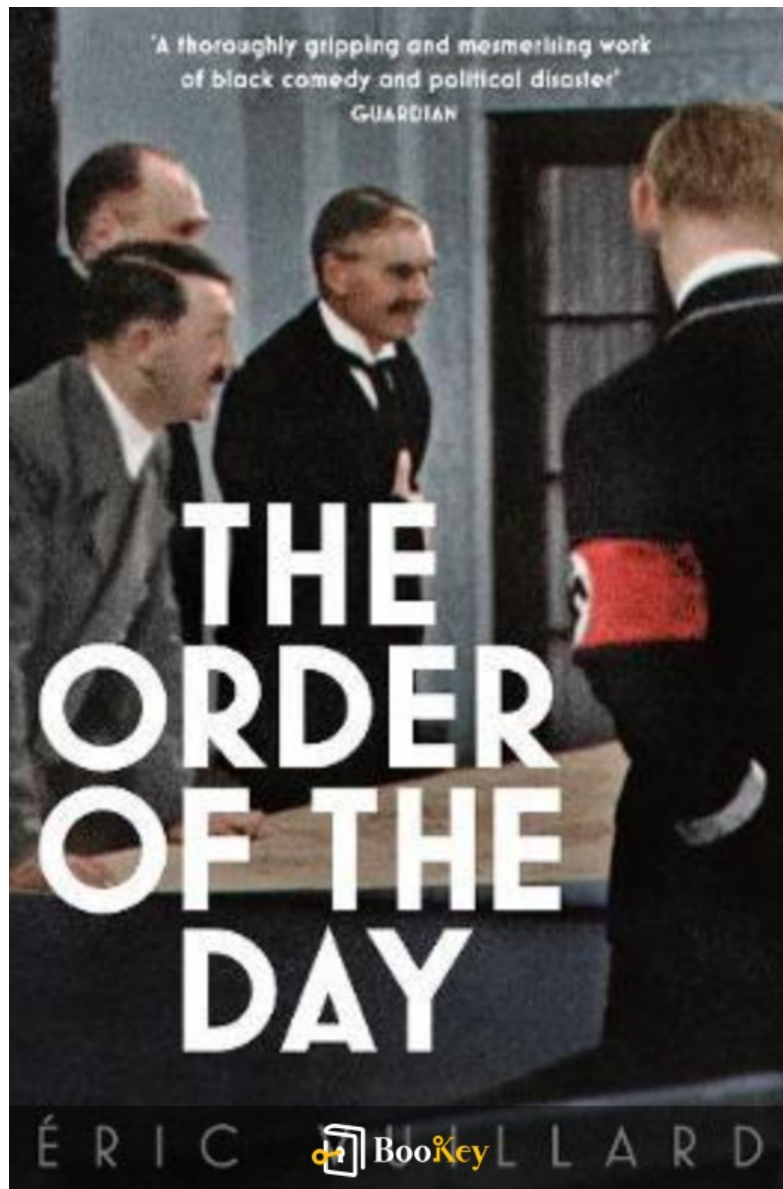


The Order Of The Day PDF

Éric Vuillard



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About the book

Overview of "The Order of the Day" by Éric Vuillard

In his compelling work, "The Order of the Day," Éric Vuillard intricately weaves a narrative that exposes the ominous intersection of corporate ambitions and political authority just prior to World War II. The book focuses on a significant yet obscure meeting from 1933, where twenty-four prominent industrialists convened with leading Nazi officials. This gathering, steeped in secrecy, played a pivotal role in determining the fate of millions, illustrating how ordinary discussions can lead to unforeseen and disastrous outcomes. By employing meticulously gathered historical facts, Vuillard challenges readers to reflect on the often-invisible forces driving global events. His powerful writing not only chronicles a critical moment in history but also acts as a powerful warning for us to be aware of the subtle influences of power and their potential repercussions.

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About the author

Profile Summary: Éric Vuillard

Name: Éric Vuillard

Date of Birth: May 4, 1968

Place of Birth: Lyon, France

Profession: Writer and Filmmaker

Overview:

Éric Vuillard is acclaimed for his exceptional work in both literature and film, particularly recognized for historical narratives that skillfully intertwine factual events with fictional elements. His storytelling shines a light on significant historical moments while intricately examining the human stories that shape these events.

