



The Outsider

Howard Fast

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Fast's "New York Times" bestseller traces the lives of Rabbi David Hartman and his family through the postwar turmoil of mid-century America

David Hartman returned from the Second World War to the small New England town of Leighton Ridge. Rabbi to the fourteen Jewish families in his small community, Hartman, along with his town, spends the years after the war facing the major political and social upheaval of the time. From McCarthyism and nuclear spies, to civil rights and Vietnam, Hartman, along with his best friend, a Congregational minister, helps lead the town through the chaotic changes sweeping the nation. This ebook features an illustrated biography of Howard Fast including rare photos from the author's estate.

The Outsider Details

Date : Published December 1st 1984 by Houghton Mifflin

ISBN : 9780395361016

Author : Howard Fast

Format : Hardcover 311 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Literature, Novels

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From Reader Review The Outsider for online ebook

Sarah says

This book was well-written and I enjoyed it, but seemed a bit pretentious for me.

Rebecca says

I started this book long ago and struggled with it for a while. When I returned to it after a break, I found it far easier to understand. It is dated in a way, but concerns the ever relevant questions of life. Is there a God? What is faith? What is the nature of love? Why do we feel a need to separate ourselves from each other in petty distinctions? What is the meaning of life? The book seeks to ask the questions and not to answer them so much.

Joan says

This sat on my shelf for many years. After the Immigrant I wanted more and more of Fast. I loved the Outsider as much - even more, as Rabbi David Hartman struggles with his call and his faith in many ways the same as my own struggle. I also loved the way he took us through the depression, the wars, McCarthy. I thought the relationship with Lucy, his wife was a bit strange and it did not last. I can't give it five stars because the rabbi's continuing angst grew old after a while. I would have liked a few lighthearted moments. but again, Fast tells a whale of a story and tells it well.

Publisher's comments.

Mary Frances says

I don't think I ever read a book by Howard Fast before this, and I am very impressed. I had a bit of difficulty with the main character David, whose personality seems a little unreal to me, but I grew more comfortable with him as I read on. He is, however, really a construct to convey Fast's political beliefs and his questions about racism, war, god and faith. However, one has to credit the author, who does eventually make David seem real despite the burden of channeling so much philosophy. In the end, I liked the book very much and will try other books by Fast, who was himself quite an interesting man, progressive in politics, blacklisted for flirting with socialism, author of Spartacus, which movie helped break the blacklist. I recommend the book for anyone who also has asked themselves questions about the things that really matter. In some ways, this book reminds me of that old best seller Five Smooth Stones, which also came out of the civil rights era and asked similar questions, though Fast is a better writer without doubt.

Mandy says

This long, mostly well-written if sometimes rather dry novel tells of the life of Rabbi David Hartman. After serving as an army chaplain in WWII he moves with his wife to the small town of Leighton Ridge and there we follow him through the following decades, from 1948-1977. David is a good man, an honest man, who always tries to do what he considers the right and moral thing. America is changing in so many ways and all of these changes come to Leighton Ridge to some degree or another. McCarthyism, the Civil Rights movement, Vietnam, Women's Lib – David has to face these often cataclysmic events and come to terms with them from both a religious and human point of view. There are a lot of conversations in the novel, in which these issues are discussed, and to some extent David Hartman is there as a mouthpiece for the author's own views and preoccupations, and at times this can slow the narrative down a little, but overall I found this a moving and compelling story of one man's odyssey through life. It's not perhaps great literature but it is an engaging narrative which gives an authentic portrait of one man and his family, and of life both in small town America and on the wider stage. A very good read.

Maryetta says

I have read this book three times in my life since 1984.
I find it very interesting how much I forgot about the book.
I think this last read was more understandable since I'm a few years older than I was in 1984.

Amy says

Couldn't finish. Not like a Howard Fast book. N
Boring.

Marianne says

I don't like to give a book a "don't like" rating, but I must. I had to force myself to slog through this novel, filled with wandering individuals endlessly sloshing about staring at their navels! Not very happy people. So a downer of a bood.

Ali says

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Reading Howard Fast helps to read American history with a reflection from the literature. No matter how critically Fast faces American society, he loves his father land, his culture and his nation, deeply and respectfully.

Reading Howard Fast helps to read American history with a reflection from the literature. No matter how critically Fast faces American society, he loves his father land, his culture and his nation, deeply and respectfully.

Bill says

Rabbi David Hartman, fresh from witnessing the horrors of liberating Nazi death camps in World War II, has married and is looking for a synagogue; his mentor suggests a newly formed synagogue in Fairfield County, Connecticut, just outside New York City.

For David, who traveled with the army as a Rabbi during the last horrific World War, Connecticut is another world, but he and his new wife accept the challenge.

But he sees himself often as an ‘outsider’ as he lives through the post World War Two American history – the Rosenberg tragedy, the McCarthy era, the Korean War, the Civil Rights Movement, and Vietnam, and as he does, as all lives do, he and his relationships change.

This is a remarkable novel, since it traces what so many endured and celebrated during the last half of the 20th century in America – a lasting look at a history that changed us all.

Glen J says

Inside out and upside down

Rabbi Hartman quickly becomes everyman as he embarks on his calling to shepherd a small flock in Connecticut. Salvation seems to be a work in progress for him. Wonderful read.

Roberta Sallee says

I picked up this book at the library and thought I recognized the author's name from years ago...a series of books about some inter-related families in CA starting with the great fire in SF and including grape growing. I remembered enjoying them a lot.

This book centered on a rabbi with a small congregation in CT. It took me longer to read than usual. The beginning and ending were interesting, but the middle muddled down for awhile.

I ended up liking it. The time period covered(1946-1960)(the copyright is 1984) and it was intriguing seeing the author's perspective of that time's events through the main characters' eyes.

It wasn't until I had to look up by author and not title (so many newer books called The Outsider!) that I noticed that Howard Fast had, indeed, written the book I was thinking of originally...The Immigrants.

I think I will take it out and see if it is still as good as I remember!

Tiffany S says

This book definitely put Howard Fast on my list of authors to read more of their works.

It follows the life of Rabbi David Hartman, who came back from WWII definitely a changed man. He was at the liberation of one of the concentration camps (Dachau). I cannot fathom being an American Rabbi doing that. He comes home, marries, and gets his first synagogue in a small New England town Leighton Ridge.

The book follows roughly the next 30 years of his life in Leighton Ridge. The adjustment from New York to small town is hard on his wife which becomes hard on his relationship. They form a close friendship with Congregational minister Martin Carter and his wife. The book explores the struggles of a family, antisemitism, a changing America, and one man's journey through these. I definitely recommend. I received an e-book from NetGalley for reviewing.

Frank says

Read in the 80s

Mona Lisee says

I struggled to finish this book. I found it hard to really relate to the main characters and the plot slow.
