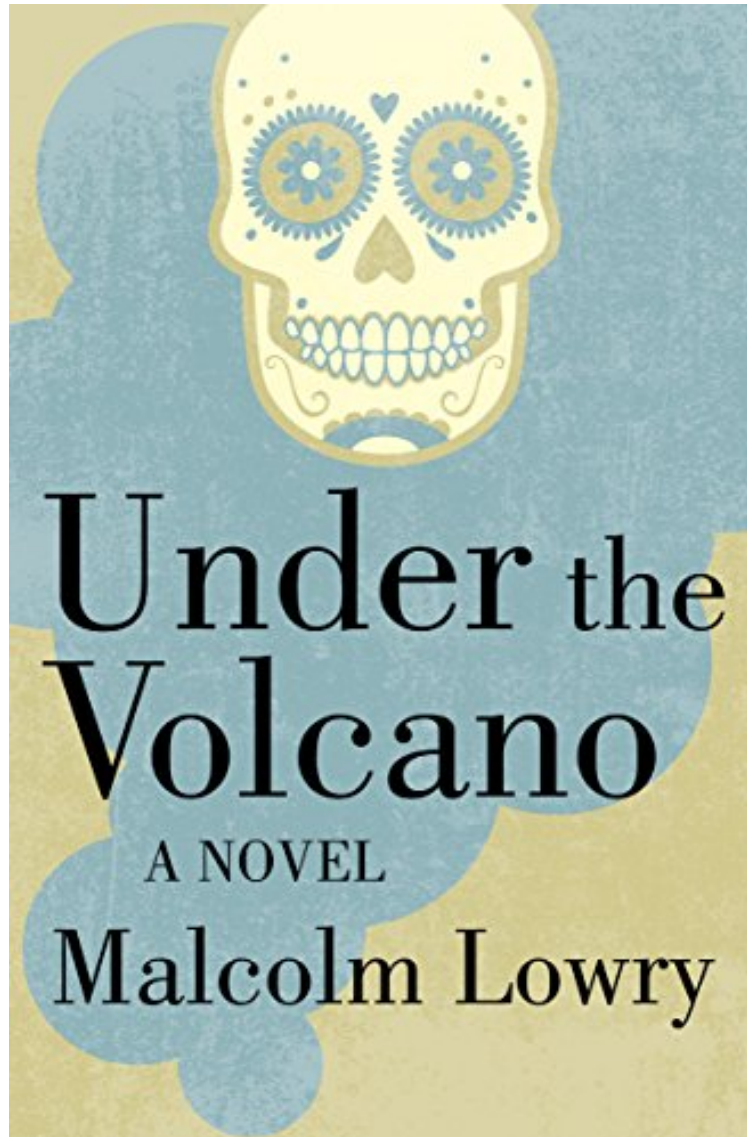


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Von Malcolm Lowry

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Von Malcolm Lowry : Under the Volcano: A Novel (P.S.) (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Under the Volcano: A Novel (P.S.) (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. "Perhaps he was drinking lightness, and promise of lightness." (M. Lowry)Von expressNo question, this modernist English masterpiece - some call it a modernist inferno - is not easily accessible to everyone. The author was aware of that when he recommended that it should be read at least twice to understand its full meaning and to let it "explode in the