Notable Achievements:

- Awards: Winner of the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 2017 for "L'Ordre du jour" (The Order of the Day).
- Literary Style: Celebrated for his literary elegance and critical insights, which breathe life into historical accounts and reveal the complexities of human experiences.

Contributions:

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Beyond his novels, Vuillard's engagement with cinema and his passion for history and politics further enhance the depth of his narratives, establishing him as a powerful and influential presence in modern literature.

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The Order Of The Day Summary Chapter List

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1. The Unfolding of Political Ambitions in Pre-War Europe

In the years leading up to World War II, Europe was a complex tapestry woven with political ambitions that would not only alter the continent's landscape but would also reverberate across the globe. Éric Vuillard's "The Order of the Day" intricately unravels the political machinations occurring during this pivotal moment in history, focusing on the tumultuous atmosphere that allowed nationalist fervor and authoritarianism to take root and flourish. The narrative delves into the lives of key political figures, each of whom played a significant role in the unfolding drama of pre-war Europe, their ambitions often shrouded in the larger socio-economic conditions of the time.

At the heart of these ambitions was Adolf Hitler, whose rise to power was characterized by his skillful manipulation of the socio-political landscape of Germany. Following the devastating effects of the Treaty of Versailles, many Germans felt humiliated and betrayed, and Hitler capitalized on these sentiments. The Nazi party promised to restore Germany to its former glory. Through propaganda and populist rhetoric, he garnered support from various sectors of society, including the working class who were grappling with unemployment and economic instability during the Weimar Republic. The political ambitions of Hitler were not solely driven by a desire for power; they were also underpinned by an extreme nationalist ideology that sought to

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expand German territory and assert dominance over neighboring nations.

In addition to Hitler, key figures such as Hermann Göring and Joseph Goebbels played pivotal roles in orchestrating the Nazi regime's vision. Göring was instrumental in establishing the Luftwaffe and expanding the military apparatus of Nazi Germany, while Goebbels' control of propaganda allowed the regime to craft a narrative that vilified Jews and other marginalized groups, further unifying and galvanizing the base of support for the regime. Their actions were not isolated; they reflected a broader pattern of rising authoritarianism across Europe, as leaders in countries like Italy under Mussolini and Fascist factions in Spain sought to consolidate power by appealing to nationalistic and militaristic sentiments.

The political ambitions of these key figures were mirrored by the ideological currents of the time. The late 1920s and early 1930s saw the rise of totalitarian regimes promising stability in an era marked by economic upheaval following the Great Depression. The ramifications of this crisis were felt across Europe, leading to a decline in faith in democratic institutions and paving the way for extremist ideologies. Countries like France and the United Kingdom struggled with their own internal divisions, while nations such as Hungary and Austria were flirting with authoritarian rule, creating a fragmented political landscape ripe for exploitation.

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Within this fraying social fabric, cultural tensions also brewed. The fear of communism, born from the Russian Revolution, was palpable in many democratic societies. This fear often aligned with nationalist ambitions, creating a milieu where the notion of an ‘enemy within’ manifested in xenophobia and scapegoating. Intellectuals, artists, and scholars found themselves at odds with rising fascist sentiment, yet their voices were increasingly drowned out in a cacophony of nationalist propaganda.

Ultimately, the unfolding political ambitions in pre-war Europe were a confluence of varying forces—economic instability, rampant nationalism, and the failures of democratic governance. As authoritarian figures like Hitler and Mussolini rose to prominence through a mix of populist promise and violent suppression, they set the stage for a world war that would follow. Each decision made in this political milieu would contribute to a historical trajectory marked by conflict and suffering, illustrating how political ambition, when aligned with ideological extremism, can culminate in catastrophic outcomes.

Through vivid narratives and careful examination, Vuillard invites readers to reflect on these dynamics, challenging them to consider the interactions of power, ambition, and the socio-political context of pre-war Europe. His exploration serves not only as a historical account but also as a cautionary tale about the potency of unchecked political ambitions in shaping the course

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of history.

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2. A Look into the Life and Actions of Key Figures

In "The Order of the Day," Éric Vuillard intricately delves into the lives of pivotal figures whose ambitions and ethical stances significantly influenced the political landscape of pre-war Europe, particularly in the lead-up to World War II. Through rich narrative and keen insight, Vuillard brings to life the motivations and actions of these influential personalities, highlighting how their decisions laid the groundwork for the catastrophic events that would follow.

