



## Too Loud a Solitude

By Bohumil Hrabal

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TOO LOUD A SOLITUDE is a tender and funny story of Hant'a - a man who has lived in a Czech police state - for 35 years, working as compactor of wastepaper and books. In the process of compacting, he has acquired an education so unwitting he can't quite tell which of his thoughts are his own and which come from his books. He has rescued many from jaws of hydraulic press and now his house is filled to the rooftops. Destroyer of the written word, he is also its perpetuator. But when a new automatic press makes his job redundant there's only one thing he can do - go down with his ship. This is an eccentric romp celebrating the indestructability- against censorship, political oppression etc - of the written word.

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## Too Loud a Solitude By Bohumil Hrabal Bibliography

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

One of Czechoslovakia's most popular authors, Hrabal ( *I Served the King of England* ) was never a dissident, nor are his books polemics; he is noted for his visceral, fabulistic prose and bizarre sense of humor. Hanta, the narrator of this absorbing novella, is a gentle alcoholic who has spent 35 years compacting wastepaper. In his messy, subterranean world, the refuse of human life accumulates: bloody butcher paper, office correspondence, yellowed newspapers and, most importantly, books. Able to quote Kant, Goethe and Seneca, he is both "artist and audience" as he destroys or selects for his own enjoyment the printed matter others have discarded. Hanta's unusual occupation--in a country which until recently suffered severe literary censorship--is an ironic backdrop as he reflects on the women he has loved or imaginary encounters between historical figures such as Jesus Christ and Lao-tze. This fable about the modern-day equivalent of book-burning, although a showcase for Hrabal's dazzling writing talent, often slides into parody, under the weight of its obtrusive morality.

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From Library Journal

In this novella, written in 1976, narrator and authorial alter ego Hanta meditates on the 35 years he has spent at a hydraulic press in a dark cellar, compacting waste paper and books proscribed by various regimes. Though he no longer weeps or protests when rare treasures appear in his press, the books that he must destroy become his whole life, his only companions. When he is to be replaced by young workers with a more productive machine, Hanta dreams of a gigantic press that destroys not only himself but the entire city, with its traditions and culture. Written by a leading Czech writer (*I Served the King of England*, LJ 4/1/89), this affecting metaphor expressing fear for Central European culture belongs in libraries collecting European fiction.

- *Marie Bednar, Pennsylvania State Univ. Libs., University Park*

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Review

'Short, sharp and eccentric . sophisticated, thought-provoking and pithy' SPECTATOR 'Unmissable, combines extremes of comedy and seriousness, plus pathos, slapstick, sex and violence all stirred into one delicious brew' GUARDIAN 'In imaginative riches and sheer exhilaration it offers more than most books twice its size . at once tender and scatological, playful and sombre, moving and irresistibly funny' INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY Devastating... a superb book and a magnificent author' INDEPENDENT

## **Users Review**

**From reader reviews:**

**Virginia Villalon:**

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