



Flotsam

Erich Maria Remarque , Burhan Arpad (Translator)

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Political dissidents, Jews, medical students, petty criminals. Among the thousands of displaced persons traveling the unpaved roads of Europe, there are Steiner and Kern. Both have irritated officials for outstaying their cold two-week welcome in Czechoslovakia. And so they must leave. Not that either has any place to go. Not in 1939. But when a man is led by a guard to the border of one country, he must try another one. Until he is escorted from that one too.

Living hand-to-mouth, selling shoelaces and safety pins for a few pennies, there are still pleasures to be had in such a life. Paris, for one; love for another. For amidst the heartless cruelty and cold-blooded laws of the Nazi state, there is still humanity and kindness. And there is incomparable joy in falling in love, surviving, and telling your story so it is never forgotten.

Flotsam Details

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From Reader Review Flotsam for online ebook

Bach Tran Quang says

Tên tiếng Việt của cuốn sách này là "Bên Đu Ca Cuội Cùng loài ngỗng không còn sống" mà cái tên tuyt ẹp. Tôi b? n t?ng m?nh ?n n?i khi g?p nó l?n ?u tiên trong t?m sách c?, không c?n bi?t nó nói v? cái gì, tôi mua li?n tay.

Remarque là tác gi? tôi yêu thích nh?t trên ?i. Tôi có th? vi?t h?n m?t khóa lu?n v? vi?c t?i sao tôi thích ông ?n v?y. Mà thôi, hãy nói v? tác ph?m này.

B?n có tin r?ng con ng?i nhi?u khi không b?ng m?nh gi?y không? Gi?y ó có th? là t?n, rõ r?i, và gi?y ó có th? ch? là cái th? c? trứ. ? xác nh?n h? ??c là NG?I.

Tôi tin r?ng n?u ai có máu phiêu l?u, ph?t ph?t s? thích cu?n sách này ghê g?m, b?i nó là liên t?c nh?ng cu?c hành trình t? biên gi?i này ?n biên gi?i khác, t? nhà kho, quán tr?, ?n khách s?n r?i c? v?a hè, gh? á. Nh?ng khác v?i Ph?t, ?i ? cho vui, còn h?, ?i là ? ch?y tr?n, cái ói, cái ch?t, nhà tù. ?i là ? t?n t?i.

Hai nhân v?t: M?t Steiner già ?i, l?c l?i, tinh quái và m?t Kern tr? d?i, ng? ngh?ch và còn khá m?ng t?ng l?n hoài bão ?u b? b?t nh?t vì c? trứ b?t h?p pháp. H? che ch? và cùng nhau v?t qua bi?t bao ch?ng ???ng dài.

Có m?t c?nh tôi ám ?nh mãi, là l?n chia tay không l?i c?a Steiner v?i ng?i v?. L?ng l?, gi?a ph? xá nh?n nháo và ông ?úc nh?ng ?y th?ng yêu và ?au ?n. ?n n?i tôi hi?u và ?au n?i ?au c?a ng?i ?àn ông b? bu?c ph?i c?t lìa v?i tình yêu c?a ?i mình ?y.

Trong kh?n khó, l?y l?i và ?êm ?en, Remarque v?n ?em cho ?c gi? bi?t bao tình ng?i: chia nhau t?ng xu l?, t?ng h?p r?u, món ?n, ch? ng?, và th?p thoáng hy v?ng, d?u r?ng "vòm tr?i cao kia v?n màu xám c?a v? khí"

Tôi v?a mu?n vi?t nhi?u v? cu?n sách này, v?a mu?n vi?t ng?n vì ch?ng mu?n ti?t l? tình ti?t chút nào v?i nh?ng ng?i ?n sau.

Ch? bi?t r?ng khi chi?n tranh, m?ng ng?i mong manh quá, nh?ng tình ng?i c?ng ? ?y quá. Ng?i t?t còn nhi?u, hãy luôn tin nh? v?y, và ? ? b?n có th? s?ng vui v?, d?u ch?ng còn ?t s?ng.

M?t cu?n sách nên ?c và ph?i ?c.

Hiep Tran says

“Anh có còn tin t?ng vào m?t ?iêu gì ó không?

- Th?a có, tôi tin ? lòng ích k?, s? b?i b?c, l?i nói d?i và tánh hèn nhát.

