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A Day Of Pleasure: Stories Of A Boy Growing Up In Warsaw



Synopsis

An ALA Notable Book. A Day of Pleasure is the winner of the 1970 National Book Award for Children's Books.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a collection of 19 episodes from Singer's boyhood life on Krochmalna Street in Warsaw.

"Singer has written an extraordinary book that will give many days of pleasure to adults as well as children," PW stated. "These are sensitive, youthful and observant portraits of what Jewish life was like in Poland." Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc.

At a time when in children's literature the power of the imagination is frequently lost sight of or diluted, it is fortunate that we can honor a great storyteller. Mr. Singer has created out of remembered fragments of his own childhood a place instantly familiar where life is not neat and orderly, where the adventures of a boy throw into sharp and recognizable focus those resistant elements of the ever-troubled human condition. From the judges' citation, National Book Award for Children's Literature "Singer's memories of his youth in Poland make a powerful, brilliant children's book. The author lays out a panorama of Jewish life in the city-- the rabbis in black velvet and gabardine, the shopkeepers, the street urchins and schoolboys, the poverty, the confusion, the excitement of the prewar time. But even more, the author reveals himself; and the torments and mysteries that plagued him as a child will make his stories fascinating to other children....Reflecting a bygone world, the photographs add a further note of realism and power. The Horn Book

19 beautifully told anecdotes and remembrances of a childhood in the Jewish districts of Warsaw, of a young boy trying to make sense of the magical world around him against the background of the fast changing World of the twentieth century, where a world war, new realisms- political social and scientific- are sweeping away the old. And soon to come is the greatest horror of all that will end this world of Bashevis Singers childhood. 'A Day of Pleasure' won a national childrens book award, but it is a book for all ages to enjoy and gain the love of learning and literature that Bashevis Singer inspires. Beyond the religious culture and rites that differentiate people there is a universal rite of passage that all people go through growing up in a big strange world that Bashevis Singer captures perfectly. The book also has photographs taken by Roman Vishnia of the Jewish community in Warsaw between 1930-39 that adds flavour to the world Bashevis Singer writes of and reminds of a World thats gone. Easily read (in a day of pleasure!) this is hugely enjoyable whether its the first Bashevis Singer you read or-like me-one after many others. I would recommend this to anyone who loves great literature.Excellent.

This book along with "Stories and more stories from my fathers court" form the basis of understanding Singers orthodox childhood and the trauma of his all to human conflict between doubt and belief.

A slow read, but a fascinating look into the life of a young Jewish boy.

This was a fun and engaging book. I was looking for more of a reason why he became a writer, but it was good and informative about the times while he was growing up.Interesting.

Excellent book.

best read!!

This is one of the most beautiful autobiographical works I have ever read. Singer tells of his Polish childhood in such a simple and yet moving yet. This book is an example of what a great writer can do even using a simple straightforward narrative - technique and quite uncomplicated language. The opening story tells of a child filled with wonder and question, whose curiosity knows no rest. It sets the tone for the whole book. The tone is a kind of wonder at and hunger for life. There is

innocence, curiosity and a deep feeling for people and for the world. One of the most moving chapters is the one on Asher the Milkman, a simple pious man who saved the Singer family when their house was on fire, and they were asleep. This Asher is described in a such a loving way, a strong person, a modest person, a learned person and one not without sorrows and family tragedies. This is Singer's concluding paragraph of this story. "After we left Warsaw (during the First World War), we continued to hear news of him from time to time. One son died, a daughter fell in love with a young man of low origins and Asher was deeply grieved. I do not know whether he lived to see the Nazi occupation of Warsaw. He probably died before that. But such Jews as he were dragged off to the death camps. May these memoirs serve as a monument to him and his like, who lived in sanctity and died as martyrs." Singer tells of his love of storytelling, and in doing so he also tells of the friends of his childhood who shared this passion with him. One Shosha is the subject of the last story in the collection which tells of his making a visit to his old neighborhood in Krochmalna Street and meeting there a seeming duplicate of the Shosha he knew. It is her daughter. Singer also tells a great deal about his childhood, the conflict between his dream-dreaming father and his rational mother the daughter of the Rebbe of Bilgoray. He tells of his older brother Israel Joshua Singer who essentially inspired and encouraged his own writing. He tells of his being filled with questions and his meeting with the work of Spinoza which seemed to answer so many questions at the time. This review cannot begin to do justice to this work. It does not give its real feeling. This is a book which makes the reader love life more and want to live more. The spirit of Singer and of the child whose story he tells is of a person so hungry for life, so appreciative of what he sees and knows of the world. It is a work created in a tone of wonder. What a masterpiece.

In his inimitable style, Singer wrote a series of short stories about growing up in Warsaw before, during and just after World War I. Perhaps they were aimed at younger readers, perhaps not. They don't deal with much mystery, love, sex, or death, but instead with daily life, poverty, Jewish and Polish characters around him, and with childhood explorations. They are as smooth and effortless as the rest of his work, wonderful evocations of a time gone by, and of the Hasidic culture that has disappeared from Europe and has been transformed in America and Israel. You meet rabbis, washerwomen, schoolboys, and goose dealers. The divide between those who wanted to stick to tradition and those who wanted to modernize had already opened. Singer's father belonged to the former, his older brother to the latter. The great political changes that swept Poland in those years are seen from a child's point of view, a child who moved from the country to 10 Krochmalna Street in Warsaw, and then ultimately to Austria-Hungary to avoid hunger during WW I. You will appreciate

the many photographs of Polish Jewish life taken by Roman Vishniac in the 1930s, before the Holocaust swept the world of my ancestors away forever.

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