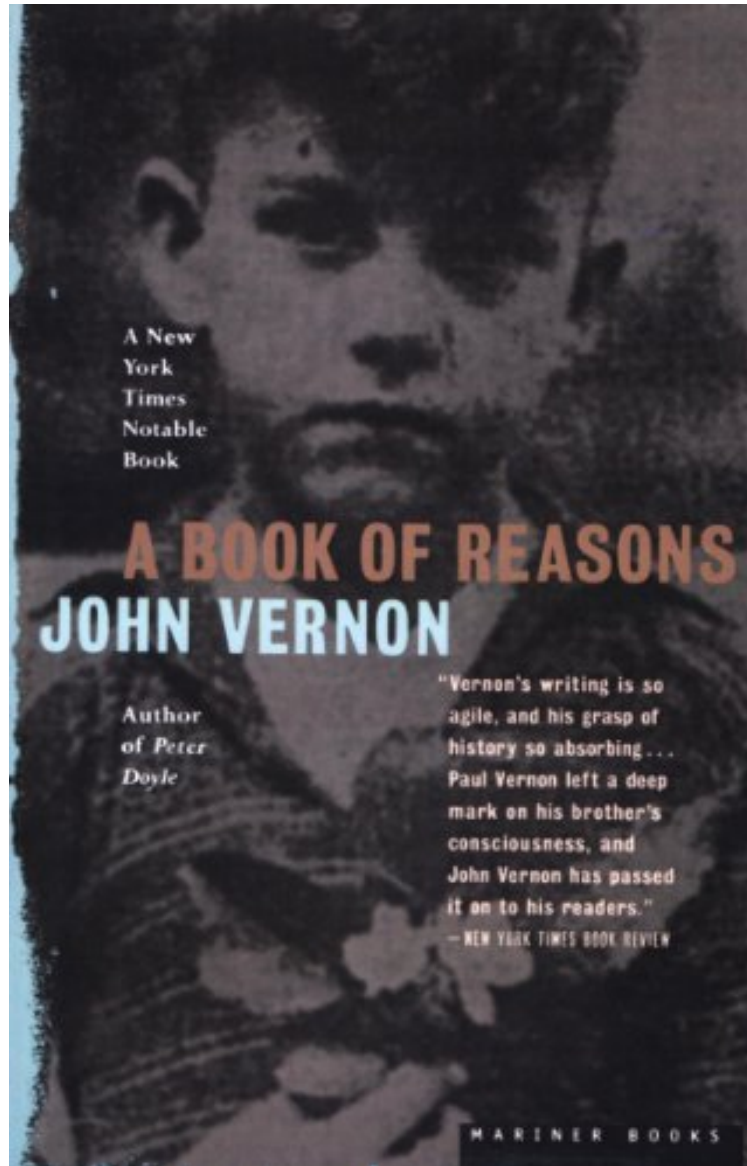


(Download free pdf) A Book of Reasons

A Book of Reasons

Von John Vernon

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Von John Vernon : A Book of Reasons before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Book of Reasons:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.
Interesting, odd, yet incomplete Von Barbara Klein John Vernon has the task of cleaning out his brother's house after his brother dies of a sudden illness. He discovers that his brother lived in an abyss of hopelessness and depression. This book is his attempt to come to terms with that discovery, and the questions of personal responsibility it raises for

him. Should he have known how his brother was suffering? Could he have helped? Was he required to? In the beginning Vernon tries to approach these daunting questions in a light-hearted search for the reasons. Why the thermometer, for instance? His musings along these lines are quite interesting. He meanders through all sorts of unrelated arcane lore looking for connections, for the reasons why things happen the way they do. Ultimately, however, he has to acknowledge that all of these reasons are beside the point. He says, finally, "Reasons do have a limit. Shall I offer a history of the Pepsi bottle, the cigarette, the milk carton, the rag? A history of bad smells? Even now, in memory, I feel buried like Paul, trapped in his house, surrounded by the waste of unexplained things." This might have been a turning point in the narrative away from reasons to the limits of personal responsibility, but the author doesn't go there. He seems to withdraw into a kind of personal disgust that pushes away the responsibilities of love and kinship. He does not come to terms with his discovery, and this is the drama of the narrative. As this drama unfolds, however, I sense that it is no longer under Vernon's control. Vernon seems to drift to a place outside of human relationships, so that the book ends on a strange unresolved note.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Vernon breathes new life into memoir genre