- Tôi ?ang lo nh? th?.

- Nh?ng c?ng ch?a h?t. Tôi còn tin ? lòng t?t, tình b?ng h?u, tình yêu và lòng t?ng tr?. Tôi ?ã bi?t ???c nh?ng ?i?u ó h?n nh?ng ng?i s?ng bình th?ng.”

Trên đây là cuốn hồi tưởng của ngài Chánh án Thu? S? và Kern khi chàng trai ng?i ??c ?ang lang thang tìm chốn dung thân cho mình. Ch? ngh?a Phát xít ?ã ??y nh?ng ng?i Do Thái l?u l?c kh?p Châu Âu hồng mong l cu?c s?ng bình th?ng nh?t ???c ch?p nh?n. ?o?n h?i tho?i toát lên m?t cách ?? ??y nh?t v? b?c tranh mà nh?ng nh?ng đi c? này ph?i v??t qua. Kern và Ruth may m?n h?n khi d?n ch?m ???c ??n b?n ??u Tây Ban Nha trong khi ?ó Steiner ch?n cho mình s? m?o hi?m ?? tr? v? ??c, nhìn ng?i v? thân th?ng c?a mình l?n cu?i tr??c khi n?ng ra ?i vì c?n b?o b?nh. B?n du ca bu?n, th?m ??m n??c m?t, n?ng n?c mùi tanh hôi c?a s? man r? vô nhân tính nh?ng c?ng ??y trong tr?o ng?t ngào khi nh?ng c?nh ??i b?t tr?c ?ó xích l?i g?n nhau b?ng tình yêu th?ng "r?t ng?i".

M?t s? trích d?n:

“S? yên t?nh... ??a con tr?m l?ng c?a lòng khoan dung ?ã bi?n m?t trong th?i ??i n?y r?i. Nó ?òi h?i quá nhi?u ??c tánh: s? hi?u bi?t, s? suy t?, tánh khiêm nh?ng và lòng nh?n n?i tr??c ?i?u b?t kh? kháng. T?t c? nh?ng ??c tánh ?ó ?ã ch?y tr?n tr??c ch? ngh?a c?a ??n tr?i... Nh?ng k? mu?n c?i ti?n th? gi?i ?ã làm h?ng th? gi?i ?i... Và nh?ng nhà ??c tài không bao gi? tìm th?y s? yên t?nh và ni?m vui.”

Greg Brozeit says

Having read all the novels published by Remarque during his lifetime—and loving every one—this one is my favorite. It is set in the mid-30s and follows three main characters who are stateless exiles driven out of their homes in Nazi Germany. This was a topic Remarque understood intimately, much as he did the experiences of a soldier in *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Remarque's novels tell stories of common people who live through major episodes of German history. In this story one gets an intimate understanding about the day-to-day struggles exiles had to face. They are unwanted in the countries they move to and unable to return to their homes. These are stories behind the statistics and machinations of politicians on the world stage leading up to World War II.

It is the story of enduring love that has to survive through barbaric circumstances. In other words, another great, unforgettable Remarque novel that exposes many facets of the human condition. In this case, love is much more than that between a young man and woman. It is also about the love of friends, family, and strangers. More than that, it is about how these types of love have to survive despite irrational hate all around them driven by impulses ranging from prejudice to instincts of self-preservation. There are many parallels to today's world and lessons about what we might become without even noticing it. It has been translated into English under the title *Flotsam*. It would have been more appropriate to directly translate Remarque's title, *Love Thy Neighbor*.

Pedro Varanda says

Um excelente e emocionante livro, que nos mostra a vida dos refugiados alemães no período anterior à segunda grande guerra. Homens e mulheres sem pátria, desenraizados, despojados de tudo e em circuito por uma Europa onde verdadeiramente ninguém os quer. Um tema que tantos anos depois é uma vergonha que ainda seja actual.

M.J. Payne says

Erich Maria Remarque's novel "Flotsam" depicts the world in Europe in 1939 where refugee's lives are strung along selling bits of shoelaces, thread, safety pins etc. in an attempt to forestall starvation. This is my fifth Remarque novel and it is the only one written in third person so far. It lives up to the others and had a wrenching effect on me. The ending of the book contains an irreplaceable collection of scenes that has one in particular I found to be a gift of priceless treasure. Some people will find the scene and others will not. This novel is another analysis of the human condition and the sacrifices of unexpected kindnesses, mainly stemming from the bonds knitted from relationships between people created through desperation. It illustrates the gutting of people's lives by the heartless Nazi regime. It is a cautionary tale of what is possible both good and bad in the human heart and soul.

arcobaleno says

Le frontiere sono la nostra patria.

