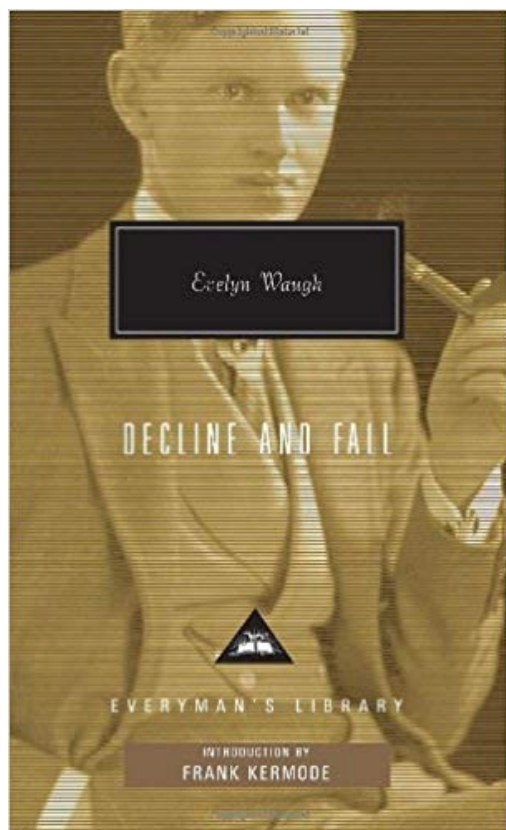


Decline and Fall *by* Evelyn Waugh



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ISBN: 067942041X

ISBN13: 978-0679420415

Author: Evelyn Waugh

Book title: Decline and Fall

Pages: 224

Publisher: Everyman's Library (February 23, 1993)

Language: English

Category: History and Criticism

Size PDF version: 1808 kb

Size ePUB version: 1949 kb

Size FB2 version: 1840 kb

Other formats: doc lrf lit txt

(Book Jacket Status: Jacketed) Decline and Fall (1928) was Evelyn Waugh's immensely successful first novel, and it displays not only all of its author's customary satiric genius and flair for unearthing the ridiculous in human nature, but also a youthful willingness to train those weapons on any and every thing in his path. In this fractured picaresque comedy of the hapless Paul Pennyfeather stumbling from one disaster to another, Waugh manages the delicious task of skewering every aspect of the society in which he lived. With an Introduction by Frank Kermod



Reviews of the *Decline and Fall* *by* Evelyn Waugh

Alsanadar

I've loved Evelyn Waugh for most of my adult life. His skewering of British society as it was during the early decades of the 20th century, his word selection, his interesting and varied characterizations are among the finest products of British fiction. In the midst of his writing life he was writing as intelligently and satirically as he did at the beginning. Reading "Decline and Fall" and "The Loved One" (1947) shows that Waugh lost none of his power over 19 years.

This book, "Decline and Fall", recounts the blossoming of a rather nebbishy young divinity student, Paul Pennyfeather, after he is expelled from Oxford for an "indecent" that he did not commit. Paul slowly winds his way through British society until he is engaged to a very beautiful, very duplicitous divorced woman. On his wedding day he is charged with aiding white slavery and delivered into a harsh life in prison. Eventually rescued by his criminal fiancée, he acts on his discovery that he is happier away from the luxury and shallowness of British Society. The plot may not sound of great interest but Waugh's writing and characters had me laughing and shaking my head in wonder at his humor.

I urge anyone that enjoys P.G. Wodehouse to try Evelyn Waugh.

Qutalan

Waugh's first novel, and some say his best. Unrelenting satire. His description of the Welsh village band is worth the price of the book, many times over. I first read this book in college 60 years ago and still pick it up periodically. My original copy is falling apart, so I had to order the Kindle version. . Lately I've recommended it to a grandchild. About this book I have no Doubts.

Hirah

This bitter farce tells the story of one Paul Pennyfeather, a young man who is expelled from an Oxford-like university due to a misunderstanding. Ever since this first scene the reader understands that he's reading a novel of the absurd. The point is never to tell a credible story with a tight plot, but to develop a savage satire on the British society, especially the educational system. After being expelled, Paul finds himself with no money and so is forced to get a job at a school of the worst level. His colleagues are pathetic and their small misadventures are hilarious. Of course, Waugh's humor is very British: caustic, understated, and at the same time some passages, like the athletic event, are excessive to the point of ridicule. At some point, Paul makes the acquaintance of the mother of one of his pupils, a rich and beautiful widow who proposes to him in marriage. This seems to be Paul's lucky break of a lifetime, and he eagerly accepts. But the woman runs a strange business which will produce the decline and fall of the title.

What develops as a hilarious farce ends up being a sad story. Waugh aims his mockery at every person and system included in the novel. Education, prostitution, jail, politics and business are all the target of this first novel which promises much about the future work of Waugh. Recommended.

Uttegirazu

As most people know this was Waugh's first book (other than a book on Rossetti), and it was written a long time ago (1928?). It has probably been reviewed at least 50,000 times since then, so this review might be a tad redundant.

If you like Wodehouse, this is like that but a bit more serious. If you like Martin Amis, this is like that but more light-hearted. The one thing that might be useful to another reader is that this book is so old that you can almost certainly find a copy at your local public library for free instead of paying \$8.89 to read it on your Kindle. After I figured that out I was able to get three more Waugh books for free saving myself \$25.

Beazezius

A wonderful first novel by Waugh! This keeps drawing the reader back to continue reading from where one left off. It is a very quick read. A great base and foundation with which to begin the journey with and study of Waugh. It is very easy to identify with characters in this novel since we all live lives of decline and fall.

Quemal

This book is an odd marriage of extreme talent with just a dash of blatant racism. Most of it is a stroll through a beautiful English garden with all the barbs still on the stems of the roses. It was published in 1928 when the British were just beginning to look in the mirror and notice the cummerbunds. Being a member of the Caucasian race living in the United States, I do hear glass shattering around me when I call attention to racism. Well, I finished the book anyway and if you can forgive the portions of history that expose our frailties no matter how disgusting, you will enjoy the writing.

Brightcaster

Waugh's notorious first novel, "Decline and Fall" brutally satirizes British society of the 1920s with his characteristic black humor. Based in part, upon his own experiences at Oxford and teaching at a private school in Wales in 1925, it lays waste British notions of honor, educational excellence, sportsmanship, the Church, and the upper class generally. In an age when most "humor" is visual slapstick, it is refreshing to read a writer who could be screamingly funny using words alone.

Readers with Politically Correct views, will probably be offended by this book (or any of Waugh's other novels for that matter), but those who believe that the only test of humor is whether or not it is funny will find it an enjoyable read.

Note: The movie version of another great satire by Waugh, "The Loved One," has only recently been released on DVD. With a screenplay by Terry Southern (who also wrote the screenplay for "Dr. Strangelove"), it is definitely worth buying, although you will enjoy it more if you read the book first. It is one of those rare films that does the book justice.

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