



Dancing with Eva

Alan Judd

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In April 1945 Hitler's bunker in Berlin was the last place Edith Mecklenburg wanted to be. Faced with the constant bombing and the inexorable Russian advance, Hitler's grip on reality weakened by the hour. But Edith had no choice: as secretary to Eva Braun, Hitler's mistress and - for a few final, desperate hours - his wife, Edith had to see it through to the bitter end. An end that was likely to be summoned by cyanide or bullet.

Edith was one of the lucky few. She not only got out alive but made a new life for herself in England, marrying the young British Army captain who first interrogated her. Sixty years on, now a widow and grandmother, the Bunker is almost forgotten - another country, another life.

But the past has not forgotten her. Hans, a soldier she knew from those dark days, has written asking if he may visit. Obsessed with the past, he has spent the intervening decades tracking down all who were there, and who survived. Edith is the last on his list, the one he is most wary of. In her reluctant raking-over of old coals, Edith finds embers that still burn, and in an act of remembrance a very current threat. . .

Brilliantly re-creating the intensity and madness of Hitler's final days and his effect on those around him, Alan Judd's highly original new novel also reveals a terrifying coda. Superbly controlled and quietly devastating, *Dancing With Eva* is a dramatic dialogue with the past by a novelist at the height of his powers.

Dancing with Eva Details

Date : Published April 2nd 2007 by Simon & Schuster (first published January 1st 2007)

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Author : Alan Judd

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From Reader Review Dancing with Eva for online ebook

Bachyboy says

I rather liked this but the writer seemed to struggle with what kind of book he was writing; a novel based on Eva Braun or a quasi historical account of Hitler's last days. Two characters who were both involved in Hitler's entourage at that time meet in their 80's to discuss the last weeks of Hitler's life and the chaos after it. Good ending.

TMM says

Good read but disappointing in terms of storyline. Author is too interested in being clever and naval gazing about the moral whys and wherefores of Hitler's Germany. Makes you want to read more about the last days of Hitler's bunker but could do with much more tension and twists.

My rating is ***

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot....>

I thought Alan Judd's *Dancing with Eva* had a lot of potential when I first discovered it, but the reality was a bit of a letdown. And by bit, I mean my first thought on finishing the book was a self-congratulatory felicitation on not having thrown the book at my wall.

Thematically speaking, there are a few interesting things going on in this piece, but the style and tone of the narrative left me bored and disinterested. The fact that I didn't care Edith or Hans severely inhibited my enjoyment of the novel, and I can't say Judd's interpretation of Eva or Adolf was noteworthy or in any way memorable. And the surprise twist at the end... can you say anticlimactic?

When push comes to shove, I'm glad I pushed through the book, but that said, *Dancing with Eva* is not something I'm inclined to recommend.

Katie Grainger says

I found this book pretty interesting for the most part, however there were some sections where I really wanted to characters to get to the point. The story follows Edith, Secretary to Eva Braun and recounts the last days in Hitler's bunker before the Third Reich collapsed.

There were some interesting issues discussed in the book regarding the morality of the people surrounding Hitler and whether they held any blame for his actions. All in all an interesting read but does drag along a little in places.

Hanneke says

Een 2e-rangs boek van een 2e-rangs schrijver. Ik heb het boek gelezen omdat het zo'n goede recensies op dizzie kreeg en omdat ik heel erg verbaasd was dat Eva Braun een secretaresse bleek te hebben gehad. Deze secretaresse werd namelijk nooit vermeld in boeken, documentaires, films en getuigenverklaringen. Dat klopt ook, want ze heeft dan ook nooit bestaan. Kijk, als je als schrijver de eeuvele moed hebt een fictief personage op te voeren in zo'n beladen historische setting, doe het dan ook historisch verantwoord. Wat mij betreft geeft Judd met zijn verhaal aan dat hij geen hoge pet op heeft van de kennis van zijn lezers, wat ik dom en zelfs beledigend vind. Het zou al veel minder irritant zijn geweest als hij Edith opgevoerd had als gezelschapsdame of iets dergelijks van Eva Braun, want iedereen die zich enigszins heeft verdiept in Eva Braun, de Berghof of de laatste dagen in de Bunker, weet dat Eva's enige functie was om een gezellige hausfrau in dirndljurk te zijn en een ongecompliceerd thuis te verschaffen voor Hitler. Eva werd niet geacht zich ergens mee te bemoeien of over politiek te praten. Eva had dus echt geen secretaresse nodig, want zij verbracht haar dagen met spelen met haar hondjes, verkleden, gymmen en zwemmen en zo nu en dan charmante gastvrouw spelen voor oorlogsmisdadigers.

Edith en haar oude kennis Hans Beck zijn wat mij betreft totaal ongeloofwaardige personages. Je hebt nergens het gevoel dat je maar enigszins te weten komt wat in hun hoofd afspeelt. Waar het verhaal interessant zou hebben kunnen zijn, wordt dat niet verder uitgebouwd. De dramatische climax is een lachertje gezien de totale hel die Berlijn was net na de val van de stad en de totale anarchie die de eerste dagen heerste. Er was uiteraard geen sprake van compassie vanuit de Russische soldaten zoals tegenover Edith werd betoond. Deze soldaten waren al jaren in de meest gruwelijke gevechten gewikkeld met de Duitsers, hadden concentratiekampen gezien en hadden met z'n allen al honderdduizenden vrouwen verkracht. Deze sentimentaliteit vind ik dan ook zeer kwalijk tegenover alle mensen die deze gruwelijkheden hebben moeten overleven.

