

## **Simplicissimus (Dedalus European Classics) by Hans Jakob Christoffel Von Grimmelshausen**



**ISBN:** 1873982763

**ISBN13:** 978-1873982761

**Author:** Hans Jakob Christoffel Von Grimmelshausen

**Book title:** Simplicissimus (Dedalus European Classics)

**Pages:** 400

**Publisher:** Hippocrene Books (September 1, 1995)

**Language:** English

**Category:** Genre Fiction

**Size PDF version:** 1912 kb

**Size ePUB version:** 1979 kb

**Size FB2 version:** 1549 kb

**Other formats:** rtf mobi mbr lrf

Book by Grimmelshausen, Hans Jakob Christoffel Von



## **Reviews of the Simplicissimus (Dedalus European Classics) by Hans Jakob Christoffel Von Grimmelshausen**

Gavirgas

The late J.B. Pick recommended this interesting picaresque to me on 12 June 2011, prior to his sad passing in January 2015. Pick's 'The Last Valley' is one of my favourite historical novels, even though it has long been out of print. Few people have heard of it, and a handful more probably know that it was made into a decent movie directed by the Sydney-born James Clavell (also the author of Shogun, King Rat etc) and starred Michael Caine and Omar Sharif, with a soundtrack written by John Barry. Although Pick's book is also about the 30 years' war, he stumbled across Simplicissimus after 'The Last Valley' was published. Simplicissimus is considered to be the first adventure novel in the German language and the first German novel masterpiece. Set during the tragic conflict that

wrecked Germany between 1618 -1648, it contains a lot of inhumanity and brutality that is candidly recounted in the first person by its protagonist Simplicius. Although Simplicius is regarded as a simpleton by his parents and subsequent guardians, his observations are often unexpectedly perceptive and at times downright hilarious. Anyone expecting long-winded prose will also be surprised to find that the humour in this novel is often unexpectedly crude and side-splittingly funny. Mike Mitchell's translation of this novel was shortlisted for The Weidenfeld Translation Prize in 1999, and I personally think that he did a great job of sprucing up the narrative and dialogue for a more modern readership. Simplicius' life takes many twists and turns in what is after all a highly dystopic Germany, and he finds himself playing many roles along the way which include a jester, war hero and even a woman. Although the pace is brisk the story goes on forever, and anyone wishing for a quick and enjoyable page turner will be disappointed. The novel also lacks any real goal, being simply a large number of life experiences recounted by Simplicius, so that the reading of it can at times get quite tiring. That said, it contains many insights into the early-modern way of life both in Germany and beyond, making it a good read for research purposes.

Rayli

Amazing and hilarious despite the dark subject matter. I'm surprised Simplicissimus hasn't been picked up by Hollywood studios, it's full of great stories. In fact, it's really five books in one (should've been six according to some reviewers). The reader follows Simplicius Simplicissimus (a la Forrest Gump) as he, at times a simpleton, is directly or indirectly involved in historical events during the 30 Years War. At times it's gory, sometimes hilarious, and at other times it's salacious - so not recommended for younger readers.

Best of all, it's written by a witness/participant of the 30 Years War. It's historical fiction, sometimes very heavy on the fiction, but I'm certain that there are important elements of truth in Grimmelshausen's depictions of townsfolk, battles, soldiers, etc.

I'd I can't speak about the merits of this particular translation and I'm not sure if better versions are available. That being said, Mitchell's translation is perfectly readable for a native speaker of English. However, this version lacks a table of contents so the organization could be improved

Vizil

O.K.

GODMAX

tough reading

Purebinder

great

Nanecele

This book really surprised me. I ordered it on a whim because it was referenced in a contemporary work and I thought it sounded interesting. It was actually quite good not to mention extremely humorous in parts.

Nuadazius

Graciously presented.. Accommodating translation.. top shelf

Good entertaining read.

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