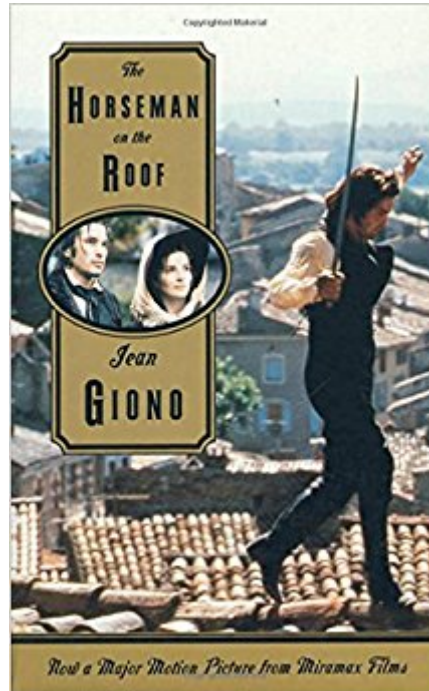




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The Horseman On The Roof



Synopsis

Perhaps no other of his novels better reveals Giono's perfect balance between lyricism and narrative, description and characterization, the epic and the particular, than *The Horseman on the Roof*. This novel, which Giono began writing in 1934 and which was published in 1951, expanded and solidified his reputation as one of Europe's most important writers. This is a novel of adventure, a roman courtois, that tells the story of Angelo, a nobleman who has been forced to leave Italy because of a duel, and is returning to his homeland by way of Provence. But that region is in the grip of a cholera epidemic, travelers are being imprisoned behind barricades, and exposure to the disease is almost certain. Angelo's escapades, adventures, and heroic self-sacrifice in this hot, hallucinatory landscape, among corpses, criminals and rioting townspeople, share this epic tale.

Book Information

Paperback: 426 pages

Publisher: North Point Press; Reissue edition (January 1, 1982)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 086547060X

ISBN-13: 978-0865470606

Product Dimensions: 5 x 1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 14 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #548,775 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #168 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Short Stories & Anthologies > Short Stories](#) #7146 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories & Anthologies > Short Stories](#)

Customer Reviews

Angelo is an young Italian nobleman and soldier whose hot-headedness has forced him into a desperate exile in France. While making his way slowly back to Italy, he witnesses the intense ravages of a cholera epidemic in Provence, and his natural romanticism, heroism, and thirst for adventure take over and change the course of his travels. Jean Giono, known as a 20th-century master of French letters, also wrote the lyrical *The Man Who Planted Trees*.

"One of the greatest writers of our generations." —Andre Malraux
"In Giono's work what every sensitive, full-blooded individual ought to be able to recognize at one is 'the song of the world.'" —Henry Miller
"Jean Giono is one of the giants of

modern French letters. He is the poet of the French countryside and of the French peasant, of man and nature, and the relation of man to nature. His books stand apart; there is nothing else in all French literature quite like them. "Giono has stridden forward with a giant's step. He reveals himself as one of the most important novelists in Europe today."

The Living Age

The Times Literary Supplement

This book is about death or, rather, life in death. Never did the lines from the English Book of Common Prayer, "In the midst of life, we are in death." reverberate so strongly for me as in the reading of this novel. Everywhere our Romantic (in the true sense of the word) Angelo meanders throughout this meandering book people drop dead of the Cholera. Families toss their loved ones out the window to be picked up on the streets. Angelo is chatting with a fellow one minute and the next the fellow begins vomiting, develops the tell-tale signs of cyanosis and - after a few writhings and contortions - expires. Only Angelo himself seems immune----because, well, his name is Angelo. The best parts of the book are the hallucinatory landscapes through which Angelo passes after he crosses a certain border in his own inner landscape: "When the boundaries between the real and unreal disappear and one can pass freely from one side to the other, one's first feeling, unexpectedly, is that the prison has contracted." The prison of the world, of course. Here is a brief, random example that Giono seems to be able to conjure out of nowhere in the midst of a pleasant walk through the countryside: "The glints of reddened light stretched out until they were like those strands of pale hair that certain spiders hang on the wind, and before disappearing, they wrapped themselves one last time around the naked branches of the trees from which, thread by thread and cautiously, they were picked off by the still-burning shadows. The west was sighing with regret." The novel works best as a sort of allegory - I was reminded several times of Pilgrim's Progress - in which the short time we have on this Earth is dreadfully accentuated and in which Angelo stalks through an almost medieval landscape of representative characters. My only problem with the book is that, in the 15 years that it took Giono to write it, he seems to have lost track of certain narrative threads. This gives the book a stylistically disjointed feel. Thus, only four stars. But, still, highly recommended. The book casts a cold eye on human life, human values, human affections in this world where, as Angelo puts it to himself: "Only the cholera is genuine."

I read this book because I saw the movie. Maybe something went missing in the translation. It is a beautiful story and I am completely disappointed. I was so bored with this book. I kept hoping the characters would come to life and I would care whether they lived or died. Nope.

I really enjoyed this book. The main character is very amusing and although people are dropping dead right and left somehow you leave the book with a good feeling about humanity in general. Very quirky and well written!

This is an exciting adventure that reminds me a bit of the historical novels of Alexandre Dumas , and Walter Scott. It deserves to be as highly regarded as; Ivanhoe, The Three Musketeers, and Queen Margot. Jean Giono is also the author of one of the best short stories of the 20th Century, The Man Who Planted Trees.

great

Very well written, entertaining

No romance, no sex, and unattractive main character. It is all about him, yet when he meets two special women there is no romance. The book's only redeeming feature is the historical account of a cholera epidemic.

I don't know if I'm the only one thinking like this, but.....let's start by saying I've read plenty of novels, from Dostoyevski to Stendhal, from Boris Vian to Umberto Eco, writers from present, from past, classic literature, contemporary literature, and for me this is one of the most memorable novels I've ever read. When I started reading, I didn't expect too much from it, but I was deeply impressed... The story is a thriller, the description breathtaking, detailing superb, everything is so vividly narrated...that once you start reading, you just can't stop! Angelo's character is an icon, it is so similar to a Stendhal's character in a story called San Francesco A Ripa....definitively, a book everyone liking literature must read!

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