

The background features a complex network of white nodes and lines, resembling a constellation or a data network. The nodes are of varying sizes and are connected by thin white lines. The overall color scheme is a gradient from dark purple at the top to a bright pink at the bottom. The text is centered and in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

The Aftermath

Written by Rhidian Brook

Published by sanmarco-sf

Table of Contents

The Aftermath Trailer	1
The Aftermath Rotten Tomatoes	2
The Aftermath Review	3
The Aftermath Book	4
The Aftermath Showtimes	5
The Aftermath Cast	6
The Aftermath Imdb	7
The Aftermath Plot	8
The Aftermath Release Date	9

The Aftermath

By Rhidian Brook

The Aftermath Trailer

1946, post-World War II Hamburg. While thousands wander the rubble, lost and homeless, Colonel Lewis Morgan, charged with overseeing the rebuilding of this devastated city and the denazification of its defeated people, is stationed in a grand house on the River Elbe. He is awaiting the arrival of his wife, Rachael--still grieving for their eldest son--and their only surviving son, Edmund. But rather than force the owners of the house, a German widower and his rebellious daughter, out onto the streets, Lewis insists that the two families live together. In this charged atmosphere, both parents and children will be forced to confront their true selves as enmity and grief give way to passion and betrayal, to their deepest desires, their fiercest loyalties, and the transforming power of forgiveness.

The Aftermath

The Aftermath Rotten Tomatoes

The Aftermath Review

This courageous new novel from award-winning author Rhidian Brook tells an emotionally riveting story of two families, one house, and love grown from hate.

Great novel indeed!

IN WAR, NOBODY TRULY WINS

I have history with this book...

...since I knew about it since almost it was published and even I bought it...

...but as many of us, readers, happens, we put the book in a box...

...and later you forgets that you have to read it!

When I found out that this book was adapted into a film (soon to be released), I ran to look out for the book...

...and finally read it!

Yep, it was a great reading indeed!

Hamburg, 1946. The Allied forces (USA, England and Russ Great novel indeed!

IN WAR, NOBODY TRULY WINS

I have history with this book...

...since I knew about it since almost it was published and even I bought it...

...but as many of us, readers, happens, we put the book in a box...

...and later you forgets that you have to read it!

When I found out that this book was adapted into a film (soon to be released), I ran to look out for the book...

The Aftermath

...and finally read it!

Yep, it was a great reading indeed!

Hamburg, 1946. The Allied forces (USA, England and Russia) have got each a part of Germany, and while some are reconstructing, some just are enjoying the spoils of war, and even enforcing strict laws against the surviving Germans.

Yes, Nazi party was truly evil, but if you beat them, and later you are treating unfair to the defeat ones...

...how noble and honorable, the victors truly were?

The vicious circle of evil should stop at some point and instead of doing circles, you have to go forward. Since after all, almost any major power in history have done unspeakable actions in war against other nation, the ally of a time it's the enemy of another.

You can't live in the past, yes, never forget to avoid falling into the same errors, but at some point you have to start the process of forgiving.

A British Colonel is in charge of Hamburg, and he's assigned a house to live with his family, a house that was still occupied by their rightful owners, and the usual action would be to take them out to go to some temporary shelter, and even the wife of the British Colonel would be just happy with that, since she lost one of her two underage sons due a Nazi bomb...

...but the British Colonel can't do that, and he offered a discreet deal with the owner of the house to remain in the upper section of the manor along with his underage daughter, who is pissed of having to share her home with invaders...

...so tension of both sides will make not easy to live all together under the same roof...

...for not saying an eager British Intelligence Officer like a hawk looking out for anyone, not matter if ally or foe, whom may be not following the new rules of occupation.

Not only the losers in a war must learn from their wartime actions, but also the victors should learn too from the experience.

If we really ending wars, the hate must end along with them.

...more

The Aftermath Book

¿Alguna vez hab is visto el trailer de una pel cula y sentido la necesidad de leer el libro? Yo no. Lo reconozco, no soy mucho de pel culas. Pero siempre hay un primera vez y me alegro que haya sido con este libro. La pluma del autor es embriagadora, como si de alguna manera pudieras beber un t  y un vaso de whisky, al mismo tiempo. La historia sensual, dura, realista, hermosa.

As a fan of historical fiction, I knew this book wouldn't have to work hard to win me over. However, I didn't know how easily the characters would draw me into their lives--into a world of motherless children and childless mothers, a world trying to live again amongst the rubble of broken buildings, bodies, and spirits. Brook gets every nuance of grief just right, without sentimentality, but with hard truths. He shows us how life is born from death, and how the broken seek and ultimately find a way to rise again. ...more

The Aftermath Showtimes

From the blurb: Hamburg, 1946. Thousands remain displaced in what is now the British Occupied Zone. Charged with overseeing the rebuilding of this devastated city and the de-Nazification of its defeated people, Colonel Lewis Morgan is requisitioned a fine house on the banks of the Elbe, where he will be joined by his grieving wife, Rachael, and only remaining son, Edmund.

But rather than force its owners, a German widower and his traumatized daughter, to leave their home, Lewis insists that the t From the blurb: Hamburg, 1946. Thousands remain displaced in what is now the British Occupied Zone. Charged with overseeing the rebuilding of this devastated city and the de-Nazification of its defeated people, Colonel Lewis Morgan is requisitioned a fine house on the banks of the Elbe, where he will be joined by his grieving wife, Rachael, and only remaining son, Edmund.

But rather than force its owners, a German widower and his traumatized daughter, to leave their home, Lewis insists that the two families live together. In this charged and claustrophobic atmosphere all must confront their true selves as enmity and grief give way to passion and betrayal. This is certainly one of the best WWII books I have read in a very long time.

My recent enjoyment of Last Letter from Istanbul by Lucy Foley, led me to this novel. The difference was the unimaginable horror of the aftermath of the war on German citizens.

I was interested in this novel since reading the German history in the era between WWI, the Bolsjewik Revolution of 1917, and WWII. What millions of people don't realize, is how the Treaty of Versailles, which brought WWI to an end, also brought famine and horror to the already devastated inhabitants of Germany. Twenty four million Germans died as a result and brought Hitler to power. ...And, with this, Lewis delivered the first of his killer statistics: 'Do you know that we dropped more bombs on Hamburg in a weekend than the Germans dropped on London in the entire war?' He said it to Edmund, but he wanted Rachael to hear it, wanted her to take in its full force; to eliminate the prejudice and self-pity. Almost on cue, the ruination of Hamburg opened up around them, and if, at first, it looked no different to the mental pictures they had of London, Coventry, Bristol, the scale of it accumulated with every yard. There were no standing structures ahead of them, behind them or on either side, only rubble, and rivers of people moving at the side of the road. 'They started it, though, didn't they, Father?'

Lewis nodded. Of course. They started it. They started it when their grievances were stirred in a pot by a conjurer; they started it with every arm raised and armband worn, with every rally attended and road built, with every utterance applauded; they started it with every shop smashed, every plane launched and bomb dropped. They started it. But where were they? Where was the master race that swallowed continents now? Surely it wasn't these pathetically clad, feeble-limbed troglodytes plodding along at the side of the shattered road?

-0-

The Aftermath

'At least they're less trouble when they're hungry,' Burnham said, offering a mirthless smile.

-0-

'Have you seen the people at the gates? Do you look at those waifs and strays, those skeletal, yellow, stinking, homeless people bowing and fawning and scraping for food and shelter and think: By God, yes, I must remind these people that they have been defeated?' In *The Aftermath* Germany is once again paying the price of war, and the circumstances in the country was just as terrible as other countries, or even worse.

The Aftermath is a gripping tale of adjustment, of unlikely friendships and the magic of forgiveness on all the people involved. It is an uplifting, inspirational novel, despite the gruesome details of the aftermath of war on Europe and its people. An atmospheric, detailed, gripping experience.

This book is equal to the stunning novel *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.

I am delighted to discover the novels of the multiple-award-winning author, Rhidian Brook. I just love his style, approach, open-mindedness and knack for detail.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. ...more

It is not good when you start a book and don't believe in the feasibility of the characters' first actions. These actions didn't fit the characters' personalities. Once this feeling was lodged in my head I could never throw it off. The characters, their relationships and their actions were not credible.

This is a book of historical fiction that depicts the first years after WW2 in Germany. The setting is Hamburg and the year is 1946. What saved me from giving the book only one star is the accurate and interesting description of the situation in Germany at this time. It was split into four zones, controlled by the English, the Americans, the French and the Russians respectively. The political tensions between the nations are emerging.

This is a book of historical fiction that depicts the first years after WW2 in Germany. The setting is Hamburg and the year is 1946. What saved me from giving the book only one star is the accurate and interesting description of the situation in Germany at this time. It was split into four zones, controlled by the English, the Americans, the French and the Russians respectively. The political tensions between the nations are emerging.

The dramatic ending is cinematic in tone. It was NOT to my taste. Talk about unbelievable! Talk about cute! Talk about tying up all the strings into a neat little bow!

I don't mind sex in a book, but every darn relationship was propelled by sex. This too was not believable. Did the author do this to attract contemporary readers?

I liked the historical but not the fictional content of this book.

The Aftermath

(The narration by Leighton Pugh was fine.)

...more

The Aftermath Cast

At first I really did not think I could write a review. The topic of this book just hit too close to home. And even now, after the silver lining at the end, there is a certain heaviness on my chest.

This book is about a British Colonel, his wife and son who go to live in Hamburg, Germany, because the Colonel is in charge of rebuilding the city after WWII.

Colonel Lewis Morgan is a kind man. Not really good at expressing his emotions (which nearly drove me up the walls) but he believes in humanity. At first I really did not think I could write a review. The topic of this book just hit too close to home. And even now, after the silver lining at the end, there is a certain heaviness on my chest.

This book is about a British Colonel, his wife and son who go to live in Hamburg, Germany, because the Colonel is in charge of rebuilding the city after WWII.

Colonel Lewis Morgan is a kind man. Not really good at expressing his emotions (which nearly drove me up the walls) but he believes in humanity and forgiveness. That, of course, does not sit well with other officers, his superiors and even his wife.

Rachel has not been herself ever since the night her son Michael was killed in front of her in a night bombing.

Edmund, the youngest son, is alive but definitely neglected by both parents, and tries to navigate an alien world.

In addition to that, Colonel Morgan has offered the German family in whose house the Morgans are scheduled to live to stay with them (the house is a villa so there is more than enough room). Again, noble, but not very well thought through.

The owner of the house, Herr Luber, has lost his wife in the war and needs to raise his daughter, Frieda, alone - no easy task since the girl definitely is disturbed if you ask me (and not just because of the loss of her mother either, judging by some revelations later on in the book).

So we have this host of characters plus some others from the British military. A very potent mix.

What was so difficult for me were the (accurate) descriptions of Hamburg after the war. The people there; the cold; the starvation; the hopelessness; all the silly prejudice against Germans (I nearly broke down on the train when Edmund, at the beginning of the book, reads the pamphlet they got as instructions for living in Germany); the hate (on both sides); the fear.

The narrator is doing a pretty good job even with the German words and phrases so this was a very nice audiobook and the author had a very intricate and wonderful way of first creating and then interweaving all the different POVs. I just think that I might have enjoyed the often beautiful writing style more had my mind not wandered off to what I remembered from history lessons and my grandparents' accounts. ...more

Soon to be a Major Motion Picture

"Soon to be a major motion picture" proudly proclaims the book jacket. And I am not surprised. Rhidian Brook's novel has well-developed characters, ample romance and danger, an important historical context, and significant moral issues. The only major movie challenge would be to capture the devastation of Hamburg in 1946, the city still shattered by the 1943 fire bombings. Brook writes well, easily shifting between different settings and points of view. A bit too

Soon to be a Major Motion Picture

"Soon to be a major motion picture" proudly proclaims the book jacket. And I am not surprised. Rhidian Brook's novel has well-developed characters, ample romance and danger, an important historical context, and significant moral issues. The only major movie challenge would be to capture the devastation of Hamburg in 1946, the city still shattered by the 1943 fire bombings. Brook writes well, easily shifting between different settings and points of view. A bit too easily, perhaps. There is a particularly British style of storytelling that I have noted before, especially in war stories (Kate Atkinson's *Life After Life* is a recent example), rooted almost in domestic social comedy, that makes for highly enjoyable reading and would translate easily to film. But although this does not have the artificial sheen of a Hollywood screenplay, it just misses the jagged edge that the subject ideally demands, that would have distinguished the true novelist from the able screenwriter.

Colonel Lewis Morgan arrives in Hamburg in 1946 to take up the post of Regional Governor under the British occupation. An exquisite house is requisitioned for him on the banks of the Elbe, but rather than sending the former owners to a billet elsewhere, he asks the family to stay on, using the upper floor as their apartment. This unique offer is only one of many ways that show him to be an altogether more humane administrator than his doctrinaire colleagues, for whom fraternization is a deadly sin. So the Morgans move in with the Luberts: Lewis with his wife Rachel and 11-year-old son Edmund, Stefan with his slightly older daughter Freda, a former Hitlermädchen who refuses to accept defeat. Both families have suffered losses: Stefan Lubert's wife was killed in the firestorm; Rachel Morgan lost her eldest son to a stray bomb dropped in an apparently safe area. She has become bitter and withdrawn, unreasonably casting blame on her husband, and resenting the living arrangements that have been forced upon her.

Brook says that his inspiration was the unusual decision of his grandfather to share his requisitioned house in a similar situation to Colonel Morgan's. One assumes that most of this is imagination, because I don't think I would want my grandchildren to know the sordid details of that fraught year of cohabitation. But it is all believable, and all the major characters ultimately show a strong moral sense, no matter what missteps they may have made in getting there. Lewis is perhaps a little too good to be true, but his humane bonhomie also has its limitations; there are still very real dangers out there. Rhidian Brook is best in his domestic scenes, but almost as good in the office, presenting Lewis' successes and occasional failures with colleagues, visiting politicians, and his superior general. The author is also to be commended for including a subplot focusing on a group of feral children, the so-called Trümmerkinder, made homeless by the war. This is not as successful as the elements he can

The Aftermath

imagine at first hand, though he is certainly trying to get beyond the domestic, to reach the degradation and horror. I especially commend him for not sugar-coating the civilian slaughter caused by the Allied devastation, and some of the British attitudes early in the book made me cringe. This is not a perfect novel; I was at 3.5 stars most of the time I was reading. But its moral center is in the right place, and that encourages me to round up. ...more

The Aftermath Imdb

Rating 2.5 stars.

The Aftermath is set after WW2 in Germany. Captain Lewis from the UK is overseeing the rebuilding of a war-torn, bomb-shocked Hamburg. He resides in a manor house on the city outskirts with his wife Rachel and son Edmund. However he makes the unusual decision not to dehouse the German family who currently live there and both families must somehow find a way to put aside their personal feelings and old grievances and live together.

If I were to break up with this book, I would say Rating 2.5 stars.

The Aftermath is set after WW2 in Germany. Captain Lewis from the UK is overseeing the rebuilding of a war-torn, bomb-shocked Hamburg. He resides in a manor house on the city outskirts with his wife Rachel and son Edmund. However he makes the unusual decision not to dehouse the German family who currently live there and both families must somehow find a way to put aside their personal feelings and old grievances and live together.

If I were to break up with this book, I would say "It's not you, it's me". And in some ways, I think it is me, the other reviews are very positive so maybe this book was just not for me or maybe I read it at the wrong time. However we all know the "It's not you, it's me" is only a line and so I do have my reasons for not liking the book.

On the positive side, there was great detail, impressive research and it feels very authentic. It was interesting to read about a period of history that I don't see covered very often. You really get a feel for how devastated Hamburg was after the war, the sense of confusion in the air and how emotionally charged everyone was.

I had never considered just how displaced people were in Germany after the war and it was horrific to read about. Especially the feral children who had been orphaned and who are trying to survive and adapt as best they can. The begging from the US/UK soldiers for cigarettes which they can then use to barter for other essential items was heart wrenching. And the sense of confusion and mayhem and desperation from the people to distance themselves from any Nazi links to survive in the new Germany is well portrayed.

However, The Aftermath is told from multiple points of view which I found confusing at times. We jumped from one to another with no warning which felt jarring and stopped me connecting fully with the various characters. Quite often I had to stop and reread a few sentences to decide which character we were now following. For the first few pages of the book, I had no idea what was happening and I went back to read the synopsis again to try and get a handle on what the book was about. After finishing the book, those first few pages make more sense but are still very jumbled.

As I didn't engage with the characters, I found the book hard work and I had no sense of urgency to keep reading. There are multiple stories going on but none of them over engaged me. How much I want to pick a book up and continue reading is my book-likability-barometer and the arrow was hovering at low for The Aftermath . It is a book, I'm glad I read as I did get an appreciation for what life after the war was like but I can't say I enjoyed it.

Recommended : Only if you like historical novels and want to find out more about this period.

Thanks to NetGalley and the Publishers for giving me a copy of this book in exchange for an honest, unbiased review. ...more

With the horrors of WWII, the Holocaust, and concentration camps; little attention is given to the reconstruction of Germany (the country and its civilians) after the war. This is precisely the focus of Rhidian Brook's novel, "The Aftermath" .

"The Aftermath" tells the story of Colonel Lewis Morgan, his wife Rachel and son Edmund, who are requisitioned into the home of German father Stefan Lubert and his daughter, Freda. Instead of displacing the family, the kindly Colonel decides the house is big . With the horrors of WWII, the Holocaust, and concentration camps; little attention is given to the reconstruction of Germany (the country and its civilians) after the war. This is precisely the focus of Rhidian Brook's novel, "The Aftermath" .

"The Aftermath" tells the story of Colonel Lewis Morgan, his wife Rachel and son Edmund, who are requisitioned into the home of German father Stefan Lubert and his daughter, Freda. Instead of displacing the family, the kindly Colonel decides the house is big enough for both families to call a home. Amazingly enough, "The Aftermath" is inspired by the true story of the author's grandfather.

Clearly, such a description signifies the implication of an emotional novel. Told in third-person narrative from each character's perspective (even the children); the novel illuminates the various ups, downs, pains, struggles, and adjustments involved in such a living situation. Although following so many characters can sometimes be distracting; Brook successfully delineates between each one with distinctive personalities and quirks, allowing the reader to truly get to know them and even pick-and-choose a favorite.

The pace of "The Aftermath" is somewhat slow but not because it is "boring" but because Brook focuses on a character and emotional study versus a traditional arc with a buildup and climatic events. Yet, there is enough dialogue and accessibility for the average reader, as well. For those seeking strong history, "The Aftermath" feels real, alive, and is clearly well-researched flowing naturally with its historical imagery. Brook's language style is beautiful and eloquent, yet with easy-to-read prose. Again, each character has a personal style but "The Aftermath" is cohesive and overall

The Aftermath

well-written.

“The Aftermath” features a satisfying enough ratio of material which stereotypically both genders will enjoy: military and governmental policy for men and emotional relationships for the women. However, Brook doesn’t overly romanticize either topic which adds to the rounded essence of the novel. Despite this even focus, there are some overly predictable romantic elements which disappoint the reader, as one comes to expect more from Brook.

On a negative end, there are moments which feel skimmed, as though Brook held back, and the texture could of included deeper resonating literary experiences. However, the tale is vivid in a way that one can imagine it as a movie (Note: it is already a screenplay and rumored to be a major motion picture release in the future).

Some further annoyances throughout “The Aftermath” include editing errors (missing end quotation marks, for instance), German phrases with no translations and British-spelled words which are distracting/frustrating, and pages numbered only on every other page. Also weak is the storyline of the orphaned children whose plot is not necessary and underdeveloped. However, these complaints are minor and not extremely taxing on the story, overall.

The climax of “The Aftermath” is somewhat subdued while the ending feels rushed and doesn’t answer all questions. This is remedied by a memorable epilogue, however. Unfortunately, Brook doesn’t include notes regarding the historical merits in the story which is a let down for those readers encouraged to learn more about the topic.

Overall, “The Aftermath” is well written, entertaining, and is a strong look at post-WWII Germany in a way not many novel attempt. The novel encourages debate and discussions regarding collective guilt. I would read another historical fiction work from Brook and recommend “The Aftermath” for HF lovers (not just those interested in WWII).

...more

The Aftermath Plot

I want to watch The Aftermath the movie, so of course, I started by reading the book. And, I must say that I quite enjoyed this story about a British family moving into a house with a German widower and his daughter after WW2. Both families have lost much during the war and now they have to live under the same roof. The ending felt a bit abrupt, but I quite enjoyed the writing and the story. Now I'm ready for the movie!

Reality bites - I never got into this somewhat disjointed post-WWII soon-to-be movie wunderkind. Which is a shame cause there are definitely solid writing skills and interesting history to be told.

But the ending for the Luberts was just a little to 1950s Donna Read and the random disappearance of the Morgans from the last 35 pages was too 1960s Bewitched. What happened to the Morgans? Did they too fly happily into the sun? Are they a vertiginous shade of green? Where did I go? Why is this road made of yellow bricks? Reality bites - I never got into this somewhat disjointed post-WWII soon-to-be movie wunderkind. Which is a shame cause there are definitely solid writing skills and interesting history to be told.

But the ending for the Luberts was just a little to 1950s Donna Read and the random disappearance of the Morgans from the last 35 pages was too 1960s Bewitched. What happened to the Morgans? Did they too fly happily into the sun? Are they a vertiginous shade of green? Where did I go? Why is this road made of yellow bricks?

Here's the thing - I could and did put this down for long periods of time with no real care as to how it all ended. I'm glad I finished it, but I don't feel like it's a book I'll talk about or keep coming back to. Don't you hate it when a book has such promise but it all evaporates in a cloud of totally forgetful? ...more

The Aftermath Release Date

Warning - contains mild spoilers!

I ummed and aahed about what rating to give this. I settled on 2.5 stars, then remembered you can't do half stars, so ummed and aahed a bit more and opted to round up to three stars.

This book was a bit odd for me. I love history, particularly World War Two and after. I also love historical fiction. This book seemed to tick both those boxes for me, so I was sure I'd really like it.

And that is the strange thing. I did like lots of things about it. He's a good write Warning - contains mild spoilers!

I ummed and aahed about what rating to give this. I settled on 2.5 stars, then remembered you can't do half stars, so ummed and aahed a bit more and opted to round up to three stars.

This book was a bit odd for me. I love history, particularly World War Two and after. I also love historical fiction. This book seemed to tick both those boxes for me, so I was sure I'd really like it.

And that is the strange thing. I did like lots of things about it. He's a good writer, it's an interesting story in an interesting setting. I found the book made me want to continue reading, and I finished it pretty quickly, at least by my usual standards (I don't have the huge commute or sleep disorder which enable some people to read anything at a rate of knots).

The story wasn't in any way unbelievable, there was no credibility-stretching stuff in there. I also felt like it did a very good job conveying the horrific mess of Hamburg in 1945 (or, more accurately, Hamburg post the terrible bombing which killed so many people).

