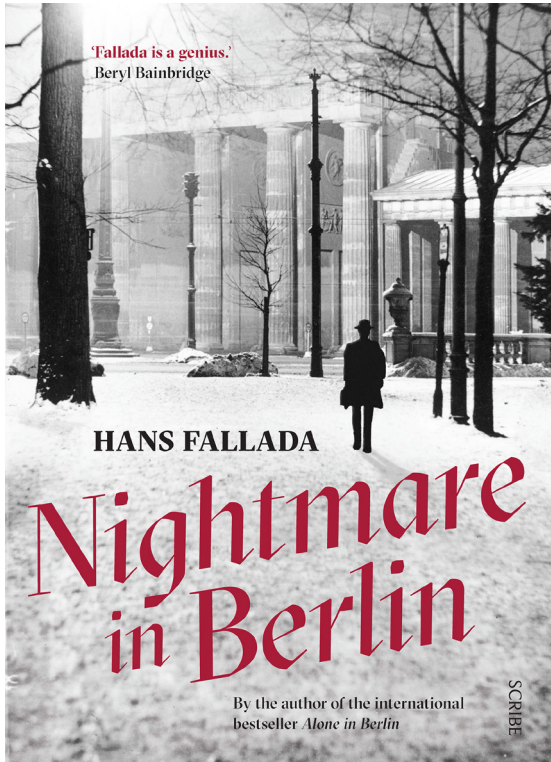


Nightmare in Berlin

HANS FALLADA



BOOK DETAILS

Format: Paperback
ISBN: 9781925321197
RRP: \$29.99



AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Hans Fallada (1893-1947) was the pen name of German author Rudolf Ditzen, whose books were international bestsellers on a par with those of his countrymen Thomas Mann & Hermann Hesse. His last two novels, *The Nightmare* and *Alone in Berlin*, were published posthumously.

Available for the first time in English, here is an unforgettable portrayal by a master novelist of the physical and psychological devastation wrought in the homeland by Hitler's war.

Late April, 1945. The war is over, yet Dr Doll, a loner and 'moderate pessimist', lives in constant fear. By night, he is haunted by nightmarish images of the bombsite in which he is trapped — he, and the rest of Germany. More than anything, he wishes to vanquish the demon of collective guilt, but he is unable to right any wrongs, especially in his position as mayor of a small town in north-east Germany that has been occupied by the Red Army.

Dr Doll flees for Berlin, where he finds escape in a morphine addiction: each dose is a 'small death'. He tries to make his way in the chaos of a city torn apart by war, accompanied by his young wife, who shares his addiction. Fighting to save two lives, he tentatively begins to believe in a better future.

Written with Fallada's distinctive power and vividness, *Nightmare in Berlin* captures the demoralised and desperate atmosphere of post-war Germany in a way that has never been matched or surpassed.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. *Nightmare in Berlin* has been called a 'moral thriller'. Which moral themes and conflicts did you feel were most powerful in the book?
2. There is a fairytale character to passages in the book, evoking the feeling of 'Once upon a time ...' Do you think this is deliberate?

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REVIEWS

‘A densely packed chronicle that is of both literary and historical value ... That this is furthermore a gripping and brilliantly written work goes without saying.’

BERLINER ZEITUNG

‘In this splendid novel, Fallada portrays the despondency and apathy of the German people in this strange period. The last months of the war are described with masterly skill, as well as the subsequent capitulation, the arrival of the Russian troops, the way in which the middle class, the ‘bourgeoisie’ must adapt to this new environment, and the moral decline of the population.’

ZWIEBELFISCH

‘*Nightmare in Berlin* is the symbol for everything that happened after the end of the war.’ **DER TAGESSPIEGEL**

‘It’s easy to see why Graham Greene — no small master of moral thrillers himself — so admired this writer.’ **CAMERON WOODHEAD, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**

3. Fallada’s depiction of post-war Germany is very autobiographical. What was your sense of the period and the feelings of the German people at the time?
4. Do you think Doll was paranoid? Discuss his character development throughout the book.
5. In Chapter 1 it is said of Doll, ‘If he died there in the wet mud, too bad for him — but only for him! Not a heart in the world would grow heavier on his account.’ Do you think this is true? And how does this change by the end of the book?
6. Doll feels shame, rage, helplessness, and despair. Discuss Fallada’s creation of the Doll character as a reflection of the German nation at the time the book is set.
7. Is the end of the book hopeful? How does this contrast with the rest of Doll’s story?



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