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A Long Way Down

Von Nick Hornby

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Von Nick Hornby : A Long Way Down before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Long Way Down:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 32 von 34 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Not as good as High Fidelity ... but still worth a read Von Francisco J Munoz As comic novels go, this book takes on a frightfully tricky subject: suicide. On New Year's Eve in North London, four lost souls go to a roof of a particularly famous suicide point called "Topper's House" to leap - only to discover a traffic jam (themselves), and, instead of

jumping, end up striking up an uneasy alliance/friendship. ("Even though we had nothing in common beyond that one thing," as the character Martin states at one point.) That's the high-concept opening and theme of this novel, in a nutshell. The four characters: MARTIN: a disgraced, morning talk-show host who served time in jail for sleeping with an underage girl. Divorced by his wife, humiliated by the media. MAUREEN: a middle-aged, self-sacrificing (and long-suffering) single mom whose only son is a virtual vegetable. A Catholic who states (p. 77): "I don't believe in luck as much as punishment." She had sex once, with only one man - which resulted in a child, the cross she had to bear (and could no longer bear). JESS: a bratty, impulsive, volatile, foul-mouthed rebel teen, daughter of a well-known government official. JJ: a 30-ish "failed" American musician (leader of the defunct cult band, Big Yellow) - now turned pizza delivery boy. (A character most resembling Rob from High Fidelity) The novel is told from the point of view of these four characters - that is, in alternating monologues (reminding me of William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*). At one point a significant reference is made to Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, in which the character of Jess suggests the author "killed herself because she couldn't make herself understood." What unfolds then, in this novel, is the characters finding the WORDS to their despair. WHAT I LOVED: The humor. Given this horribly dark subject matter, Nick Hornby continually finds a way to make his material and situations amusing. WHAT I DIDN'T LOVE: Finding this horribly dark subject matter amusing. Part of the problem with Nick Hornby is that he is a comic novelist in the traditional sense. (As with Shakespeare's comedies, it is the happy ending that defines it as such.) I kept thinking that this novel might work better as a play or a skit. The opening on the roof is very theatrical, almost like a Samuel Beckett play (full of gallows humor). The rest of the book, essentially, is a series of monologues. Some people may find *A Long Way Down* a little shallow, a little contrived and glib, like a TV sitcom run amok. Hornby constantly undermines the seriousness of his subject matter in order to make it bearable; but in doing so he also undermines the weight of it; in a way, he sort of paints himself into a corner from the beginning. The rest of the novel is about Hornby writing himself out of the hole. Give him credit for courage, though. All the negative aspects aside -- there are A LOT of laugh-out-loud passages in this book; there's enough humor and wit and liveliness for me to recommend it. His writing is still a pleasure to read, his characters full of attitude and intensely likeable, and after *The Loser's Club*: Complete Restored Edition by Richard Perez (another recent favorite of mine), I'm still recommending Nick Hornby's *A Long Way Down*. Maybe not his best -- High Fidelity still commands that spot -- but still good, a comic novel stretching the limits of what a comic novel should be.

19 von 20 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Ein grandioser Auftakt, der Mittelteil lahmt jedoch ein wenig... Von Datendieb Ein humoristischer Roman über den Selbstmord zu schreiben scheint beinahe unmöglich. Nick Hornby jedoch ist das mit diesem Buch unglaublich gut gelungen. Er beweist einmal mehr, warum er derzeit als Englands größter Autor der Pop-Kultur gilt. So versammelt er eine illustre Gruppe an Charakteren, die sich allesamt denselben Zeitpunkt ausgesucht haben, um ihrem Leben ein Ende zu bereiten: am Silvesterabend. Doch damit nicht genug wollen sie auch noch rein zufällig allesamt vom Dach desselben Hauses springen... Aus der Sicht jeder dieser 4 Protagonisten schildert Hornby den weiteren Verlauf, voll von Ironie, bitterem Sarkasmus und Wortwitz. Dabei bildet der erste der drei Teile den wohl besten des Buches. Das darauffolgende Kapitel verliert dann jedoch etwas an Schwung. Trotzdem ist die Lektüre empfohlen, da man wohl zu diesem Thema kaum ein anspruchsvolleres Buch finden wird... 15 von 16 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Brilliant and delightful Von Miezekatze "A Long Way Down" is an outstanding piece of writing. The idea seems contrived at first: Four people want to commit suicide on Toppers House on New Year's Eve. But instead of flinging themselves down, they start talking and helping each other overcome their wish to jump - and that over the next weeks and months as well... And Nick Hornby makes a compelling, moving and humorous book out of it - with some really creative twists and turns! Ex-Talkmaster and ex-prisoner Martin, mother of a severely handicapped child Maureen, punk who lost sister Jess and failed musician JJ are protagonists as different as can be imagined, and the dynamics between them is breathtaking. Each of them has his/her own individual voice and point of view, and their interactions are lively, sometimes even turbulent. I personally found Maureen and Martin most convincing, but Jess' invention of an angel that looked like Matt Damon made me laugh heartily. Hornby successfully manages to avoid sentimentality. Instead, there's a lot of humour in his novel, but also a lot of insight and truth about hardships, about the reality of life - the author never ridicules the tragedies of his protagonists' lives. Hornby respects that such hardships are highly subjective, that they often have no easy solutions, but need step-by-step changes to make living with them bearable. As a consequence, "A Long Way Down" doesn't have the over-the-top happy ending of a Sophie Kinsella novel, and this is one of the many merits of "A Long Way Down". Brilliant and delightful novel. 5 stars. PS: As audio book, buy unabridged - I cannot imagine what could possibly be left out of "A Long Way Down", every word is so well-placed in the text! A slight drawback of the unabridged audio book: Kate Reading reads both 51-year-old Maureen and 18-year-old Jess, and this is slightly puzzling at first and needs some getting used to - especially as she is spot-on as Maureen but not so convincing as Jess. The men's voices are superb, and it's a great pleasure to listen to the CDs. Highly recommended.

