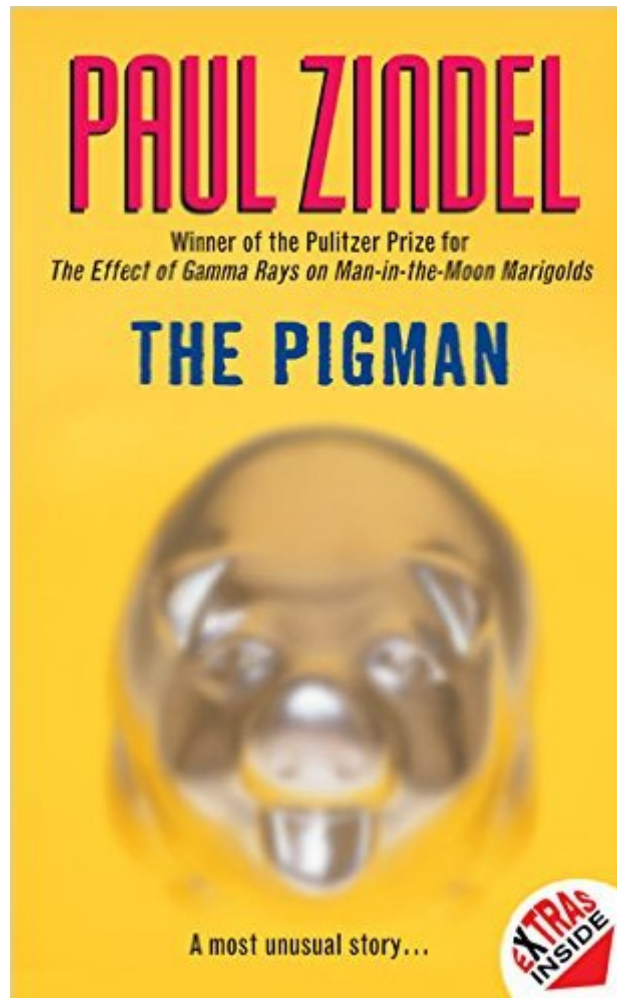


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The Pigman



Synopsis

Join the millions of readers who have discovered *The Pigman*, the beloved, groundbreaking young adult classic from Paul Zindel, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*. In *The Pigman*, what begins as a teenage prank soon becomes a timeless examination of grief, acceptance, and the transformative power of friendship. High-school sophomores John and Lorraine had no idea what they were starting when they made a prank phone call to a stranger named Angelo Pignati. Virtually overnight, they befriended the old man. But now Mr. Pignati is dead. And for John and Lorraine, the only way to find peace is to write down their friend's story—the true story of the Pigman. Supports the Common Core State Standards

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: HarperTeen; Reprint edition (March 29, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060757353

ISBN-13: 978-0060757359

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.5 x 6.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (479 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #15,890 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #38 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Emotions & Feelings #70 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Friendship #93 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family

Customer Reviews

I went about it all wrong. When I decided to see what all the fuss surrounding Mr. Paul Zindel was about, I should have just read "The Pigman" immediately. Instead, I read his far less accomplished (and, these days, horribly dated) "My Darling, My Hamburger". Having come to the conclusion that Zindel was fine if slightly overrated, I then moved onto "The Pigman". Once I finished it, I realized my mistake. Zindel WAS an accomplished young adult writer. Heck, he was one of the granddaddys of the genre. And "The Pigman" is a fabulous book. Depressing? Heck, yeah. But fabulous. The heroes (so to speak) of this little work of art are John and Lorraine. Sophomores in high school, the book jumps between their narratives. This book is their "memorial epic", dedicated to their adventures with the man they call The Pigman. As the story plays out, it becomes clear that neither

