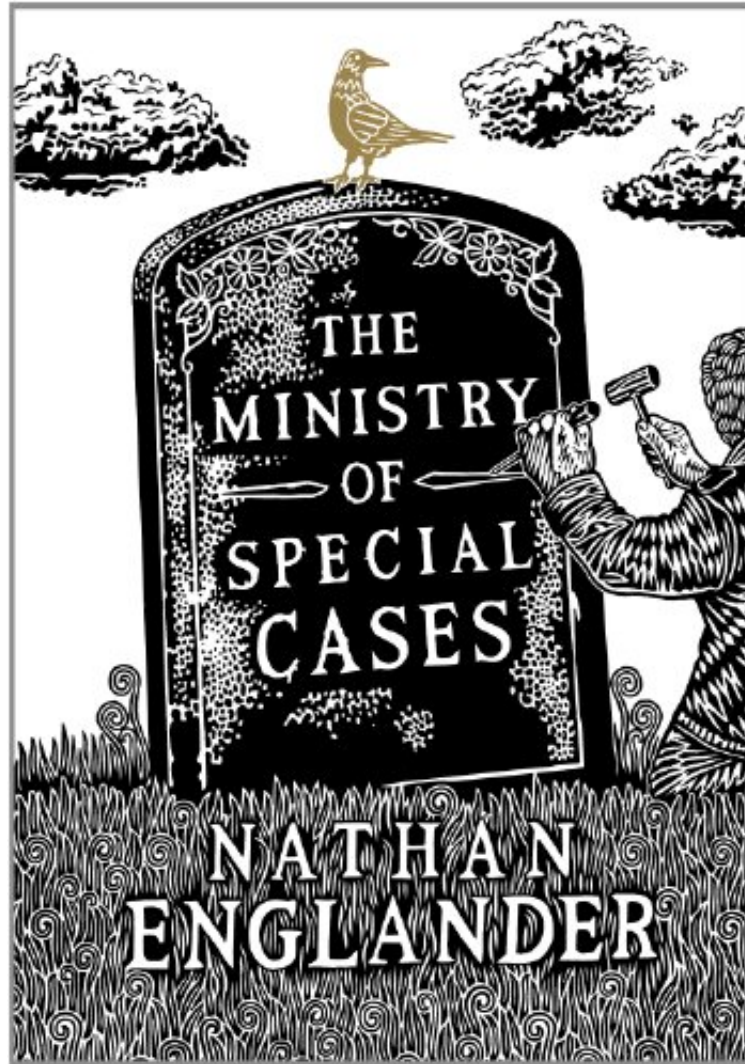


[Free] The Ministry of Special Cases (English Edition)

The Ministry of Special Cases (English Edition)

Von Nathan Englander

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Von Nathan Englander : The Ministry of Special Cases (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ministry of Special Cases (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen3 von 3 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Low Comedy and Sharp Wit Lead to Laughter, Tears, Sadness, Hope, Desolation, and AbsolutionVon Donald MitchellSeldom has a novel commanded so many of my emotions. My heart felt like a piano on whose strings a master musician was playing both polkas and dirges. But most of all, Mr. Englander kept surprising me. I usually read mysteries to enjoy fictional surprises, but The Ministry of Special Cases provided many more surprises than any mystery I've read in recent years.When I began reading the book, I had to stop and start over. I couldn't believe what I

was reading. It's almost as though Hamlet started with the grave digger's scene. How can I summarize this book? I'm not sure I can do so accurately, but I'll hit some of the right notes of I call this book Don Quixote at The Trial. In the process, Mr. Englander unerringly portrays a society that's failing because each person only wants to look out for himself or herself. You will find yourself in Argentina during the beginning of the "dirty war" when many young people disappeared. What would it like to be a parent of such a young person? That's what you will graphically experience by reading The Ministry of Special Cases. Kaddish Poznan was conceived through an accident between his prostitute mother and a customer. The rabbi granted Kaddish such an unusual name in hopes it would protect him. As the book evolves, you'll see that the name has indeed shaped his character as well as his actions. Many of the "respectable" Jews in Argentina at the time had forbearers who also engaged in illicit and illegal activities, while sporting colorful names such as Hezzi Two-Blades. Kaddish has been looking for the big score all of his life, but hasn't found it. As the book opens, Kaddish is busy defacing a grave in the older part of the Jewish cemetery so that a connection to a dubious forbearer can be disguised. That's how Kaddish earns his cigarette money. His university student son, Pato, is a reluctant participant. Father and son are in continual conflict. Kaddish's wife, Lillian, supports the family by working hard for little pay in an insurance broker's office. Concerned about safety, she is soon out buying the strongest door she can locate. I won't go into more of the story from there lest I give away important details, but you'll find the plot to be amazingly well constructed to open up unexpected doors to empathy and understanding as you identify with one or both of the parents and wonder what you would do to keep your youngster safe. How can I summarize what I feel about the book? It's a masterpiece. 1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Low Comedy and Sharp Wit Lead to Laughter, Tears, Sadness, Hope, Desolation, and Absolution Von Donald Mitchell Seldom has a novel commanded so many of my emotions. My heart felt like a piano on whose strings a master musician was playing both polkas and dirges. But most of all, Mr. Englander kept surprising me. I usually read mysteries to enjoy fictional surprises, but The Ministry of Special Cases provided many more surprises than any mystery I've read in recent years. When I began reading the book, I had to stop and start over. 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Nicht selten erinnern die beschriebene Willkr des Regimes und der Umgang der Behrden mit den Eltern des Vermissten an Kafkas "Der Prozess". Es ist harter Stoff, aber sehr, sehr lesenswert.

