

Amos: To Ride A Dead Horse

Stanley Gordon West



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Set in Montana in the early '60's, it is the story of one man who against impossible odds refused to give in to despair and hopelessness. Amos was a man who thought he'd experienced all that life had to offer when, with a capricious turn of fate, he fell through the cracks of society's institutions, into the merciless cogwheels of human apathy and carelessness. After a tragic accident that kills his wife and leaves him with a shattered hip, without family, and penniless, Amos is deposited in the county poor farm, Sunset Home, outside a small Montana town. He believes his life is over and he resolves to let go and die as quickly as possible, isolating himself from the other residents of the poor farm.

Under head nurse Daisy Daws's iron-clad rule, he notices small cruelties and injustices but attempts to ignore them in his refusal to accept this meaningless end to his life, until an unthinkable horror witnessed by chance in the middle of the night reawakens his deeply felt sense of justice. Ever so often, indifference and neglect mutate into unmitigated evil and then humanity goes on trial. Rarely, someone stands in the breach and shouts "No" with only courage and dignity as weapons. Amos, in spite of himself, becomes that person when he says aloud to himself in the darkness of his bleak little room, "I'm not going to die, by God, and I'm not going to let her get away with it!" The story of his struggle with Daisy Daws not only to survive but to overcome is a compelling testimony to the inner strength and irrepressible spirit of man. Albert Camus once said, "In the midst of winter, I found there was within me an invincible summer." This became Amos's credo. With a growing respect and affection for his fellow inmates, with a newfound romance with the lovely Fern, and against devastating odds and arrogant brutality, he finds a triumph he never expected.



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