Il coinvolgimento è stato, a dir la verità, inferiore a quello di "Niente di nuovo sul fronte occidentale": all'inizio qualche passaggio mi è sembrato un po' forzato, la trama disorientante tra un protagonista e l'altro.... Eppure vi ho sempre trovato un che di semplice e pulito, una scrittura misurata e piana; e mi sono lasciata portare un po' alla volta dal suo procedere pacato, dal suo tono malinconico, e accompagnare lungo le sue pagine, già sfogliate dal tempo, della mia edizione '1949'. Vi ho trovato molte immagini veramente struggenti nella loro essenzialità; i sentimenti si sentono vivi, le atmosfere sono sempre delicate, nonostante la crudezza delle storie e degli accadimenti: profughi senza identità nell'Europa alle soglie della seconda guerra mondiale; esiliati senza nome (*i nomi devono figurare scritti, altrimenti non appartengono a nessuno*); apolidi in continua fuga *senza una meta fissa*, che cercano di sopravvivere conservando la propria dignità *fra lo sconvolgimento di tutti i valori*; nemici dello Stato in un tempo in cui *colpevole non è colui che assale, ma l'assalito*; vagabondi delle frontiere *sospesi su quel mondo, nel buio del loro destino di senza patria*; abitanti del solo presente perché i ricordi *amareggiano soltanto l'esistenza*. Tuttavia Uomini; persone che cercano di conservare la propria sensibilità, che consolidano le amicizie, gli affetti genuini, gli amori innocenti; che alimentano la reciproca *solidarietà dei diseredati*, la condivisione di chi vive fuori legge; che mantengono vivi i sentimenti per non perdere la speranza nel domani; che mettono *in comune un po' di destino in una vita fatta di vuoto e di fughe*.

E alla fine l'ho apprezzato per tutto ciò che è, facilmente sorvolando su quel che non è, e le stelline sono via via aumentate.

Rick Slane says

Many refugees kicked out of Germany in the 1930's without passports or visas are forced back and forth across the borders of Austria, Czechoslovakia & Switzerland. The characters in the book just want to find work, love, and security in an almost dystopian environment.

Denys Percheklii says

This is my third book out of Remarque collection. I would say that this story is much more powerful that

"Arch of Triumph" and "Heaven Has No Favorites". The novel mainly covers the story of three people: Steiner and a couple Kern and Ruth. Terrible pre-WWII times force them to run between borders of different countries because they cannot go back to Germany and they have no legal documents.

The book covers a lot of important sides of people's soul. For instance: love, greed, kindness, hunger, belief in miracles, disappointment, disinterested help, friendship, honesty, cruelty and mercilessness. Also, you will definitely be able to see yourself in one of the various stories of interpersonal relations like: man and woman, father and son, friends, strangers and people in need.

During the whole story I was thankful for the life I have and people, who surround me. This book might help you to look at your life from a different angle.

Definitely worth reading!

Ishtiaq Ahmed Fahim says

One of the best books that I've ever read. One of the best creations of Remarque. Splendid narrative, such real storyline that actually depicts how the scenarios were back in the late 1930s, the years just preceding the Second World War.

The title of the book is quite self-explanatory. The literal meaning of "Flotsam" is the floating wreckage of a ship. In this novel, Remarque skillfully sketches the lives of those ill-fated emigrants wandering across Europe just to breathe freely under the open sky, to lead a humane life. But all they can manage is to lead nightmarish gypsy lives with no sense of belonging. Having proper papers, passports, managing residential and work permits are everything for them. They pass from one border to another at the dead of night. Then this happens again and again. They have no place to go. That's the most sardonic yet pathetic aspect of their existence.

They have no place in the big world that God has created for them. Their hearts are torn apart by the borders and they belong to no country. They just keep on floating. They have to. Otherwise the cruel world would get better of them and they have to capitulate. But they don't. The human spirit never dies. As they keep on floating, they keep on breathing!

