



The Enemy Camp

Jerome Weidman

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The Enemy Camp Details

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From Reader Review The Enemy Camp for online ebook

Judy says

Jerome Weidman wrote 22 novels in a long career which also included plays and hundreds of short stories. His first novel, I Can Get It For You Wholesale, became the Broadway musical in which Barbra Streisand made her debut. The Enemy Camp, which was the #9 bestselling novel in 1958, is the only one of his I have read.

It is said to be autobiographical and tells the story of George Hurst, a Jewish man who rose up out of the Lower East Side ghetto, married a Christian woman and learned to overcome his fear of anti-Semitism.

Many Jewish writers have covered this ground and Jerome Weidman was among the first. He writes with energy and knows how to keep a reader on the edge of the protagonist's anxiety. In other words, he wrote a page turner that reveals to a shiksa like me what it was like for a Jewish man in early to mid 20th century America.

I did not know anything about the author or the novel when I started it and was happily surprised to find it so good.

Elaine says

A wonderfully compelling story, filled with glimpses of an America that is only recently past. The protagonist came through World War II and is living the early 1960s version of The American Dream -- a respectable nine-to-five white-collar job in Manhattan; a house in an upscale Connecticut suburb with a loving wife and well-adjusted kids -- and a big ol' dog. What he keeps hidden is his childhood, in New York's Lower East Side (when it had an actual forest), and years spent trying to make his way through a contradictory world. His adoptive mother Tessie is unabashedly hostile toward Gentiles and George learns early on to keep from her his friendships with non-Jews. He ventures into the Gentile world, constantly second-guessing whether Tessie will ultimately be proven right. His closest friends are Danny and Dora, who form a strange dysfunctional triangle with George. Their troubled relationship follows George, no matter how fast or how far he tries to run from it.

This book is not "about" one thing. It's about religion and how it affects relationships and worldview; it's about love and the different ways people define it; it's about friendship and betrayal, and it's about history. The 21st-century reader may find it astonishing that American Jews often felt the need to "pass" as Gentile. This book will explain why.

The language is modern and very relatable, and will have the reader continually comparing life today as it was just a few decades ago.