of them are the most reliable of narrators. Coming from unhappy homes, the two friends fill their days with idle games. By complete accident they meet the acquaintance of one Angelo Pignati a.k.a. "The Pigman". A lonely old man whose only friend is an ugly baboon at the zoo, Pignati slowly befriends the reluctant teens. Through his kindness, the kids begin to experience a little more happiness than they've felt anywhere else. But when Pignati places his trust in the two, they betray him and Pignati's world is destroyed. Cheery fun! Actually, I'm usually pretty anti-depressing books. There are just too darn many of them out there these days. When I was a teen I avoided them like the plague and I suspect that's partially why I missed "The Pigman" in the first place. Reading it today, I was surprised by the humor in it. John and Lorraine (the women's names in this book really drill home its original 1968 copyright date) are goofballs through and through. Whether they're prank calling, roller skating through the Pigman's dining room, or noshing on chocolate covered ants, this kids have a ball. John's the compulsive liar of the two while Lorraine psychoanalyzes anyone who gets within a hair's breath of her. One of the things I liked the most about this story was that their relationship remains fairly steady. There's a bit of awkwardness after the two kiss at one moment, but for the most part they're just good friends who need one another badly. I suspect the sequel to this book, "The Pigman's Legacy", probably plumbs their interactions a little further, but that's just a guess. On the whole, the book is most remarkable because it still speaks clearly to teens today. Who isn't going to understand about the fun that can be had with a house party, booze, and a band? Or the two-faced nature of many an adult? Just update a couple phrases here, a word there, an appliance yonder, and you could probably publish this story as a very modern creation. A tip of the hat to Paul Zindel then. A word of advice: If you would like to learn more about this wonderful author, begin with "The Pigman". This book was groundbreaking in its day and it remains a funny and sad paean to the death of teen-age innocence.

Through his style of writing, Paul Zindel makes it easy for anyone to make a connection with the characters. Can you picture a teenager without life dilemmas? Not in today's society, so this is one book you must have every teenager read. In this book, you will meet two dynamic characters- John and Lorraine. They are two sophomores in high school who share with the reader their adventures. John is the typical prankster. Lorraine is his sidekick. Together, they do many things. They drink and smoke at the cemetery, and play practical jokes on people. The famous telephone marathon prank was one prank that changed their lives forever. The Pigman introduces them to a whole new world. Throughout the book, John and Lorraine will encounter themes of love, compassion, and trust. In addition, you will read about the different conflicts they experience. What does John's father wants

him to be when he grows up? Why Lorraine's mother hates men? Who is Bobo? When I read this book as an adult, I could not put it down! I found myself becoming part of the story. I strongly encourage every educator to have this become part of your reading collection. If you are not an educator, you should purchase or recommend this book to any teenager you know. They will not be able to thank you enough.

The Pigman by Paul Zindel was published in 1968 by Bantam Books. The novel is a fiction "memorial epic" about two high school students, John and Lorraine, who meet an old man, Mr. Pignati, and spend a lot of time with him. The main setting is Mr. Pignati's house. The main characters write the book about their experiences with the Pigman. John and Lorraine's families do not give them support and don't pay any attention to them. They meet the Pigman through a prank phone call. John and Lorraine start hanging out with the Pigman, but their relationship is not normal because of the age difference (Mr. Pignati is about 56 years old and John and Lorraine are either 14 or 15 years old) and we know that it is not going to have a happy ending. (His name is Mr. Pignati but they call him the Pigman because he collects glass pigs.) John and Lorraine start hanging out with the Pigman because he is so nice and partly because they feel sorry for him. The Pigman takes John and Lorraine to the zoo to meet Bobo, the Baboon. Mr. Pignati is very nice to them and pays them attention, which their parents don't give them much of. One day while they are playing around at his house, the Pigman has a heart attack and goes to the hospital. While he is in the hospital, John and Lorraine have a party. The Pigman comes home early from the hospital in the middle of the party to find his house a wreck. Throughout the story, John and Lorraine are trying to be what they aren't, adults, and the Pigman is trying to be what he isn't, a kid. Because John and Lorraine are playing at being adults, they are forced to grow up and be more mature. Zindel's purpose is to entertain and to send a message to teenagers not to pretend to be what you aren't. Zindel entertains the readers, young and old, by having the two main characters switch on and off writing the chapters. You get to read each point of view. Also, the problems that John and Lorraine face are realistic problems. Lorraine's family isn't perfect and John's family is falling apart. The message Zindel sends teenagers is not to pretend to be what you aren't. The Pigman is playing at being a kid and has a heart attack because of it, and John and Lorraine are playing at being adults and end up with adult problems at the end. The strengths of the novel are that it's appealing to teens and it catches the reader's attention. It appeals to teens because two teenagers are writing the story, and the author uses childish humor. For instance, John refers to a kid at the party as looking like a "constipated weasel." (Just try to picture this.) The personalities and the way the book

is written makes the reader get "hooked on the book." I would recommend this book to teens or older because the problems that the characters face and how they deal with them are interesting. The book seems like it is a comedy and a tragedy, and it keeps you reading on.

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