At the forefront of this exploration is Adolf Hitler, the infamous leader of the Nazi Party and Chancellor of Germany. His rise to power was marked by a blend of charisma, populism, and ruthless political maneuvering. Vuillard depicts Hitler not just as a dictator but as a master tactician—a man acutely aware of the fragility of social order in post-World War I Germany. The Treaty of Versailles had left a bitter mark on the national psyche, and Hitler capitalized on this discontent to forge a narrative of revival and restoration. His speeches appealed directly to the fears and aspirations of the German populace, weaving together a vision of national strength that resonated deeply with citizens yearning for stability and pride.

Equally important is Hermann Göring, a key figure in the Nazi regime who played a central role in consolidating Hitler's power. Vuillard portrays

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Göring as both ambitious and opportunistic, navigating the treacherous waters of political intrigue with a blend of subservience and calculated defiance. His involvement in the Night of the Long Knives, where potential rivals within the Nazi Party were purged, exemplifies the lengths to which he and others would go to secure their positions. Göring's time as a leader of the Luftwaffe further illustrates his significance; under his command, the Luftwaffe became a symbol of Nazi military prowess, overshadowing the complexities of its ethical implications in the years leading up to the war.

The narrative also takes a critical look at other influential figures such as Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda who masterfully manipulated public perception through media control. Vuillard highlights Goebbels' understanding of mass psychology and how he utilized media to create a meticulously crafted image of the Nazi regime, frequently exploiting themes of victimization and national rejuvenation. He played a key role in establishing the narratives that justified the regime's increasingly aggressive domestic and foreign policies, showcasing the dangerous interplay between media, truth, and power.

The author introduces business and political leaders, such as Fritz Thyssen, whose financial support for the Nazi Party was pivotal in its rise. Thyssen's motivations are scrutinized, revealing a complex dynamic of self-interest colliding with ideological fervor. As an industrialist funding Hitler's

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ambitions, his actions reflect a broader complicity among the elite—an intersection where economic gain was prioritized over moral responsibility. Thyssen's subsequent regret, as he found himself trapped within the brutal regime he had bankrolled, serves as a cautionary tale about the unforeseen consequences of aligning one's fortunes with totalitarian ideologies.

Furthermore, Vuillard touches upon the reactions of a fraction of the political spectrum that opposed the Nazi ascent, including figures who stood against the tide. Yet, their voices, while noteworthy, were often drowned out by the overwhelming momentum of the Nazi propaganda machine. This contrast is crucial to understand as it encapsulates the broader societal acceptance of the regime's pernicious policies that ultimately dehumanized millions.

The examination of these figures creates a multi-faceted portrait of ambition, moral ambiguity, and the human capacity for both greatness and destruction. Vuillard illustrates that the actions of these individuals were not isolated; rather, they were interconnected threads in a larger social tapestry that shaped the historical trajectory of Europe. Their lives serve as lenses through which we can understand the powerful interplay of ambition, ideology, and consequence that characterized one of the darkest times in modern history. By carefully charting their trajectories, Vuillard lays bare the chilling reality that political decisions, backed by personal ambition, can ultimately lead to unspeakable atrocities.

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3. The Fraying Social Fabric and Cultural Context of 1930s Germany

In the 1930s, Germany was at a crucial crossroads, and the social fabric of the nation was fraying under the weight of economic turmoil, political instability, and cultural upheaval. This environment created a fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root, leading to catastrophic consequences for both Germany and the world at large.

The aftermath of World War I had left Germany in a state of severe economic insecurity. The terms of the Treaty of Versailles humiliated the nation and imposed crippling reparations that led to hyperinflation in the early 1920s. By the time the Great Depression hit in 1929, the German economy was already on its knees; unemployment soared to unprecedented levels, and millions were left destitute. People from various social strata were affected by the economic collapse, causing widespread discontent and the erosion of faith in established political parties.

Amidst this chaos, the political landscape became increasingly polarized. Traditional political alignments began to fray, with many Germans seeking solace in radical solutions. The Weimar Republic, which was seen as weak and ineffectual by many, struggled to address the multitude of social issues facing the populace. The rise of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) exemplified this shift. Promising renewal and stability,

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Adolf Hitler capitalized on the public's despair and distrust of the government, offering scapegoats in the form of Jews and other minorities, while portraying himself as the nation's savior.