En dan verder nog: wat heeft de titel te betekenen? Dat wordt absoluut niet duidelijk. Edith danst in de Bunker met Eva. Ja, en toen? Niets dus. Je hebt geen idee wat Edith daarvan denkt en het heeft verder geen impact op wat dan ook. Vervolgens: het kussend nazi paartje op de kaft. Wie zijn dit? Edith heeft geen liefdesaffaire met Hans Beck, zijn dit dan Eva en haar zwager? Geen idee. Het is natuurlijk wel een interessant plaatje om het boek te promoten.

Kortom, dit boek heeft mij zeer geërgerd. Ik hoop niet dat het een eerste aanzet is tot het populariseren van de Tweede Wereldoorlog.

Marija S. ivanovska says

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Ashley says

I had higher hopes for this book, but sadly the story seemed flat and didn't keep my interest for long- this coming from the person who loves WWII themed books. The ending was anti-climatic and rather disappointing.

Silke says

I have been looking forward to read this book since the day that I bought it... and what a disappointment it has been. Maybe I expected a little bit to much from this book. I am just starting to read about World War II, so I don't have a lot of experience reading fictional books about this subject.. But this book just felt like it dragged on and on. The discussions between the two main characters were very philosophical and never really coming to a point. The whole dark secret that was revealed at the end was such an anticlimax. I just didn't get it, why would elderly people at the end of their lives even consider murdering each-other? I read this book in the hope to learn more about Eva Braun, but further then the color of her shoes and her shopping expeditions to Munich this book never brought me. A missed chance!

janetandjohn says

Edith was Eva Braun's secretary - one of the few that escaped the bunker after Hitler's suicide. As an old lady, married to a British officer and now widowed, she is surprised to receive a letter from a soldier who also escaped that day. He'd like to come for a chat.... but what is there to talk about? You'd be surprised!

ape says

I found this slow going to begin with, but it got more interesting later in the book and by the end it was quite tense. It actually made me think of another book, Embers, by a Hungarian (?) guy that I recently read. Not that they're similar stories, but more of the set up - it's set during a short time frame, with two old people meeting up after decades of no contact, and talking through their common past.

In this case the common past is shared by Hans, a soldier in the Nazi German army, and Edith, Eva Braun's secretary, during the second world war. The main focus being on the last days, the bunker, and what happened to them shortly after Hitler and co committed suicide and everyone else fled the bunker. And the bad things that happened to them.

I never completely understood what Hans was after, only that I didn't like him, and he really did get what he deserved in the end. What was he expecting, coming back and tormenting Edith with the past, and threatening (perhaps not intentionally) her family and her life. He used and abused her, never really got that and then turned up wanting to chat about it...

Interesting new angle on the war, but as I said below, not the fastest paced book.

Yna Fempia Paez says

It was only during the end part that I was completely tuned in to the story. At first it was really very boring as everything that happened in the past were narrated in a very long (and I mean very long) conversation between Edith and Hans, a soldier she knew back in the days.

It was also not very engaging as I lost interest while reading it because, let's face it, the author used to many complicated words and grand phrases. I just wished he kept the narrative itself simple so one can concentrate on the plot and not on trying to decipher the meaning of each argument.

Brian says

Edith Mecklenburg was Eva Braun's (fictional) personal assistant. As such, she was with her mistress and Hitler in the bunker during the last days of the war. Unlike Eva, Edith did not choose to commit suicide when the allied troops closed in. Instead she was captured by allied troops and ended up marrying her interrogator.

Now elderly, living in a big house in the English countryside she has become almost more English than the English and would rather not remember her time as part of Hitler's entourage. But a visit from Hans, a soldier who was also in the bunker in those last grim days, upsets the delicate equilibrium of her old age. Why does Hans want to see her? What is to be gained from reopening that closed chapter?

Dancing With Eva is not a big book. The entire plot revolves around the evening of Hans' visit, interspersed with flashbacks to their shared past. But it's compelling nonetheless - I practically read it at one sitting - and the revelation that comes at the end followed by a neat little twist is very satisfying.

Susan says

The story of Edith, who as a young women, worked for Eva Braun recounts the last days of the Second World War in a Berlin bunker to someone she has not seen for 40 years. So far, I'm not particularly enthralled but will keep going.....

I'm glad I stayed with this book - especially for the discussion on sanity!

The ending was quite dark and dare I say appropriate!

Velvetink says

Fictional account of Eva Braun's personal secretary. Thought provoking yet again on the banality of evil - takes many twists and turns.

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Rachel Brand says

This is a fantastically written and very compelling novel. It is so well researched and historically accurate that I actually found myself believing that Eva Braun had a secretary, and wondered why she had never appeared in the movie of Hitler's last days, 'Downfall.' It wasn't until I read the author's note at the back of the book that I discovered that Eva's secretary was entirely fictional! 9/10

I'd recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the events in Germany during WWII but doesn't mind reading historical fiction which contains some artistic license. I'd also recommend that those who enjoyed this book and would like to find out more about life in Hitler's bunker to watch 'Downfall.' Just make sure that you get a copy which has subtitles as the film is entirely in German.
