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B. Traven

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1969 #File Name: B00GWU8UQS | File size: 49.Mb

B. Traven : The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (Modern Library no. 389) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Treasure of the Sierra Madre (Modern Library no. 389):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. just as relevant todayBy Roy Armstrong IIThe classic movie follows the plot of this impressive novel by mysterious author B. Traven closely. Two Americans seeking work and money in Mexico in the 30s hook up with an old gold prospector and go looking for the lost gold mine in the Sierra Madre mountains. Dobbs, Curtin, and the old prospector Howard find the gold, but it leads to trouble, mistrust, and, finally, loss and death. The overriding theme of the novel is that greed--in this case for gold--leads not to happiness but rather to mistrust and finally to disaster of one kind or another. Traven writes: "[M]an becomes the slave of his property." The author extends this specific theme of the destructive results of greed into an effective denunciation of capitalism and imperialism by the European conquerors of Mexico and the Catholic Church that sanctions them, this at the vicious oppression and often death of the indigenous peoples of Mexico. Traven writes: "[T]here was never a torture without a monk holding out a crucifix before the victim, and the greater part of the gold was to go partly to the Spanish king and partly to the Holy Father in Rome." The old man Howard contrasts "the little feller, the ordinary citizen" with the heralded leaders of the nation. These leaders, he maintains, are actually robbers with "no scruples and no honesty in business and the affairs of the nation. "These highwaymen speaking from the platforms of the conventions of the ruling parties, were the same people who in success stories and in the papers were praised as valuable citizens, the builders of the nation." As a contrast to this oppressive, dirty, hopeless world of greed and control, Traven offers an alternative. Old man Howard saves an Indian boy thought to be dying. The boy's people urge Howard to forget his business (the gold mine) and accept their thanks. "Why worry about your business? There is only one business on

earth, and that is to live and be happy. What greater thing can you gain from life than happiness?" B. Traven is a mysterious figure. Who was he? A left wing German revolutionary probably. (The novel was written in German.) Whoever he was, his indictment of greed, oppression, control by an elite class, and cruelty is just as relevant today as it was in 1935. Moreover he has written a suspenseful story with many well drawn characters and scenes to dramatize his message.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Light at the End of the Tunnel By Charles Scott

The man returned the photo ID R. Royce gave him, and said, "You are who you say you are." Royce was at a real estate office in north Texas selling a house. The year was 2015. August. He was oddly reminded of the first time he ever visited the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City years ago, in 1986. The OIC flippantly asked Royce, "What kind of badge do you want?" He handed the security officer a letter of authorization for Revenue Agent credentials. It would be Royce's first professional job. Turns out, he lasted throughout most of his probationary period. He had been terminated in just under a year. Deemed unsuitable, sort of a dud. Regrets. He had none. He essentially lacked the requisite basic accounting skills and a qualifying business background. Hired "off the street," he was thankful for the opportunity presented, and he had learned a great deal about getting along with people in the corporate world. Afterwards, between jobs, he tinkered with television sets, repaired automobiles, and performed part-time military duty as an Army Reservist in the Ready Reserves. During this period of uncertainty in his life, he put in various applications for gainful employment, including one for an interesting Soil Conservationist position, and one for Medical Examiner. He liked the idea of saving the world and the people in it. When he did not receive a reply for either job, he called each of the respective employment offices on the telephone to inquire why. One of the secretaries said that he could not be considered at all, since another office had held onto his application and would not let go. It seems someone at the "South Florida desk" wanted him to work in the capacity of an information specialist with their I.T. Section. In other words, their organization wanted to train him in information technology. Then, they would grant him "peace officer" status. When they did finally hire him, the equipment they issued him included a tin star, electronic access to the intranet, and a "heater." For the most part, he behaved in a professional and responsible manner, and did not create too many waves. "Don't rock the boat," he was told. To make a long story short, he latched onto the job and held onto it, like a hungry pit-bull biting into a chunk of raw meat. Unlike the dog, however, he divined a major long-term goal of living a normal, healthy, and happy life; the thought safely hidden away within the mysterious recesses of the more highly developed cerebral portion of his brain. Toward the end of his fruitful career, he transferred to Texas, where he was ultimately to retire in a small, quiet, out of the way duty station. There, he continued to maintain a low profile. He began to see daylight at the end of the tunnel. Looking back over the years, Royce realized the job entailed inherent risks. Unlike in the Army in which, "You knew the job was dangerous when you took it," the risks associated with his civilian job were such that, for example, the pool of employees in Miami averaged one suicide every six years; in Dallas, one heart attack victim every three years. He didn't want to become another labor statistic. When he gave the supervisor his "two weeks notice," Royce told him that the most stressful thing he planned on doing in the future was to watch the grass and trees grow, and the flowers bloom. What he neglected to mention was that he was going to the mountains for a breath of fresh air, looking for kimberlite. One fine day, he packed a GPS instrument and a geology book among the personal effects and camping gear already loaded in the vehicle. That very afternoon, he drove away in the direction of the setting sun. The book, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, written by Bruno Traven and published in 1935, is a prime example of an author's literary work who was perfectly at peace with himself and in perfect harmony with the universe, even though he lived through tumultuous times of great chaos and discord, caused by war. He was fully knowledgeable of mankind's evil, selfish, and injurious nature. He was wise to man's wicked ways. Yet, one gets the clear and distinctive impression that he kept himself aloof nonetheless. Without a doubt, he had set himself to a higher standard. Furthermore, he prophesied the prevalent tendency for dominant feudal rule, and the rising tendency of dictatorship in government. He also predicted the resulting anarchy which inevitably follows the weakening, downfall, and ultimate collapse of any and all antagonistic and oppressive totalitarian regimes, for example, the ones you see on the evening news every so often with regularity, in which the dire consequences, and pathetically uninspired results of wholesale chaos and terror are apparent. It makes you wonder. There must be a higher power at work somewhere in the supremely metaphysical universe. In any event, if one adheres to a strictly grassroots approach to life in general, B. Traven's short stories are just as telling and just as revealing as any of the graphic details portrayed in the novel. Among the cleverest stories with a true-to-life, down-to-earth message are "The Story of the Nun" and "The Silk Scarf," in my opinion. These are must reads for Traven fans.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Film WAS better!!! Read why...By Customer

I don't really know how to even start rating this book. I think my first mistake was watching the movie first and then reading the novel. I am giving the book a 4 star rating because it started the making of the classic movie. The movie was MUCH better than the novel. Why??? Because the movie whittled down the BEST parts of the novel. In the movie we get to see the eventual emotional breakdown of the protagonist Dobbs (played by Humphrey Bogart) in such a graphic way. Whereas the novel meanders to the end until he starts to break down. I was also shocked at how much profanity there was in the book (and Spanish F bombs too! I now because I read Spanish too) I bought this book thinking it was going to be a clean read...OH NO!!!! The F bomb in English was there too but replaced by the word

'Funking'. Yeah you get the point. The ONLY reason I am giving it a 4 star rating instead of a 2-3 star is because this book sparked the great imagination of the film producer John Huston.