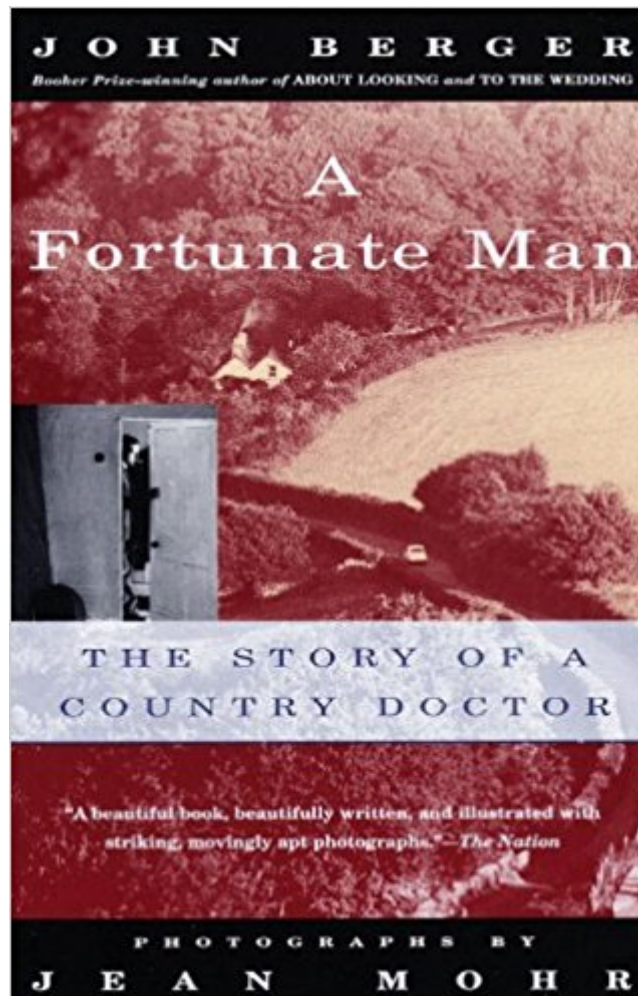




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A Fortunate Man: The Story Of A Country Doctor



Synopsis

In this quietly revolutionary work of social observation and medical philosophy, Booker Prize-winning writer John Berger and the photographer Jean Mohr train their gaze on an English country doctor and find a universal man--one who has taken it upon himself to recognize his patient's humanity when illness and the fear of death have made them unrecognizable to themselves. In the impoverished rural community in which he works, John Sassall tends the maimed, the dying, and the lonely. He is not only the dispenser of cures but the repository of memories. And as Berger and Mohr follow Sassall about his rounds, they produce a book whose careful detail broadens into a meditation on the value we assign a human life. First published thirty years ago, *A Fortunate Man* remains moving and deeply relevant--no other book has offered such a close and passionate investigation of the roles doctors play in their society. "In contemporary letters John Berger seems to me peerless; not since Lawrence has there been a writer who offers such attentiveness to the sensual world with responsiveness to the imperatives of conscience."--Susan Sontag

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Customer Reviews

Mr. John Berger calls this work an essay, a word that does not bring to my mind great literary work. It brings back memories of forced reading and documentation. "A Fortunate Man", is a literary accomplishment, it is another example of this Author's skills and to the man this book is a tribute to.

Additionally the photographs of Jean Mohr bring a sense of hyperrealism to this documentary of one Doctor's practice, the world in which he lives, and the lives he cares for. Many of the black and white images brought to mind the Artist Andrew Wyeth as he too has documented the life of those traditionally not thought to be extraordinary, but who are the foundations of our society. Photographs are not generally found in most popular literature. Images are the realm of the Author and the creations he or she can conjure in the mind's eye of a reader. Some would comment pictures are inappropriate; they intrude, or at worst become a crutch for weak writing. Others would say each reader should have their own visual experience, their own reference points they create when reading another's work. But in this collaboration the images and words compliment one another, and like the words that are black and white, the photographer too makes her contribution in shades from black to white, and the result is simply extraordinary. There are moments when the Author becomes a poet adding but a few lines to an otherwise lone photograph, and the feeling evoked has more impact than chapters of lesser writers. Mr. Berger describes a landscape as perhaps being other than a stage where events unfold, and actually being a screen or curtain that hides life's events.

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