Kurzbeschreibung Narrated in turns by a dowdy, middle-aged woman, a half-crazed adolescent, a disgraced breakfast TV presenter and an American rock star cum pizza delivery boy, *A Long Way Down* is the story of the Toppers House Four, aka Maureen, Jess, Martin and JJ. A low-rent crowd with absolutely nothing in common - save where they end up that New Year's Eve night. And what they do next, of course. Funny, sad, and wonderfully humane, Nick Hornby's new novel asks some of the big questions: about life and death, strangers and friendship, love and pain, and whether a slice of pizza can really see you through a long, dark night of the soul. From Publishers Weekly Starred . If Camus had written a grown-up version of *The Breakfast Club*, the result might have had more than a little in common with Hornby's grimly comic, oddly moving fourth novel. The story opens in London on New Year's Eve, when four desperate people Martin, a publicly disgraced TV personality; Maureen, a middle-aged woman with no life beyond caring for her severely disabled adult son; Jess [...]; and JJ, an American rocker whose music career has just ended with a whimper meet on the roof of a building known as Toppers' House, where they have all come to commit suicide. Bonded by their shared misery, the unlikely quartet spends the night together, telling their stories, getting on each others' nerves even as they save each others' lives. They part the following morning, aware of having formed a peculiar sort of gang. As Jess reflects: "When you're sad like, really sad, Toppers' House sad you only want to be with other people who are sad." It's a bold setup, perilously high-concept, but Hornby pulls it off with understated ease. What follows is predictable in the broadest sense as the motley crew of misfits coalesces into a kind of surrogate family, each individual takes a halting first step toward creating a tolerable future but rarely in its particulars. Allowing the four main characters to narrate in round-robin fashion, Hornby alternates deftly executed comic episodes an absurd brush with tabloid fame, an ill-conceived group vacation in the Canary Islands, a book group focused on writers who have committed suicide, a disastrous attempt to save Martin's marriage with interludes of quiet reflection, some of which are startlingly insightful. Here, for example, is JJ, talking about the burden of understanding that he no longer wants to kill himself: "In a way, it makes things worse, not better.... Telling yourself life is shit is like an anesthetic, and when you stop taking the Advil, then you really can tell how much it hurts, and where, and it's not like that kind of pain does anyone a whole lot of good." While the reader comes to know all four characters well by the end of the novel, it's Maureen who stands out. A prim, old-fashioned Catholic woman who objects to foul language, Maureen is, on the surface, the least Hornbyesque of characters. Unacquainted with pop culture, she has done nothing throughout her entire adult life except care for a child who doesn't even know she's there and attend mass. As she says, "You know that things aren't going well for you when you can't even tell people the simplest fact about your life, just because they'll presume you're asking them to feel sorry for you." Hornby takes a Dickensian risk in creating a character as saintly and pathetic as Maureen, but it pays off. In her own quiet way, she's an unforgettable figure, the moral and emotional center of the novel. This is a brave and absorbing book. It's a thrill to watch a writer as talented as Hornby take on the grimmest of subjects without flinching, and somehow make it funny and surprising at the same time. And if the characters occasionally seem a little more eloquent or self-aware than they have a right to be, or if the novel turns just the tiniest bit sentimental at the end, all you can really fault Hornby for is an act of excessive generosity, an authorial embrace bestowed upon some characters who are sorely in need of a hug. 175,000 first printing. (June) Tom Perrotta's most recent novel, *Little Children*, has just been published in paperback by St. Martin's Griffin. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist *Starred* In his trademark warm and witty prose, Hornby follows four depressed people from their aborted suicide attempts on New Year's Eve through the surprising developments that occur over the following three months. Middle-aged Maureen has been caring for her profoundly disabled son for decades; Martin is a celebrity-turned-has-been after sleeping with a 15-year-old girl; teenage Jess, trash-talker extraordinaire, is still haunted by the mysterious disappearance of her older sister years before; and JJ is upset by the collapse of his band and his breakup with his longtime girlfriend. The four meet while scoping out a tower rooftop looking for the best exit point. Inhibited by the idea of having an audience, they agree instead to form a support group of sorts. But rather than indulging in sappy therapy-speak, they frequently direct lacerating, biting funny comments at each other--and the bracing mix of complete candor and endless complaining seems to work as a kind of tonic. Hornby funnels the perceptive music and cultural references he is known for through the character of JJ, but he also expands far beyond his usual territory, exploring the changes in perspective that can suddenly make a life seem worth living and adroitly shifting the tone from sad to happy and back again. The true revelation of this funny and moving novel is its realistic, all-too-human characters, who stumble frequently, moving along their redemptive path only by increments. Joanne Wilkinson Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved