

The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared

by Jonas Jonasson



About the Book

The international publishing sensation --- over six million copies sold worldwide!

A reluctant centenarian much like Forrest Gump (if Gump were an explosives expert with a fondness for vodka) decides it's not too late to start over?

After a long and eventful life, Allan Karlsson ends up in a nursing home, believing it to be his last stop. The only problem is that he's still in good health, and in one day, he turns 100. A big celebration is in the works, but Allan really isn't interested (and he'd like a bit more control over his vodka consumption). So he decides to escape. He climbs out the window in his slippers and embarks on a hilarious and entirely unexpected journey, involving, among other surprises, a suitcase stuffed with cash, some unpleasant criminals, a friendly hot-dog stand operator, and an elephant (not to mention a death by elephant).

It would be the adventure of a lifetime for anyone else, but Allan has a larger-than-life backstory: Not only has he witnessed some of the most important events of the 20th century, but he has actually played a key role in them. Starting out in munitions as a boy, he somehow finds himself involved in many of the key explosions of the 20th century and travels the world, sharing meals and more with everyone from Stalin, Churchill and Truman to Mao, Franco and de Gaulle. Quirky and utterly unique, THE 100-YEAR-OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT THE WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED has charmed readers across the world.

Discussion Guide

1. Author Jonas Jonasson describes THE 100-YEAR-OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT A WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED as "an intelligent, very stupid novel." What do you think he means?
2. Allan Karlsson is 100 years old. This is unusual; typical icons these days are much younger. How does his age matter to the novel? Did you relate to him? Why do you think the author, Jonas Jonasson, chose to make Allan a centenarian? Is there a reason the author would begin the current action on the protagonist's 100th birthday?
3. Would you call Allan a role model? Why, or why not?
4. At the opening of THE 100-YEAR-OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT A WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED, Allan climbs out a window to escape a birthday party that clearly means something different to him than it does to the people planning it. What do you think of this act? Is this rebellion? Is this simply expedient? Have you ever considered simply escaping out a window rather than facing something?
5. What do you think the author was saying about our society and the attitude towards aging? Who is the oldest person you know? What have you learned from that person, and did reading THE 100-YEAR-OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT A WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED make you wish you could hear more of that person's personal story?
6. Compare THE 100-YEAR-OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT A WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED to other novels about protagonists who have unexpected adventures and encounters. What does the conceit of inserting fictional characters into real-life situations tell readers? What does it mean to you?
7. Readers learn about Allan's past through his stories. Do you trust his memory? Did it occur to you that these might not be true? Why? What does it tell you about the nature of the past, and memory?
8. Throughout the novel Allan encounters historical characters, and gets involved in episodes that change history. Which episode did you enjoy the most? Why?
9. Imagine an "outtake" from the novel --- wherein Allan encounters someone from history who does not appear in THE 100-YEAR-OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT A WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED. Who would you like it to be?
10. If you had to describe THE 100-YEAR-OLD MAN WHO CLIMBED OUT A WINDOW AND DISAPPEARED in a single word, what would it be?
11. At 100, Allan's life is filled with important moments. And yet he does not seem to see these encounters as momentous. Is he naïve? Innocent? What does Allan's own attitude toward his past and his present tell you about him and his view of life? Do you hold a similar perspective?
12. Reviewers across the globe have commented on the humor in the novel. Did you laugh? Would you define this as comic, or satiric? What is the difference?
13. Have you read other novels by Swedish novelists? If so, which ones? If not, why not? How is this one similar or different?

14. Re-read the final pages of the novel. Some would say that Jonasson has left an episode yet to come. What do you think will happen to Allan? Why do you think the author chose to end the novel like this? Would you read a sequel?

Author Bio

Jonas Jonasson worked as a journalist for the *Expressen* newspaper for many years. He became a media consultant and later set up a company producing sports and events for Swedish television. He then sold the company and moved abroad to work on his first novel. Today Jonasson is a global phenomenon. His novels have sold 16 million copies in 46 countries. Jonas Jonasson lives on the Swedish island of Gotland in the Baltic Sea.

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