Culturally, 1930s Germany was an era marked by contrasts. The German expressionist movement had previously captivated intellectuals and artists alike, reflecting the tumult and anxiety of the times. However, as the Nazis ascended to power, they vehemently opposed modern art and liberal thought, branding them as degenerate. Artists such as Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Emil Nolde found themselves at odds with the new regime, which sought to impose a rigid vision of Aryan culture. The regime's censorship stifled cultural progress, while film, literature, and music were co-opted to propagate Nazi propaganda, glorifying Aryan ideals while vilifying perceived enemies.

In addition to artistic constraints, the societal fabric became increasingly oppressive. The Nazis introduced policies that emphasized conformity and suppressed dissent. The youth were indoctrinated through the Hitler Youth, while women were relegated to domestic roles, emphasizing their function in the home over participation in broader societal affairs. This doctrine was evident in the slogan "Kinder, Küche, Kirchen" (Children, Kitchen, Church), encapsulating the ideals of a woman's place in society.

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As tensions mounted, Jewish communities faced increasing marginalization, exemplified by the implementation of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, which stripped Jews of citizenship and legalized discrimination. The pervasive atmosphere of antisemitism underscored a broader societal fragmentation. The government meticulously crafted a narrative that dehumanized Jews and positioned them as enemies of the state, further fracturing the social cohesion of what had once been a diverse and vibrant society.

The cumulative effect of these socioeconomic, political, and cultural shifts was a volatile environment where fear, propaganda, and fanaticism flourished. The earlier sense of a collective national identity transformed into a divisive ideology that would ultimately lead to war. The societal bonds that once held communities together weakened as suspicion and enmity took hold, making way for a regime that would pursue aggressive expansionism and the genocidal policies of World War II.

To summarize, the fraying social fabric and cultural context of 1930s Germany were characterized by economic despair, political radicalism, cultural oppression, and the aggressive dismantling of diverse social identities. This convergence of factors not only set the stage for Nazi ascension but also illustrates how deeply intertwined social conditions and cultural contexts can create a perfect storm for totalitarianism. The decade ultimately acts as a harrowing reminder of the consequences of societal

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fractures and the perils that follow when a nation allows fear and hatred to dictate its values and actions.

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4. The Orchestration of Power: Decisions that Led to War

In Éric Vuillard's "The Order of the Day," the narrative centers on the pivotal moments leading up to World War II, emphasizing how political decisions and the orchestration of power laid the groundwork for the impending conflict. The chapter focuses on the complicity of political actors and the mechanisms they employed to facilitate the rise of Nazism, revealing the moral ambiguities intertwined with their ambitions.

In the 1930s, Europe was a powder keg of nationalistic fervor, economic despair, and the remnants of World War I's aftermath. Key figures such as Adolf Hitler, Hermann Göring, and various businessmen and politicians played crucial roles in orchestrating events that would eventually lead to war. Their decisions were not made in isolation; rather, they were influenced by a complex interplay of political ambition and economic necessity.

Vuillard illustrates the decisions of the 1933 Reichstag election as a significant turning point in this orchestration of power. The Nazis' rise was bolstered by their promises to revive the faltering economy, restore national pride, and overturn the Treaty of Versailles. The business leaders who supported Hitler understood that aligning with him could secure their interests, as evidenced by the meetings held in their boardrooms, where the lines between business and state affairs blurred. For instance, the

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industrialist Fritz Thyssen openly provided financial support to the Nazis, believing that a Nazi Germany would safeguard his business interests and foster an environment conducive to capitalism. This collaboration highlighted a moral bankruptcy, as personal gain was placed above ethical responsibilities.

Moreover, the chapter delves deeper into the socio-political landscape of 1930s Germany, where the fragility of the Weimar Republic allowed extremist factions to gain traction. The socio-economic distress following the Great Depression created a fertile ground for radical ideologies. Vuillard presents the dismantling of democratic institutions and civil liberties as a direct result of political machinations. The Reichstag Fire in 1933 provided Hitler with a pretext to push through the Reichstag Fire Decree, which suspended many civil liberties and allowed for the arrest of political adversaries, marking a critical step towards totalitarian control. The chilling realization is that decisions made in a climate of fear and uncertainty can lead to catastrophic outcomes.

