



## **The Plague, The Fall, Exile and the Kingdom, and Selected Essays**

*Albert Camus , Stuart Gilbert (Translator) , Justin O'Brien (Translator) , David Bellos (Introduction)*

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**The Plague, The Fall, Exile and the Kingdom, and Selected Essays** Albert Camus , Stuart Gilbert (Translator) , Justin O'Brien (Translator) , David Bellos (Introduction)

From one of the most brilliant and influential thinkers of the twentieth century—two novels, six short stories, and a pair of essays in a single volume. In both his essays and his fiction, Albert Camus (1913—1960) deployed his lyric eloquence in defense against despair, providing an affirmation of the brave assertion of humanity in the face of a universe devoid of order or meaning.

*The Plague*—written in 1947 and still profoundly relevant—is a riveting tale of horror, survival, and resilience in the face of a devastating epidemic. *The Fall* (1956), which takes the form of an astonishing confession by a French lawyer in a seedy Amsterdam bar, is a haunting parable of modern conscience in the face of evil. The six stories of *Exile and the Kingdom* (1957) represent Camus at the height of his narrative powers, masterfully depicting his characters—from a renegade missionary to an adulterous wife—at decisive moments of revelation. Set beside their fictional counterparts, Camus’s famous essays “The Myth of Sisyphus” and “Reflections on the Guillotine” are all the more powerful and philosophically daring, confirming his towering place in twentieth-century thought.

## **The Plague, The Fall, Exile and the Kingdom, and Selected Essays Details**

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## From Reader Review The Plague, The Fall, Exile and the Kingdom, and Selected Essays for online ebook

## **Titus Manoj Kumar says**

In short, The Plague can be defined as a fictional version of the Myth of Sisyphus.

## Zahra Abshari says

**Michal says**

The Plague: Boring, speckled with inconsequential sequences, unrealistic and just runs into sand at the end. Excellent as a intellectually-looking inventory for your bedside table that lasts a very long time.

The Fall: Interesting stylistically and intellectually from start as a dialogue reduced to a first person monologue, but eventually it just goes on rambling until you lose all capacity to pay attention.

I am done with Camus.

**Sara says**

Really liked "The Plague" and "The Fall"--liked some of the selected essays better than others. "The Artist at Work" was quite good.

This was the first time I had ever read Camus and I'm glad that I have read so much Greek and Russian literature over the years to prep for Camus.

I enjoyed the style of writing by Camus because no one seems to write like this anymore. (This collection doesn't have "The Stranger" just so you know.)

## Brixton says

Feb 2011: "**The Myth of Sisyphus**", 2 of 5. The absurdity of living and the logical necessity of suicide--should be right up my ally, but I just couldn't get into this. One thing I did feel throughout was that the writing was very clunky and awkward; I'm inclined to point my finger at the translator, but since I cannot go to the original, and I (perhaps without foundation) assume Everyman's is using the translation *de rigueur*, it might just be clunky and awkward. Whenever my understanding started gaining some momentum, the

direction of this essay would just roll right back down to the beginning, and it was always a struggle to get going again. Maybe Camus was just pulling a funny one on stubborn readers like me.

Dec 2009: *The Plague*, 3.5 of 5. Fun to read in these days of 11-step handwashing posters in public restrooms and other attempts to inflate public obsession/paranoia of colds and flus.

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### **Patrick says**

This is why I don't like riding in cars.

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### **Lou Fillari says**

I had high expectations. So, my bad.

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### **Raymond Thomas says**

I'm at a bit of loss on how to discuss Camus, but I shall address his stories in the order that they appear.

There are many parts of The Plague that hold great promise for an interesting novel and even an interesting reflection on the philosophies and nature of man, however a lot of it gets lost in the pages upon pages of philosophical discourse that break up the actual characterizations and plot. I still enjoyed the story but there were moments where it just got bogged down attempting to explain the philosophical to me rather than letting me experience it fully through the characters and plot of the book.

Similarly there is an interesting concept in The Fall, but again it often seems to get bogged down in itself, seeming going on for pages without introducing new concepts or advancing the plot. I think ultimately this is one of Camus' weaker works. It strikes me as another example of why philosophers rarely make for good authors or novelists. It's often needlessly unclear and over repetitive.

