences of a variety of characters to provide a disturbingly accurate depiction of life in a totalitarian state. The two primary characters, Otto and Anna Quangel, receive a letter informing them that their son, a soldier in the German Wehrmacht, has been killed in the invasion of France. The Quangels later decide to engage in a secret plan to inform Germans about the reality of Nazism—leaving anonymous messages on postcards in places throughout Berlin—a decision that sets off a series of events and an intense manhunt that demonstrates what life was really like in the Third Reich. The characters include neighbors like a distraught Jewish woman, a retired prosecutor, a family of hard-core Nazis, a small time criminal informer and his sometime accomplice. Others range from a somewhat sympathetic Gestapo investigator, a prison chaplain based on the Tegel prison pastor Harald Poelchau and a Nazi judge, Feisler, based on the notorious Roland Freisler. Hans Fallada (pseudonym of Rudolf Ditzen) was a troubled writer who remained in Germany during the Third Reich—a decision that was condemned by Thomas Mann. But his story is so believable because only one who lived through the day-to-day reality of Nazi Germany could have described the incongruities and gray areas that everyone experienced. The moral of the story is that resistance, whatever its form, preserves that dignity and worth of humanity in an inhuman world. Fallada's story is loosely based on a real-life couple. He wrote the book in less than four weeks in November 1946. He died as a result of various addictions on February 5, 1947. This edition, which restored a number of edits from the original published edition, came out 60 years later. Although we Americans are prone to hyperbole and love to rank everything, I won't write that it was best book I've ever read. But I do have a hard time naming any that are its equal. Five stars don't seem adequate for this truly majestic, humanistic novel.

The most remarkable book ever written about life in the Third Reich. Not only does it transport the reader into that pit of inconceivable oppression, but it celebrates the courage of "average" people to put their life on the line to affirm their disgust, even in very small and ultimately futile ways. You can read all the good historical works about nazism and watch every documentary but will not begin to comprehend the sickness of the regime until reading Every Man Dies Alone.

Gripping and well-written considering that it was penned by a war-ravaged author in just 24 days! Fallada wrote the book following a stint in a Nazi insane asylum for drug and alcohol abuse and just before his death in 1947. The narrative is loosely based on a true story and tells the story of a group of neighbors living in Berlin during WWII. After losing a son in the war, the main characters, Otto and Anna Quangel, begin a quiet rebellion by leaving handwritten postcards with anti-Nazi messages throughout the city. They are pursued by Gestapo Investigator for more than two years. The stories of the neighbors, who include an older Jewish woman, a retired judge, a pro-Nazi family, a postal woman, and a slime ball hustler and his promiscuous wife, are woven together to provide a sense of working-class life in Berlin under the Nazi regime. The author's poignant depiction of the constant fear, distrust, and intimidation among ordinary German citizens (not just those who were being overtly persecuted) put me on edge and served as a stark reminder of how terrible life in Berlin was less than a century ago. This book is focus on everyday people doing everyday things trying to survive in whatever way they can.

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