mind" like a sort of psychedelic bubble. Here he got Schopenhauer who claimed that "Any book that is at all important ought to be at once read through twice." In a famous letter he defended his novel against a negative reviewer and called attention to his structuring of the *Volcano* "like a churrigueresque Mexican cathedral": "Poems often have to be read several times before their full meaning will reveal itself...In late 1936 Lowry and his wife Jan Gabriel moved from Mexico City to Cuernavaca with its year-round agreeable climate, it was their final attempt to salvage their marriage. However, this failed and a year later he was quite alone in Oaxaca and began one of his many phases of alcoholic excess, that he was jailed in Oaxaca and in mid 1938 even was deported from the country. "Under the Volcano" (first published in 1947) demonstrates how extensive autobiographical material can be wrapped up in complex layers of symbolism to be set against a rich evocation of Mexico in a series of intricate and unwillingly destructive relationships. Obviously, the aspects of the author's death are oddly relevant to the consideration of his work, since excess of every kind was both his method and his subject. When *Under the Volcano* appeared some of its thunder was stolen by a novel called *The Lost Weekend* by Charles R. Jackson, which was subsequently filmed by Billy Wilder (1945) with Ray Milland in the leading role and winning four Academy Awards. Lowry was intensely disturbed upset by this chance - he felt his life was ruled by chances, both fatal and benevolent - but the two books had little in common. Here the action takes place on November 1, 1938, the Mexican Day of the Dead in Quauhnahuac and chiefly tells the tragic story of the last twelve hours in the life of Geoffrey Firmin the alcoholic British ex-consul. He was removed from the post after President Lzaro Crdenas signed an order that expropriated the assets of nearly all of the foreign oil companies operating in Mexico, and Britain severed diplomatic relations with the Mexican government. So he can be seen as a political victim and his crumbling life also serves to reflect the political unrest in Mexico when he becomes entwined with Nazi-funded Mexican sympathizers. But when the town is overrun with men and women posing as disgraced members of the corps diplomatique, comparable to a kind of Joycean Latin Bloomsday for mescal freaks, the reason is *Todos Santos* not politics. Now without occupation except his fabulous drinking, Firmin makes efforts to rise to the occasion of the unexpected return, in the early morning of *The Day of the Dead*, of his estranged wife Yvonne. Yet their attempts to reconcile are virtually knocked off balance by his continued drinking and abusiveness. This is further complicated by Firmin's half-brother Hugh and one of his friends, a French film director, as both of them are in love with Yvonne. In this lightly fictionalized memoir of a return to Mexico, he sneaks out of his hotel bedroom, leaving his wife asleep, in search of a pre-breakfast drink at the *Farolito*, the local cantina and during the following hours, one could claim tha the consul wrote glass in hand. At least that's the impression, yet the author understood himself as a poet first. Firmin spends the last hours of his life drinking and reflecting on his life until he and his wife meet a horrible end. The former consul is gunned down by Mexican fascists who mistake him for a criminal and drop him in a ditch, and his wife is trampled to death by a runaway horse. *Todos Santos* is re-created with such realistic attention to detail and phantasmal images and sounds that the reader is transported both consciously and unconsciously to the streets of the town. As Europe seems drifting ever closer to war, these are times of uncertainty. The groundwork is being laid in Spain and even the rather insignificant nation of Mexico is preparing itself for potential trouble while newspapers are warning of political and military collapses in Europe. This frightening scenario is dominated by two volcanoes, constantly implying by their sheer presence to entrap the entire population under their destructive forces. Rarely has a book invoked such a powerful sense of place and time as it weaves together themes of alienation, love, political idealism, and myth.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Coming to terms with the devil
Von Owen Hughes
Malcolm Lowry's "Under the Volcano" can reasonably be called a masterpiece, for whatever that term is really worth. At least it shows my own prejudice in favour of a novel which is probably out of favour today, and not sufficiently read by a new generation in search of, or besieged by, a devil within. A novel that can be read on many levels, it also contains pungent writing that carries the odours of a world that has been all but banished from North America today. It is, if you like, an unclean world, in which much is to be expected, little obtained. Whether from the religious rites, with all their devotions and ecstasies, or the characters who are more familiar to us (and who are sometimes smiling shyly to us from the edges of other novels by Graham Greene or Gabriel Garcia Marquez), much is promised, little given. But, as for the characters themselves, the disappointment that may greet us is only transitory, leaving us to march the march of faith on our own terms, and carry whatever remnant of the garment of civilisation we have managed to save to the last, on our voyage into the heart of this epic novel. And there lies its great strength; it is a novel with a beating, living, enervating heart and those who remain for the journey will surely be marked by it, as by all literature of this calibre.

2 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The tragedy of a man in the 20th century
Von Ian Muldoon
Suddenly with a gun or slowly using other means, including alcohol, why does a man(I use the term generically) self-destruct?. Why was there virtually no suicides among occupants of Nazi concentration camps? Camus asserted there was only one important philosophical question and that was suicide. The protagonist in *UNDER THE VOLCANO*, Geoffrey Firmin ponders " Why am I here, says the silence, what have I done, echoes the emptiness, why have I ruined myself" (p342) Suffused with superstition, mystery, bizarre activities set on the Day of the Dead in Mexico at the foot of a Volcano, with echoes of guitar music, and dead dogs, images reminiscent of an hallucinatory carnival from *Alice in Wonderland*, colour, horror, sounds, this is a novel rich in atmosphere. " A sound like windbells, a

ghostly tintinnabulation reached their ears."(p324) "Three black vultures came tearing through the trees low over the roof with soft hoarse cries like the cries of love." p151 And telling and true insights like " It's amazing when you come to think of it how the spirit seems to blossom in the shadow of the ABBATTOIR".P91 A profoundly moving novel which must rank as one of the great novels of the 20th century so well is it crafted and so telling its story.

KurzbeschreibungMalcolm Lowrys iconic novel about a fatal Day of the Dead in a small Mexican town and one mans struggle against the forces threatening to destroy him. In what the New York Times calls one of the towering novels of [the twentieth] century, former British consul Geoffrey Firmin lives alone with his demons in the shadow of two active volcanoes in South Central Mexico. Gripped by alcoholism, Geoffrey makes one last effort to salvage his crumbling life on the day that his ex-wife, Yvonne, arrives in town. Its the Day of the Dead, 1938. The couple wants to revive their marriage and undo the wrongs of their past, but they soon realize that theyve stumbled into the wrong place and time, where not only Geoffrey and Yvonne, but the world itself is on the edge of Armageddon. Hailed by the Modern Library as one of the one hundred best English novels of the twentieth century, Under the Volcano stands as an iconic and richly drawn example of the modern novel at its most lyrical.