Exile and The Kingdom is a wonderful collection of extremely readable short stories. Some of them are a bit hard to decipher in totality, but the message doesn't get lost in the shorter stories like it does in The Fall. Similar to my feelings on Hemingway, I think the short stories are really the best work of Camus.

The essays on Absurdism are quite interesting, though honestly the only parts I truly enjoyed and didn't find to be trying were the ones where Camus explains the absurd by reviewing the works of Dostoevsky and Kafka. Using literary classics as a way to explain his concepts was a good choice and really helped with overall understanding of Camus' beliefs.

Finally, Reflections on the Guillotine was probably the highlight of this collection, for me anyway. Camus leaves the heavy and trying language of philosophy to present an argument against capital punishment that appeals to reason and logic rather than a confusing collection of philosophical beliefs.

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### **J. Watson (aka umberto) says**

In this hardcover, I finished reading "The Plague" in another paperback edition, "The Fall" in 2006 and "The Myth of Sisyphus" some years ago. Last week I decided to read "Exile and the Kingdom", however, I was not sure I could make it since it "consists of short stories which explore the existentialist predicament from various viewpoints" (front flap). Unfortunately, I know vaguely on existentialism, therefore, its definition in Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary should be quoted for understanding and further narration: "(philosophy) the theory that humans are free and responsible for their own actions in a world without meaning" (Turnbull, et al. 2010, p. 531).

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### **Xio says**

I wanted to write a long note about how, once I'd finished rereading The Plague, it dawned on me that \*this\* story had played a giant role in forming my character. And to realize something like that is a bit profound. Perhaps it was due to the veil of fever I was reading through but I had to lie still awhile and cast myself back to the initial encounter and recall the kid I had been... That ferociously vigilant and angry kid appalled by the world of the 80's...sigh. Wanting, as Rimbaud wrote, (in which poem was it? "The Blacksmith"):

"Nous nous sentions si forts, nous voulions être doux ! "

right-o.

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### **Laura says**

"The nature of art is to bind the general to the particular... I also know that I am not seeking what is universal, but what is true. The two may well not coincide."

For me Camus is an artist, a discerning of truth, a moralist, and, above all, a humanist.

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### **Broadsnark says**

It is always difficult to review a book of collected works and this one is more difficult than most. I loved The Plague and would give it four stars for sure. But a couple of the stories in here were extremely problematic (Camus was not known for being an anti-racist, feminist.) Some of it was just rather boring. That said, reading The Plague was exactly the kind of dark meditation on life that I needed right now. Yes. We are all on a losing battle with death. There is often not much we as individuals can do about the worst that happens - war, disease, sociopaths. But we can struggle and fight and find joy and commiserate with all the other poor fools in this same mess that we are in.

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## **Marty says**

I read The Plague, but I couldn't find that book listed on its own. It's a great book that had a profound effect on me in college. It was the first book I "had to read" in a literature class. I was so innocent, and this book opened my eyes to pain, suffering, death, tragedy... real life! I went on to be an English major. This book may have turned me in that direction.

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## **Matthew Ciarvella says**

It's hard to know what to say about a writer like Camus. I've enjoyed his writing since reading "the Stranger" back in high school. Although "the Plague" is regarded as one of his finest works, I actually ended up enjoying "the Fall" the most. "The Exile and the Kingdom" were also very enjoyable.

There are two essays included in this collection: "the Myth of Sisyphus," which I've read before and "Reflection on the Guillotine." The latter is an especially poignant read with regards to capital punishment in the United States and the botched execution of an inmate several weeks ago.

In my opinion, Sisyphus is the best work to read when trying to explain existentialism to someone. Even though Camus himself would disagree with this assessment, his account of Sisyphus's eternal task and the worthiness of that struggle is what helped me really understand existentialism.

Although this wasn't an easy collection to read through (it took me a couple of months to finish everything), I feel enriched from the experience. If you're like me and you try to balance your literary diet and you're interested in existential writing, consider adding this one to your list.

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## **James Smith says**

Camus' THE FALL continues to haunt. It is the ghost of Augustinianism--and is itself haunted by an Augustinian option.

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