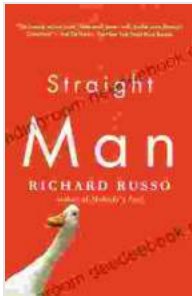


Straight Man: A Novel of Higher Education by Richard Russo



Straight Man: A Novel (Vintage Contemporaries)

by Richard Russo

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 3303 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
X-Ray : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 418 pages



Richard Russo's *Straight Man* is a witty and insightful novel that explores the absurd and profound realities of academia. It follows Hank Devereaux, a literature professor at the fictional West Central University, as he grapples with his dysfunctional department, overbearing colleagues, and the challenges of teaching and administration.

Hank Devereaux: An Ordinary Man in an Absurd World

Hank Devereaux is an ordinary man trying to make sense of an increasingly chaotic world. He is a dedicated professor who loves teaching literature, but he is also surrounded by a cast of eccentric and often bewildering characters.

There's Gordon Kunkle, the department chair who is more concerned with bureaucracy than with education. There's Dickie Pope, the pompous and insecure poet. And there's Libby Gelman, the overzealous feminist who is determined to make Hank's life miserable.

The Absurdities of Academia

Russo's novel is a scathing satire of the absurdities of academia. He skewers the pompous language, the petty rivalries, and the endless meetings that seem to dominate university life.

In one particularly memorable scene, Hank is forced to attend a faculty meeting that is devoted entirely to discussing the purchase of a new coffee machine. The meeting is a microcosm of the larger problems of academia: it is filled with meaningless jargon, petty squabbles, and a complete lack of focus.

The Realities of University Life

Despite the absurdities, *Straight Man* also captures the realities of university life. Russo shows us the challenges of teaching, the frustrations of administration, and the personal sacrifices that faculty members often make.

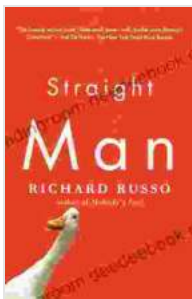
Hank is a dedicated teacher who cares deeply about his students. But he is also struggling to balance his teaching responsibilities with the demands of his personal life. He is divorced, his son is estranged, and he is constantly feeling overwhelmed.

A Novel About the Human Condition

Ultimately, *Straight Man* is not just a novel about academia. It is a novel about the human condition. It is about the challenges of navigating a complex and often absurd world.

Hank Devereaux is a flawed and complex character, but he is also a relatable one. We can all identify with his struggles to find meaning and purpose in life.

Richard Russo's *Straight Man* is a brilliant and thought-provoking novel that will stay with you long after you finish it. It is a must-read for anyone who has ever set foot on a college campus.



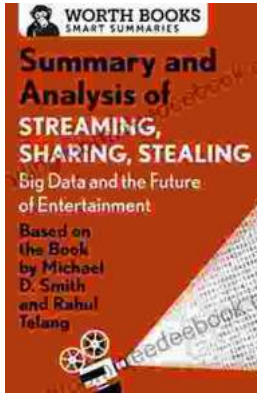
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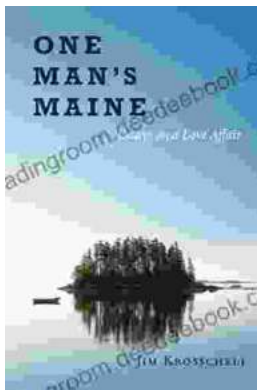
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