

Chapter 1 : Earth and High Heaven by Gwethalyn Graham | Bag Full Of Books

Earth and High Heaven was a novel by Gwethalyn Graham. blog.quintoapp.com was the first Canadian novel to reach number one on *The New York Times* bestseller list and stayed on the list for 37 weeks, selling copies in the United States that year.

August 30, by Claire The Captive Reader As much as I love discovering forgotten and neglected books, sometimes the fact that they are so very obscure when there is no earthly reason they should be makes me incredibly frustrated. There is a concern about the lack of shared culture and beliefs, of different values and aims, and the knowledge that, if married, the pair would not fit easily into either of the social spheres from which they came: Marriage, both sets of parents say, is difficult enough without bringing in these kinds of stresses, stresses which Erica and Marc can do nothing to alleviate. Nobody can do it. To her, Marc is simply Marc. He is an entirely unique and fascinating person who happens to be Jewish. But she still seems to think of him as the exception. Her racism is unconscious, which she realises when listening to Marc describing his brother David and finds herself waiting to hear some sort of defining Jewish characteristic in his description, surprised by her surprise that David sounds just like any Gentile: Evidentially it was not going to be anything like as easy as she had thought; you could not rid yourself of layer upon layer of prejudice and preconceived ideas all in one moment and by one overwhelming effort of will. During the past three weeks she had become conscious of her own reactions, but that was as far as she had got. The reactions themselves remained to be dealt with. She had counted too much on the fact that her prejudices were relatively mild and her preconceived ideas largely unstatedâ€¦ Erica is a much more forceful presence in the novel than Marc. Marc is rather resigned, beaten down by the world and himself. And yet he is still interesting and quietly competent and forceful, despite this rather melancholy description of him: There was a lurking bewilderment in his eyes, as though, in spite of all his common sense and most of his experience of living, he still expected things to turn out better than they usually did. Above all, when that smile went out like a light, his appalling vulnerability became evident, and you began to realise how much strain and effort had gone into the negative and fundamentally uncreative task of sheer resistance â€” resistance against the general conspiracy among the great majority of people he met to drive him back into himself, to dam up so many of his natural outlets, to tell him what he was and finally, to force him to abide by the definition. I found Erica incredibly sympathetic and appealing. At twenty-eight, she has a successful career and is generally respected and admired. What she wants most is a family of her own, though her life seems to have been remarkably romance free prior to the arrival of Marc. But most importantly, she has an incredibly close bond with her father, Charles. They are confidants and best friends, as well as father and daughter. She brings out the best in him and, we see as the novel progresses, the worst. The fight scenes between him and Erica are harshly realistic and almost unspeakably cruel â€” no holds are barred and they each know just where to strike to make it hurt the most. It is always fascinating to read books written and published during the war that deal with issues related to it and Graham touches on almost anything you can think of. The entire time I was reading this, I kept thinking how Persephone-like it felt in tone, quality and themes. And, really, could there be higher praise than that?

Chapter 2 : Earth and High Heaven - Wikipedia

Earth and High Heaven and millions of other books are available for Amazon Kindle. Learn more Enter your mobile number or email address below and we'll send you a link to download the free Kindle App.

