

The parallel life of J.D.
Salinger, in his own words

Gunzenhausen

PIET DE MOOR

Piet de Moor likes to call his books a 'fricassee', after a dish popular in Flanders in which all kinds of ingredients are mixed. In this book, centred on the life of J.D. Salinger, he combines fact and fiction to create an intriguing puzzle, a novel as well as a portrait of an era.

The trigger was an article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung about Salinger's time in Germany during and shortly after the Second World War. Drawing upon existing biographies of the author and on novels, reportage, diaries and essays by literary giants of those years, De Moor tells the story of J.D. Salinger who, as a young man, took part in the invasion of Normandy. In his rucksack he carried his typewriter and several chapters of a typescript that eventually became 'The Catcher in the Rye'. After the Battle of Hürtgen Wood and the German capitulation of May 1945, Salinger was stationed in the Bavarian town of Gunzenhausen as an intelligence officer.

This mixture of fact and fiction produces a very readable account of a character who sometimes deliberately took liberties with the facts. Salinger made up a number of details to put his biographers, whom he despised, on the wrong track. Nevertheless, this plausible fiction reads like a ripping non-fiction tale.



AUTHOR



Piet de Moor (b. 1950) is an author and journalist. His past works include the essay and report books 'Twilight Country' (2005) and 'The God in Boots' (on Stalin, 2003), as well as the novels 'Hotel Silesia' (2008) and 'The Adamite' (2010). He lived in West Berlin for two years during the 70s and went on various excursions into Russia, Central Europe and the Balkans. Since 1 July 2010, he has once again been living in Berlin. Photo © Guy van Kerkhove

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