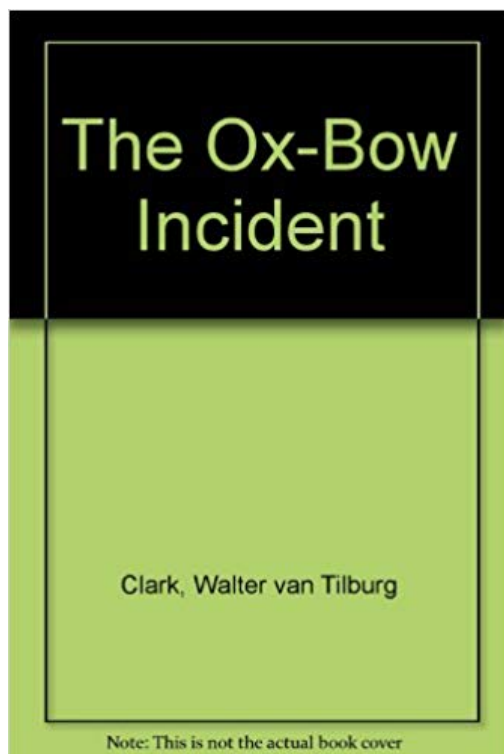


The Ox-Bow Incident *by* Walter van Tilburg Clark



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Reviews of the *The Ox-Bow Incident* *by* Walter van Tilburg Clark

Nuadabandis

Grim. Thought-provoking. Well written and memorable. All adjectives which can aptly be applied to this classic novel by Walter Von Tilburg Clark

1909-1971) Clark was born in Maine but grew up in Nevada since his father was the President of the University of Nevada. The Ox-Bow Incident was filmed by William Wellman and starred the young Henry Fonda as Art Croft . Croft is the fictional narrator of the piece. 28 men ride out on a snowy night in the winter of 1885 to lynch cattle rustlers and supposed murderers of a prominent cowman in the community, The book is a platform for various points of view regarding such topics as:

The rule of law or the role of violence expressed by a mob

The role of conscience in making hard decisions

Questions dealing with morality and guilt and innocence. Daviess is a tormented man by these queries,

The book is slow at the beginning and it takes a while to sort out who is who among the many characters. The novel has good descriptions of nature and wildlife in the Nevada region. There are no heroes in the book as all the characters have good and bad points, Three men are executed for rustling and murder. Are they guilty? A taut tale well told by Clark. The book is one of the greatest American novels. An excellent novel for book club and classroom discussions on a variety of topics dealing with justice and the law. A great classic!

Gholbithris

In 2007, I was transferred from the United States Penitentiary in Pollock, Louisiana to the Marianna Federal Correctional Institute in Florida, which required that I spend two months in the Federal Transfer Center in Oklahoma City. Two months is a long time when all you're allowed to do is play cards, watch TV, or read, which is what I spent most of my time doing. They had a little push-cart in the unit with a hundred or so books on it, and they'd swap it with the carts in the other units once a week. If you actually stumbled upon a good book, you'd better read it fast because they don't tell you when you're leaving, they just wake you up at two o'clock in the morning and tell you it's time for your flight on "con-air."

Toward the end of my stay, I started reading a western called "The Ox-Bow Incident". I don't particularly care too much for the genre, but this was no ordinary western. It's considered a masterpiece according to the blurb on the front cover, and indeed it is. The more I read, the better it got, and I was coming to the climax at two o'clock one morning when I got the knock on my door letting me know it was time to go.

I recently got a chance to read it again and the ending is even better than I thought it would be. It deals with mob violence and the lynchings that were common in American frontier life. It makes me realize that I'm very lucky to be living in the time and place that I inhabit now, contrary to all appearances.

Review written by David Allan Reeves
Author of "Running Away From Me"

zmejka

As I read this wonderful book, I kept asking myself, who is the pack that doesn't have the courage to break away and do the right thing. Is it the men who blindly follow the leader of that pack who hang the black man, knowing it is wrong, but fearful of being called a ___ lover. You see, I grew up in the south, and there was little that would get you driven from the group, and hated morning quickly than that. Or was it an entire nation, that was standing by watching a bully ravage a continent, and enslave and eventually try to completely eradicate a whole race of people.

Either way, the end let's us know, we are called to stand up for right, no matter what the cost.

Velellan

This is a sad story of violence and how people react to it or fail to. Although it's set in the west, it's by no means a "western." The story of how violence exists and people fear trying to stop it more than the violence itself could take place anytime, anywhere, I rated the book with four stars which shows that I liked it. You cannot really "like" a story like this because it is painful and cruel. We see the violence and cowardice in others - and worse, in ourselves - and we wonder what we would have done that dark snowy night. Faced with violence and tyranny and indecision and swayed by the so called "leaders" of the mob we found ourselves in, would we also be afraid to stop the violence. You may find yourself - as I was - trapped and haunted by the story but I doubt if you will "like" it.

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