They smile, they sing, they play violin, they make love. The sense of love, sacrifice and camaraderie makes every page of this magnificent novel a fabulous reading experience. Remarque has magical touch! His depictions of even the minor details are so pleasant to visualize that I was entirely overwhelmed while turning the pages one after another. Long live the human spirit. Long live literature which inspire it, too!

Yasin S. says

Remarque'n ülkesinden kaçt??? zamanlarda yazd??? çok güzel bir roman. Bu ülkesiz mülteci insanlar? anlatt??? tek roman? olmayacakt?. Belki de ülkesine duydu?u özleminden dolayı? ülkesinden uzakta ya?ayan insanlar? anlatmaya di?er kitaplar?nda da devam edecekti. Ayr?ca kitab?n kahramanlar?ndan olan Ruth

Holland Remarque"n Hayat K?vilcimi kitab?nda geen Ruth Holland ile ayn? ki?i de?ildir. Ruth ismini 4 kitab?nda kullanan Remarque"n bu isme olan ba?l?l???n?n sebebini bilen varsa sylesin:)

Tatjana Litvinenko says

In this world a piece of paper is more important then person's life. Good book.

Nguy?n says

Ti ? ??c nhi?u review v? cu?n sch ny tr??c khi ch?n ??c. Review no c?ng ??m n??c m?t. Nh?ng c l? n c ch, v c th? l?y ?i t nhi?u n??c m?t c?a ti khi 17 tu?i h?n l by gi?. Khi con ng?i ta khng cn c quy?n l mnh, thi v?i Remarque, tnh yu l c?u cnh.

Nh?ng ch? khi chng ta bi?t s?ng h??ng th??ng h?n.

Eirini Proikaki says

"...στην αρχ? φαντ?ζεσαι πw ε?ναι κ?τι εξαιρετικ?, μ δεν αργε?ς καθ?λου ν παρατηρ?σεις ?ταν βρεθε?ς στον δρ?μο γι κ?μποσο δι?στημα, πw η δυστυχ? ε?ναι το πιο κοιν? πρ?γμα στον κ?σμο."

Γι ?λλη μι φορ?,τλει?νοντας ?ν βιβλ?ο του Ρεμ?ρκ,δεν ξ?ρω τι ν π.Με συγκ?νησε,με π?νεσε και με τρ?μαξε.Γρ?φτηκε πριν τ?σα χρ?νια,μιλ?ει γι μι ?λλη εποχ?,κι ?μw μοι?ζει ν ?χει γραφτε? χθε?ς,γι την δικι? μς εποχ?.?νθρωποι χρ?ς πατρ?δ,περιφ?ρονται απ το ?ν μ?ρς στο ?λλο,συνεχ?ς κυνηγημ?νοι και προσπαθν ν επιβι?σουν σε ?νν κ?σμο εχθρικ?.Πρ?γματα που γι ?λλους ε?ναι δεδομ?ν ,γ?αυτο?ς ε?ναι πολ? σημαντικ?:μια ?δεια παραμον?ς που τους δ?νει τη δυνατ?τητα ν μνουν 2 βδομ?δε? σε ?ν μ?ρς χρ?ς ν φοβο?νται την αστυνομ?,?ν κρεβ?τι,ο ?χς εν?ς βιολγιο?,?ν ψητ? κοτ?πουλο,?ν ζεστ? πανφ?ρι.
Ε?ναι στεν?χρω βιβλ?ο αλλ? και γλυκ?,αφ?νει μι ελπ?δ αλλ? δε?χνει και π?σο σκληρ?ς ε?ναι ο κ?σμος μς οπου ?ν χρτ? ? η ?λλειψ? του,μπορε? ν εκμηδεν?σει ?νν ?νθρωπο.

Nataly says

The book is great! I haven't known that the German Jews had troubles before the Worl War 2. I thought their sufferings started since 1 September 1939. But they started some years before it. I'm eager to read the other books by Remarque!

Evelina Mark says

It is sad, that this book is not popular like other Remarque's books. Because, I think, it is very interesting

book and story. And because of that, this novel (book) has many titles (f.e.: Love your neighbour, Love Thy neighbour, Flotsam).

I got caught up in a story very strongly and I had to take time to recover from it.

I love this book, I think, this book is a masterpiece and it is fascinating.

Also, I loved Steiner's character, I think, he was carrying that positivity, which we needed in that story.