And then the ups are all so saccharine – they make for even grimmer reading! Many of you will know how much I adore and admire Persephone Books. So what an up it is to have my name inside those very dear grey covers! It interrogates how we treat migrants, misogyny and anti-semitism while being an unputdownable story of love against the odds. This was my shard of hope, and yet, as soon as Graham offers it, she withdraws it: When Marc and Erica hear birdsong during their first weekend away together, Marc says: Her decision to write so overtly about Canadian anti-Semitism was, however, both brave and unusual in the contemporary political climate. Beer points out that the Canadian Jewish Community helped with this camouflage. To-day it is the Jews who have been reduced to serfdom, decreed into helotry, made lower than the worm. The international press was also complicit in masking the specifically Jewish nature of the Holocaust. Graham believed that writers ought to engage with contemporary politics. In the s, Graham and her mother helped Jewish refugees and welcomed them into their home in spite of widespread anti-Semitism. Clearly, Gwethalyn Graham grew up with an awareness of social issues, and a sense of moral justice, for which she knew how to fight. She had also spent some time in Europe, when she attended a Swiss finishing school, and again in , when she went to England, France and Switzerland following publication of her first novel Swiss Sonata, which drew on her experience at the finishing school. Swiss Sonata is set in January , at the time of the Saar plebiscite; the school acts as a miniature League of Nations, with tensions rife between pupils from many countries and of different religions. So Graham was more attuned to the problem of anti-Semitism than many of her fellow Canadians, but perhaps the reason for such a passionate argument against it can be found within the pages of Earth and High Heaven itself. Horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation – Oh why did I awake? The words could just as easily be voiced by Erica, and also by Graham herself. Following a short and disastrous first marriage, Graham – like Erica – had an affair with a Jewish lawyer. Like Erica, she wanted to introduce this Jewish lawyer to her father, and, as in the novel, her father refused to meet him. Whoever is right, at some point a love affair with a Jewish man induced a similar moment of awakening in Graham, directing her passion for social justice towards Canadian anti-Semitism in this novel. Gwethalyn Graham does not, however, confine herself to the Jewish cause. As soon as she has set up her opposition of Jews versus Gentiles, she complicates it. Graham shows how English Canadians are further split along class lines: It is an intriguing image. Crucially, Miriam refuses to describe Marc: Instead of the wealth of prejudiced generalisations with which Marc is burdened, and which cause these divisions within society, Miriam lets him speak for himself. In Swiss Sonata, the headmistress reflects on her own shortcoming when it comes to understanding the girls: In Earth and High Heaven, time and again, Erica attempts to persuade her father to stop generalising so that he might see Marc as an individual, not as a Jew: When Marc tells her about his brother David: She kept trying to dismiss the feeling that something about Dr. David Reiser did not seem to fit, and then, suddenly angry at her own evasiveness, she swung around and deliberately faced it. Her surprise was due to the fact that Dr. Reiser did not sound like a Jew. Perhaps the most insidious aspect about our habit of seeing individuals through generalisations is that the person suffering from the discrimination can become complicit with it. It is, but it is also empowering. For if Marc is partly to blame, then he is also partly able to put it right. This sense of time ticking is heightened by the War, which we hear rumbling relentlessly in the background, imbuing each moment with added urgency. Yet Graham also shows us how time can be seized and stretched into something quite different. After their second meeting, they arrange to meet on the Wednesday for dinner, only for Marc to phone and ask to see Erica that very night instead. In showing us a love which refuses to be bound by time, Graham also gives us a love which is timeless. When it was first published, the novel was a hit not just in Canada, but it topped the American bestseller lists, was translated into eighteen languages, and sold over 1. Since the Second World War, societies have grown infinitely more diverse, and yet we still all know people from different backgrounds who, like Marc and Erica, have struggled

to be together in the face of prejudice – whether they practice different religions, are from different classes, or have different shades of skin. Gwethalyn Graham wrote *Earth and High Heaven* to confront the divisive prejudices that were all too prolific in Montreal in , but – sadly – her call to arms resounds just as urgently in Britain today.

Chapter 3 : *Earth and High Heaven* – Gwethalyn Graham | The Captive Reader

Earth and High Heaven is, simply, a drama of human relationships -- of two people in love who are confronted by the obstacle of racial intolerance -- presented with such cutting truth, such fidelity to life, such compassion and understanding, that their problem becomes, indelibly, the reader's own.

Chapter 4 : EARTH AND HIGH HEAVEN by Gwethalyn Graham | Kirkus Reviews

Earth and High Heaven, came out when Gwethalyn Graham was The book was a massive success: it sold one and a half million copies, was translated into fifteen languages and was the first ever Canadian book to be top of The New York Times bestseller list, staying on the list for 38 weeks.

Chapter 5 : *Earth and High Heaven* by Gwethalyn Graham

Earth and High Heaven is a fascinating novel; as so much of the story consists of various characters discussing their views on racism, prejudice and.

Chapter 6 : *Earth and High Heaven* eBook: Gwethalyn Graham: blog.quintoapp.com: Kindle Store

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Chapter 7 : *Earth and High Heaven* explores mixed marriage taboo | blog.quintoapp.com

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Chapter 8 : Gwethalyn Graham - Wikipedia

Such is the case with *Earth and High Heaven* by Gwethalyn Graham. Published in , the book not only won the Governor General's Award for Fiction (Graham's second - and she was only 31) but it was also the first Canadian novel to reach number one on the New York Times bestseller list.

Chapter 9 : *Earth and High Heaven* by Gwethalyn Graham | LibraryThing

Gwethalyn Graham's novel *Earth and High Heaven* () is said to bear the distinction of being the first book published in Canada by a non-Jewish author that deals centrally with Jewish themes and characters.