



The Rack

By A. E. Ellis, Derek Lindsay

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"There are certain books we call great for want of a better term. They rise like monuments above the cemeteries of literature: *Clarissa Harlowe*, *Great Expectations*, *Ulysses*. *The Rack* to my mind is one of this company." - Graham Greene

"A terrific book . . . a penetrating examination of the nature of suffering . . . to read it is in itself an experience." - *Time and Tide*

"Quite possibly a masterpiece." - *Irish Times*

"Book of the year if there ever was one." - V. S. Pritchett, *New Statesman*

"A work of sombre power, of soaring comedy." - Cyril Connolly, *Sunday Times*

"[V]ery remarkable . . . Ellis's humour is grim, but behind the book one has the impression of an unusual and powerful mind." - *The Observer*

"Then consider yourself an experiment of the gods in what a man can endure . . ." This is the sardonic advice of a doctor to his patient, a young Englishman suffering from tuberculosis in the days before effective antibiotic treatment, and it sets the theme for this brilliant novel. The hero, Paul Davenant, has arrived at a sanatorium in the Swiss Alps with high hopes of a full cure and a normal life. But as the weeks and months pass interminably by, Davenant undergoes endless tests and medical procedures, each more horrific and dehumanizing than the last, all the while facing the possibility that his case may be hopeless. Despite the pain, indignity, and tediousness, Davenant never loses sight of the outrageous, farcical side to his situation, the absurdity of it all. When he falls in love with a fellow patient, he becomes determined to recover his health, but will he succeed, or will all the tortures he has endured have been for nothing?

When *The Rack* was first published in 1958, the critical acclaim was universal: reviewers compared it with the works of Proust, Mann, and Camus and declared it a masterwork destined to take its place among the great novels of the 20th century. This edition, the first in 25 years, features a new introduction by Andrew Sinclair.

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Editorial Review

Review

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bobby Miller:

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Sherri King:

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