Von Ein Kunde_A Book of Reasons_ is the strongest memoir I have read since Tobias Wolff's *This Boy's Life*. Interspersed with Vernon's accounts of visits to his brother's abandoned, ruined house are fascinating historical interludes detailing the invention of objects such as the thermometer and the claw hammer. Toward the end of the book, Vernon gracefully alternates between descriptions of the Big Bang and his brother Paul's conception, which occurred several years prior to the author's. As a historical novelist, of course, this is Vernon's great strength -- an uncanny ability to make us believe he has witnessed not only those events which followed his birth, but those which came before. The sections of the book in which Vernon describes coming face-to-face with the mess of Paul's house are extremely moving. It will be an overwhelming chore to clean the place up, and this becomes very clear to Vernon as he recounts the situation to his wife over the phone and suddenly bursts into tears. He is a warm, engaging, funny, and compassionate narrator, and it is utterly impossible to put the book down as we follow him through the process of enlisting a cleaning crew, and, finally, watching them get to work.

In many ways, this is a book about shame -- the shame of not keeping one's house clean, the shame of disconnection between family members, the shame we must all face when claiming we are more together than others, cleaner than others, better socialized. Gently, intelligently, and with great style, Vernon reminds us of our place in history, and of how we are all connected.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Specific reasons for "A Book of Reasons"

Von margo wixsom

The cover illustration of one of Joseph Cornell's cryptic boxes, assembled from discarded junk, is an excellent visual metaphor for the way in which John Vernon approaches the topic of death, loss and an exploration of the reasons for living in this book. Vernon attempts to make sense, not so much of the death, but of the peculiar, eclectic life of his older brother. The binding threads among the disparate elements of Vernon's university career, his role as executor of his brother's estate, the brother's gradual withdrawal from social relationships and the junkpile life that he leaves behind, are brief excerpts from an old encyclopedia that describe the tools and techniques of empirical culture. Vernon profoundly explores the microcosm of American family and lifestyle in his examination of the microcosm of his brother's life and their disconnected and blundered relationship. From the opening pages of his excursion to the local Walmart to find a thermometer to mount on his recently dead brother's house, Vernon is adept at using his own frustration and experiences of cultural clutter as the divining rod to unravel the peculiarities of brother's secluded and repulsively littered life. Vernon uses metaphors like the thermometer throughout the text to observe and measure his own as well as our cultural climate and the ways in which we collect and treat objects and relationships in our supposedly educated and modern American culture. Vernon employs a masterful mix of humor, angst, revulsion, annoyance and fascinated curiosity in his exploration of grieving as a means to examine the many-layered questions of life and death. It is a refreshing exploration that avoids the usual religious and spiritual overtones of the subject, yet retains a profound metaphysical inquiry about self, other and culture that presses the reader to frame (and reframe) his/her own perspective and practices. Vernon uses metaphor and object representation as tools to explore the essential questions and impacts of life and lifestyle. If there is one flaw in this fascinating and engaging book it is the ending, which slips into a conventional approach that pushes the reader to accept the notion that no life is a waste. When Vernon takes us into mundane territory in such an unconventional way it is a bit disappointing that he ends on such a conventional note.

Kurzbeschreibung "History in its minute particulars touches us all, and in the least expected ways." Every family has its odd character, the one member who never seems right with the world. In his brilliant pairing of family history with the history of civilization, John Vernon discovers the extraordinary sources of ordinary things in the life of his reclusive brother, Paul. When Paul died and John was charged with settling his affairs, he came face to face with a life he had never suspected. His brother's house in southern New Hampshire was in a state of squalid, shocking disrepair: piled high with a lifetime of trash, unheated and decrepit, pitifully unlivable. An assembly worker and an amateur inventor, Paul had managed to keep his sad and strange world hidden. The story of this troubled soul is at once

fascinating and tragic. And more: it cries out for reasons. Why does a childhood full of promise turn wrong? Why do we clutter our lives with things? How do we make and understand our world? Vernon seeks answers in the most unexpected places. Buying a hammer and thermometer at Wal-Mart, that icon of consumerism, inspires a short history of tools and the discovery of mercury. Paul's wake occasions an investigation of blood circulation and embalming. Vernon voyages through science and physiology, culture and mythology, on a search "for a way to comprehend a life that left behind not splendid monuments but ordinary wreckage." The result is a book of reasons: reasons for his brother's way of life, reasons for his own response to Paul's death. Bringing to bear the narrative powers that distinguished his acclaimed historical novels *Peter Doyle* and *All for Love*, Vernon links the story of one odd individual to the surprising and irregular upheavals of history. In the process, he discovers how reasons, for all of us, are one means of learning to accept things that can never be explained.