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L'Elegance Du Herisson CD (French Edition)



Synopsis

Je m'appelle Renée, j'ai cinquante-quatre ans et je suis la concierge du 7 rue de Grenelle, un immeuble bourgeois. Je suis veuve, petite, laide, grassouillette, j'ai des oignons aux pieds et, en croire certains matins auto-incommodants, une haleine de mammoth. Mais surtout, je suis si conforme à l'image que l'on se fait des concierges qu'il ne viendrait à l'idée de personne que je suis plus lettrée que tous ces riches suffisants. Je m'appelle Paloma, j'ai douze ans, j'habite au 7 rue de Grenelle dans un appartement de riches. Mais depuis très longtemps, je sais que la destination finale, c'est le bocal poissons, la vacuité et l'ineptie de l'existence adulte. Comment est-ce que je le sais? Il se trouve que je suis très intelligente.

Exceptionnellement intelligente, même. C'est pour ça que j'ai pris ma décision : la fin de cette année scolaire, le jour de mes treize ans, je me suiciderai. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an English review of a book in French. (There is an English translation (The Elegance of the Hedgehog). (Also a movie in Netflix) Written by a Philo Prof. In France they don't separate philosophy and literature. They are one, whereas as we make philosophy a technical discipline like math. So this interesting blend of philosophy and human characters is very interesting. The French are good at literature we must say. The two intertwining characters are a young upper class girl and the janitor of the upscale building she lives in. The little girl is super smart and quickly sees through the superficialities of her mother and father and discovers the autodidact old lady janitor who is

intelligent and perceptive. The girl had planned to kill herself as life was so meaningless. But through her interaction with the janitor she discovers reasons to live. "Si la vie vaut la peine d'Être vécue." Is life worth living? The book explores this primal philosophic question not in a cold philosophic way as the English would have it but in a humanized philosophy.

Exceptional book. It took me a little while to get into the rhythm of it but then it soared. Not in any flashy way but went deep right into my heart. The concierge-first I had trouble to accept the fact that she is so refined and well read being what she did for a living.. One can say it was my prejudice. Paloma of course for all her intelligence is a typical teenager to start with but soon after we see that her awful and affluent family really has nothing to offer for her spiritual nourishment what she really craves. I could not decide first whether it was a polemic against the shallow rich and the "noble" poor but I think this is beside the point. These people are individuals in all their complexity. The end is both tragic and uplifting. This book made me think real hard about true values. All the other criticism I read (repetitive, Renee is perfect etc) for me is unimportant. One of the finest books I've read lately. It will stay with me for a long time. Eva Foreman

I bought this to read in parallel with the English version, but the novel turned out to be more "philosophical" and conceptual than I'd expected, so I didn't attempt the original French. For native readers in either language, I'd recommend it as a whimsical and thoughtful book -- not much action but some interesting ideas and two characters that really stick with you.

Well written but too analytic and too wordy at times. Not easy reading. A few members of the reading had to buy the English translation ! I would not recommend it for readers who are not fluent in French. Too much of a casse-tete. Sometimes entertaining though but at the same a study of human behavior and class conflicts.

I enjoyed this book greatly despite my rusty French. It is a funny thought-provoking character study of two women. An elderly intellectual concierge and a highly intelligent young girl reside downstairs and upstairs in the same building but in separate chapters of the book. They both struggle with the stereotypes that govern their lives and their own expectations of the life they were given. They caused me to giggle, shake my head and snort but also made me ponder the twists and turns in people's reactions to life. A friend says the English translation is also excellent.

I started out really enjoying this book, but became more and more disheartened as the story continued. This is a highly repetitive tale where every page serves only to explain how perfect the concierge is. She loves tea! She reads! She's socially awkward! Repeated again and again and again. The remainder of the characters are thinly sketched caricatures. Then towards the end of the novel a component of Asian mysticism is introduced, where a Japanese gentleman is held to be perfect and beyond reproach, solely because he is Asian. Perhaps this speaks to a basic racism that is uniquely French, but I found it very hard to swallow. Finished the novel but would not recommend.

Being French, I wanted to read it. It was so very appealing to me because I understood the cultural background. Some friends have bought it (in English) and I helped them with setting it up the values of the people involved so they could truly understand why the book is clever, interesting, a reality few realize by just " going to Paris " !Odette ~

My French book club read this. Made me think, laugh and cry hard. I purchased the Netflix film in French with English subtitles after reading it. Good job but not as great as the book.

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