The orchestration of power is further illustrated through the Munich Agreement of 1938, a blatant example of appeasement, where European powers tried to pacify Hitler by allowing the annexation of Czechoslovakia's Sudetenland. The rationale behind this decision was the desperate hope for peace and stability, yet it was an act of misguided diplomacy that

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emboldened the Nazi regime. Vuillard emphasizes this collective failure of European leaders to assess the dangers of appeasement, an error rooted in the experiences of World War I and the fear of another large-scale conflict. The consequences of these diplomatic blunders would soon become evident, as they only served to further catalyze Hitler's aggressive expansion.

As Vuillard weaves through these historical events, he compels readers to ponder the moral implications of leadership and the grave impact of choices made in the corridors of power. Decisions, often made in private meetings or through hushed conversations in lavish settings, reverberated through the fabric of society and ultimately contributed to the outbreak of a war that would consume millions. The orchestration of power is shown not merely as a clever maneuvering of political chess pieces but as a complex web of human choices that pushed nations into the abyss of conflict.

In summary, "The Order of the Day" meticulously uncovers the orchestrated decisions that led to World War II, serving as a stark reminder that political power, when wielded without regard for humanity, can lead to catastrophic outcomes. Through the examination of historical figures and critical decisions, Vuillard invites readers to reflect on the fragility of peace and the responsibility borne by those in power, urging a critical awareness of how similar patterns can emerge in contemporary contexts.

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5. The Consequences of Choices: Reflection on Historical Events

In "The Order of the Day," Éric Vuillard meticulously unpacks the events that led to the rise of Nazi Germany, revealing the intricate web of decisions that shaped a monumental era. As we reflect on these historical choices, it becomes evident that the consequences of political ambitions often ripple through time, altering the course of nations and the lives of millions. The reflection on historical events illuminates not just the decision-makers but also the context that allowed those decisions to flourish.

Central to this reflection is the understanding of how the political ambitions of a few individuals can escalate into widespread calamity. Vuillard illustrates this through the actions of prominent figures in Nazi Germany, such as Adolf Hitler and influential industrialists, who, in their quest for power and profit, made choices that collapsed moral boundaries. For instance, the complicity of the German industrial sector with the Nazi regime showcases how corporate interests played a critical role in facilitating the regime's rise. Companies like Krupp and Bayer did not merely support the government; they actively sought alliances, understanding early on that collaborating with the Nazis was not just politically prudent but also financially beneficial. This union of state and corporate power echoes the reality of how economic motivations can dictate moral choices, leading to catastrophic societal consequences.

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Furthermore, Vuillard's narrative prompts reflection on the societal conditions that enabled such drastic choices. The fraying fabric of 1930s Germany, marked by economic despair, social unrest, and a collective desire for stability, created fertile ground for radical ideologies to take root. This illustrates how societal vulnerability can be manipulated by savvy politicians, positioning their agendas as solutions to widespread discontent. The choice to rally support by scapegoating minorities and promoting xenophobia, as witnessed in Nazi propaganda, further emphasizes how fear can transform societal values and impact collective choices.

Events leading up to the Second World War are punctuated with critical moments that reinforce the idea that choices matter. Consider the Munich Agreement of 1938, a pivotal diplomatic choice made by Britain and France in an attempt to avoid conflict. This decision to appease Hitler not only emboldened the Nazi regime but also highlighted the catastrophic potential of misjudgment in diplomacy. It serves as a stark reminder that the desire for peace can inadvertently lead to the very war it seeks to prevent. The consequences of this choice unfolded into a larger conflict that engulfed the globe, resulting in untold suffering and loss of life.

The aftermath of these historical choices forces us to confront the moral and ethical implications of our decisions. Reflection on these events reveals a

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pattern: decisions made in the name of expediency or survival can lead to dehumanization and violence. As Vuillard presents the grim reality of the Holocaust, we are faced with the haunting question of how individuals and societies can ignore the evident human cost of their choices.

In conclusion, "The Order of the Day" compels us to consider the far-reaching consequences of historical events shaped by individual and collective choices. It serves as a poignant reminder that the choices made in the corridors of power do not exist in isolation. They reflect broader social and economic contexts, and their repercussions are felt profoundly across generations. A continuous engagement with history invites us to learn from the past, underscoring the importance of ethical decision-making in the present to prevent the repetition of such tragic events in the future.

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