So, despite all of that, why only 3 (well, 2.5) stars?

It just felt a little superficial to me. It was as if the author had painstakingly plotted out the environment his characters would inhabit, and the relationships they would have, yet had paid not enough attention to developing these relationships over time.

So, for example, we go from a situation where *and there's a spoiler here* the main female character in the book goes from a frosty resentment of the German in whose house they are living, to having an affair with him in what seems like a matter of a day or two.

We go from mistrust and animosity to passion in one jump without passing through any intermediate stages. Not only that, but the affair could be spotted pretty much from the start, it was that predictable.

The Aftermath

I also felt that some of the characters were pretty cartoonish. The creepy intelligence major and his social climber wife felt particularly clichéd to me. The scene with the Russian, American and French military representatives felt to me like it was straight out of the Big Book of National Stereotypes, 1945 edition. I didn't really see the point of Lewis's interpreter at all. The character really went nowhere.

The ending of the book felt somewhat like a case of "I've got nothing more to write here, so I'll knock it on the head", as if a convenient way to wrap matters up had been found, and even then, it didn't really seem like a particularly good or conclusive ending. It just felt like the book had run out of steam.

A shame, really, I had really wanted to like this book, and although I have read far worse books than this so far this year, this was pretty disappointing stuff.

...more

World War II, which historian Max Hastings called "the greatest and most terrible event in human history," will never fail to be a subject that fascinates historians, novelists and readers. Lately, though, it seems that the immediate aftermath of the war has caught writers' interest. Just off the top of my head, I can think of these books: Tony Judt's *Postwar*, William I. Hitchcock's *The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe*, Ian Buruma's *Year Zero: A History of 1945*, and, on the fiction side, John Lawton's wonderful *Then We Take Berlin*.

Rhidian Brook joins this group with his new novel, *Aftermath*, set in Hamburg. Hamburg, once a vital port city, in 1946 is another wrecked city in the German landscape, with bodies still buried under mounds of bombed-out husks of buildings, defeated Germans devoting all of their waning energy to finding food and cigarettes whatever way they can, and the conqueror Allies trying to figure out how to build a foundation for a new country on this blasted wasteland with these fragile people.

British officer Colonel Lewis Morgan is assigned a large, palatial house, but he is still enough of an idealist that he doesn't want to have its current residents turned out. And so, when his wife Rachael arrives, with their son Edmund, she finds that they are sharing living quarters with Stefan Lubert, an architect, and his daughter, 15-year-old Freda. For Rachael, this is discomfiting. The Morgans' oldest son was killed in her presence by a stray bomb and she is less kindly disposed toward Germans. Still, she is emotionally affected by seeing that so many Germans also lost their lives in bombing and she accepts the presence of the Luberts in the house "so long as they stick to their quarters."

There are parallels between the Morgans and the Luberts. Frau Lubert was killed in a British bombing raid, which leaves Stefan Lubert mourning and Freda filled with hostility. It seems that Rachael and

The Aftermath

Stefan almost need each other, and that Freda and Edmund's need to coexist in the house also plays out as a parallel to the rocky road to reconciliation between the Germans and Allies.

While Brook paints an evocative picture of war-ruined Hamburg, he is less successful with his characters. Maybe it's that famous British reserve, but I never got much of a feel for Lewis, Rachael or Stefan. That improved as the book neared its end, but by then it was too little, too late.

Brook's writing is often beautiful, but there are also some awfully clunky moments, such as when he uses the language of today, not the 1940s. The dialog used for the street kids is just plain bizarre; it sounds like what Ring Lardner might have used for the characters in *Guys and Dolls* if he'd been German.

There is also a film of this story in the works, and I wouldn't be surprised if it ends up working better than the book. The scenery should be striking, acting skills may make up for some of the character deficiencies on the page, and we can hope that the awkward places in the novel's writing will be absent in the film's script. In the meantime, though, if you're interested in a crackerjack story of postwar Germany, I recommend John Lawton's new *Then We Take Berlin*. ...more