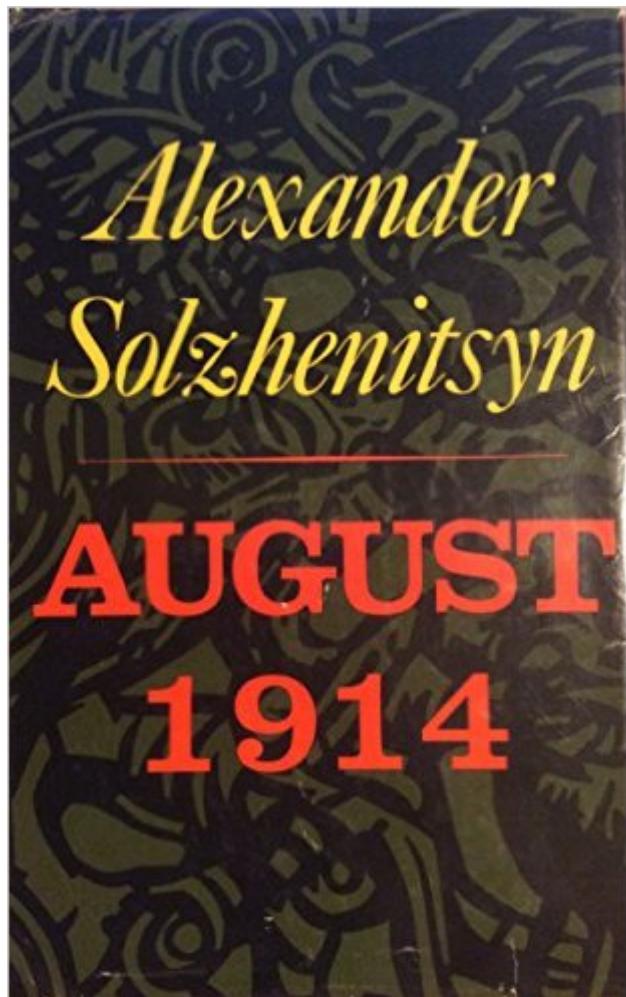


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August 1914



Synopsis

Part of a sequence of novels about the Russian Revolution carrying the overall title of The Red Wheel. The other titles in this series include October 1916 and Lenin in Zurich. Other books by Solzhenitsyn include The Gulag Archipelago. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

Series: Red Wheel (Book 1)

Hardcover: 622 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (1972)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374106843

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Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 6.1 x 1.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (69 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #522,300 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #204 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > Russian #4868 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > War #30724 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > Literary

Customer Reviews

The theme of this book is not prison camps: it is nothing more narrow than life itself. And it is almost as rich in characters and stories within stories (here Solzhenitsyn is very like Tolstoy) as life: constancy in love, artistic integrity, the whimsy of fate, literacy in Medieval Novgorod, the prison in the Count of Monte Cristo, snow, how to sew, the law of unintended consequences. A few major abiding themes run like threads throughout the book, providing unity: First, the life of the "zek," the prisoner in Stalin's camps. Second, loneliness: not just of prisoners longing for a woman or lost loved ones, or of persecuted wives trying to make lives for themselves, but ultimately of each person. Every conversation carries a different meaning for the people involved. The author "gets inside of peoples heads" in an amazing way -- from the janitor Spiridon to the "Best Friend of Counter-Intelligence Operatives," Joseph Stalin himself. Third, and on a deeper level, integrity, both artistic and moral. Fourth, and I don't know if this was the conscious intent of the author or not, the book reminds us of the unity of Western civilization. Aside from mentions of Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Pushkin, and Lermontov, (which, I might add, also describes the company Solzhenitsyn belongs in,

with honor), the book is honeycombed with references to the great thinkers and artists of European civilization -- from the ancient Greeks and the Gospels, to Dante, the Holy Grail, Bach and Beethoven. The Marxist Rubin even quotes Luther. Primarily, no doubt this is a reflection of the fact that the prisoners in the "sharashkas," the top-secret scientific work camps, were educated men, unlike, say, the hero of his shorter novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.

August 1914 Alexander Solzhenitsyn I remember when my son was little. He would bring me August 1914 and ask me to read it to him. There were no pictures in this book, but he knew that it was a book that I loved. So we would lie on his bed and as I opened the book and read to him about a world he could only discover in a book. Solzhenitsyn is one of my heroes, a moral voice speaking against the tyranny of Soviet repression. This book about the battle of Tannenberg in August 1914 is not only a brilliant historical novel, but also a critique of the forces that lead to the October Revolution in Russia. Let's talk about the story, before we continue the review. The story is about the entrance of Imperial Russia into World War I. War is declared and Russia in its hurry to honor its commitments to France, invades Prussia. Its army under the leadership of General Samsonov is unprepared for war and Russia suffers a humiliating defeat as the army is surrounded and destroyed. The story is told through the eyes of a Colonel Vorotynsky who alone sees the coming disaster and vainly tries to avert it. It is a story of an Army that did not understand modern warfare. Samsonov, a cavalry officer, is used to sitting on his horse and viewing the battlefield; this battlefield, however, stretches for hundreds of miles. Communication is non-existent; supplies are scarce. The Germans, however, understood the new technology and were able to listen in on all the Russian communications. Samsonov makes one blunder after another; he is out classed and doesn't know what to do. With his army collapsing around him, he is lost. Lost in a forest, he ends his life with a bullet as he and his staff are attempting to escape the encirclement. It is a wonderfully written book.

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