Kurzbeschreibung Kaddish Poznan chips the names off gravestones for a living, removing traces of disreputable ancestors for their more respectable kin. His wife Lillian works in insurance, earning money when people live longer than they fear. As Argentina's Dirty War unfolds around them, their sometimes hilarious misadventures are soon replaced by something much darker. A visit to the dreaded Ministry of Special Cases is only the start of Englander's stunning vision of a nation in the hold of corruption and torture, a place where absurdity, despair and hope are the end products of a bureaucracy run out of control. From Publishers Weekly [Signature] ed by Allegra Goodman Young writers are often told to write about what they know. In his 1999 collection, For the Relief of Unbearable Urges,

Nathan Englander spun the material of his orthodox Jewish background into marvelous fiction. But the real trick to writing about what you know is to make sure you know more as you mature. Englander's first novel, *The Ministry of Special Cases*, conjures a world far removed from "The Gilgul of Second Avenue." The novel is set in 1976 in Buenos Aires during Argentina's "dirty war." Kaddish Poznan, hijo de puta, son of a whore, earns a meager living defacing gravestones of Jewish whores and pimps whose more respectable children want to erase their immigrant parents' names and forget their shameful activities. Kaddish labors in the Jewish cemetery at night. His hardworking wife, Lillian, toils in an insurance agency by day, and their idealistic son, Pato, attends college, goes to concerts and smokes pot with his friends. When Pato is taken from home, Kaddish learns what it really means to erase identity, because no one in authority will admit Pato has been arrested. No one will even acknowledge that Pato existed. As Lillian and Kaddish attempt to penetrate the Ministry of Special Cases, Englander's novel takes on an epic quality in which Jewish parents descend into the underworld and journey through circles of hell. Gogol, I.B. Singer and Orwell all come to mind, but Englander's book is unique in its layering of Jewish tradition and totalitarian obliteration. At times Englander's motifs seem forced. Kaddish, whose very name evokes the memory of the dead, chisels out the name of a plastic surgeon's disreputable father, and in lieu of cash receives nose jobs for himself and his wife. Lillian's nose job is at first unsuccessful, and her nose slides off her face. One form of defacement pays for another. Kaddish fights with his son in the cemetery and accidentally slices off the tip of Pato's finger. Attempting to erase a letter, Kaddish blights a digit. But the fight seems staged, Pato's presence unwarranted except for Englander's schema. Other scenes are haunting: Lillian confronting bureaucrats; Kaddish appealing to a rabbi to learn if it is possible for a Jew to have a funeral without a body; Kaddish picking an embarrassing embroidered name off the velvet curtain in front of the ark in the synagogue. When he picks off the gold thread, the name stands out even more prominently because the velvet underneath the embroidery is unfaded, darker than the rest of the fabric. Englander writes with increasing power and authority in the second half of his book; he probes deeper and deeper, looking at what absence means, reading the shadow letters on history's curtain. (May) Allegra Goodman is the author of five books, including *Intuition*. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist*Starred * The years between the 1999 appearance of Englander's highly applauded first work of fiction, the short story collection *For the Relief of Unbearable Urges*, and the release of his first novel have apparently gone to good stead. This is a staggeringly mature work, gracefully and knowledgeably set in a milieu far from the author's native New York. The time is the mid-1970s, and the place is Argentina. The widow of Juan Peron (Isabella, that is, not his 1940s wife, Eva) has just been given the boot from the presidential office by the military, which has inaugurated an internal terrorist program that came to be known as the dirty war. Kaddish Pozman, a Jewish resident of Buenos Aires, works for hire as a midnight eraser of names from tombstones of Jews whose living families do not want any connection to their dear departed's past dubious behavior, now that an uncertain regime governs the land. Of course, one of the major characteristics of the military government is its widespread program of making people who just might be revolutionaries or insurrectionaries or even free thinkers disappear into the regime's system of detention centers, and Pozman's son becomes one such desaparecido. The bulk of this overwhelming novel, then, is Pozman's and his wife's attempt to locate their missing son. Four p's best describe this work: poignant, powerful, political, and yet personal. Brad Hooper Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved