

shutting out the sky

shutting out the sky is a powerful phrase that evokes images of urban landscapes, towering skyscrapers, and the changing nature of cities. This article explores the concept of shutting out the sky from multiple perspectives, including its historical context, social implications, architectural developments, environmental impact, and cultural significance. Readers will discover how the phenomenon affects daily life, influences city planning, and shapes the future of urban environments. By examining real-world examples and expert insights, this comprehensive guide delivers a complete understanding of shutting out the sky and its relevance in modern society. With in-depth analysis and practical information, the article aims to answer key questions while keeping readers engaged and informed about this compelling topic.

- Understanding the Concept of Shutting Out the Sky
- Historical Context of Urban Development
- Architectural Factors Contributing to Shutting Out the Sky
- Environmental Consequences of Urban Expansion
- Social and Psychological Effects
- Cultural Interpretations and Artistic Representations
- Modern Solutions and Urban Planning Strategies

Understanding the Concept of Shutting Out the Sky

The term "shutting out the sky" refers to the phenomenon where urban environments, especially dense cityscapes with high-rise buildings and compact structures, restrict the visibility and accessibility of the open sky. This concept encompasses both physical and symbolic interpretations, highlighting how urbanization alters the natural landscape. As cities grow, the vertical expansion often leads to crowded skylines, casting long shadows and creating a sense of enclosure. The phrase also suggests a disconnect from nature, as buildings, infrastructures, and artificial lights block sunlight and obscure views of the sky. Understanding this concept is essential to grasp the broader implications of urban design and its effects on the well-being of city dwellers.

Historical Context of Urban Development

Urban development has evolved dramatically over centuries, with the rise of industrialization and population growth shaping the skylines of major cities. Historically, towns and cities were designed with open spaces, parks, and public squares that allowed residents to experience the sky and natural light. The advent of skyscrapers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a significant shift, as cities prioritized vertical construction to accommodate economic growth and population density. The concept of shutting out the sky became more prevalent as more structures competed for space, leading to narrower streets and towering buildings. This historical progression reflects the changing priorities of urban planners, architects, and societies, as well as the tension between development and preservation of natural environments.

Key Milestones in Urban Expansion

- Introduction of steel-frame construction enabling taller buildings
- Rapid growth during the industrial revolution
- Increased migration to urban centers in the 20th century
- Development of zoning laws and building codes
- Emergence of megacities with dense high-rise clusters

Architectural Factors Contributing to Shutting Out the Sky

Modern architecture plays a significant role in shutting out the sky, as the pursuit of maximizing space leads to taller and more closely packed buildings. Innovations in engineering have enabled the construction of skyscrapers and multi-story complexes, often at the expense of open spaces. The design principles of contemporary urban areas prioritize efficiency, functionality, and economic benefits, sometimes overlooking the importance of natural light and sky visibility. High-density housing, commercial towers, and mixed-use developments can create urban canyons, restricting sunlight and creating a sense of confinement. Furthermore, the use of reflective glass, artificial lighting, and enclosed walkways further contributes to the phenomenon.

Common Architectural Features

- Tall building clusters with minimal spacing

- Limited setbacks from streets and sidewalks
- Facade designs that maximize floor area
- Sky bridges and covered walkways
- Use of large-scale infrastructure over open green spaces

Environmental Consequences of Urban Expansion

The environmental impact of shutting out the sky is multifaceted. Dense urban development can lead to reduced air circulation, increased heat retention, and diminished biodiversity. The lack of sunlight in certain areas affects plant growth and disrupts local ecosystems. Urban heat islands, a direct result of concentrated infrastructure and limited greenery, contribute to higher temperatures and energy consumption. Additionally, restricted access to natural light affects building energy efficiency, increasing reliance on artificial lighting and climate control systems. Environmental concerns associated with shutting out the sky also include increased stormwater runoff, reduced carbon sequestration, and challenges in managing air quality.

Environmental Challenges

1. Heat island effect and elevated urban temperatures
2. Reduced natural habitats for flora and fauna
3. Limited opportunities for solar energy harvesting
4. Increased energy consumption in buildings
5. Greater risk of flooding due to impermeable surfaces

Social and Psychological Effects

Shutting out the sky has notable social and psychological implications for urban populations. Limited access to natural light and open views can negatively affect mood, productivity, and overall well-being. Studies show that exposure to daylight and nature is linked to lower stress levels, improved cognitive function, and better physical health. Residents of densely built environments may experience feelings of isolation, disconnection from nature, and reduced sense of community. The design of public spaces, accessibility to parks, and availability of skylights or open courtyards can mitigate some of

these effects. Addressing the social consequences requires thoughtful urban planning and community engagement to preserve quality of life in growing cities.

Impacts on Daily Life

- Decreased exposure to sunlight and fresh air
- Limited recreational opportunities outdoors
- Potential rise in anxiety and depression rates
- Reduced sense of belonging and community cohesion
- Challenges in fostering social interactions and physical activity

Cultural Interpretations and Artistic Representations

The concept of shutting out the sky has inspired various cultural interpretations and artistic representations throughout history. Literature, film, and visual arts often use the motif of obscured skies to symbolize confinement, alienation, or the loss of connection with nature. Urban photography captures the interplay between towering structures and fleeting glimpses of the sky, reflecting the emotional impact of city living. Writers and artists frequently explore themes of longing for open spaces and the psychological effects of urban density. These cultural expressions provide valuable insights into how societies perceive and respond to the changing relationship between people and their environments.

Examples in Art and Media

- Cityscapes in novels and poetry depicting lost horizons
- Films highlighting the contrast between urban and rural life
- Photography focusing on the struggle for sunlight and open views
- Public art installations addressing environmental awareness
- Music and performance art exploring themes of urban confinement

Modern Solutions and Urban Planning Strategies

Efforts to address shutting out the sky focus on innovative urban planning and sustainable architectural design. City planners and architects increasingly incorporate green spaces, rooftop gardens, and light wells to enhance sky visibility and promote environmental health. Regulations such as maximum building heights, mandatory setbacks, and open space requirements help preserve access to sunlight and fresh air. Smart city technologies, energy-efficient building materials, and vertical gardens also contribute to a balanced urban landscape. Community involvement in design processes ensures that public needs are met, fostering healthier and more livable cities. The integration of these solutions demonstrates an ongoing commitment to mitigating the negative effects of shutting out the sky.

Urban Planning Initiatives

- Creation of urban parks and pedestrian zones
- Incorporation of daylighting strategies in building design
- Promotion of green roofs and vertical landscaping
- Implementation of sustainable zoning laws
- Encouragement of mixed-use developments with open spaces

Q: What does "shutting out the sky" mean in urban environments?

A: In urban environments, "shutting out the sky" refers to the blocking or limiting of natural sky views and sunlight due to dense construction, tall buildings, and close architectural spacing, which can affect the physical and psychological well-being of city residents.

Q: How has shutting out the sky impacted city dwellers historically?

A: Historically, shutting out the sky impacted city dwellers by reducing access to sunlight, open spaces, and fresh air, leading to changes in lifestyle, health, and community interactions as cities became more crowded and vertical.

Q: What are the environmental consequences of shutting out the sky?

A: The environmental consequences include increased urban heat islands, reduced biodiversity, limited solar energy opportunities, heightened energy consumption, and greater risks of flooding due to decreased permeable surfaces.

Q: How does shutting out the sky affect mental health?

A: Reduced exposure to natural light and open views can lead to higher rates of anxiety, depression, and social isolation among urban residents, as sunlight and connection with nature are important for psychological well-being.

Q: What architectural features contribute most to shutting out the sky?

A: Tall, closely spaced buildings, minimal setbacks from streets, large-scale infrastructure, and limited open spaces are the architectural features that most contribute to shutting out the sky in cities.

Q: Are there urban planning solutions to mitigate shutting out the sky?

A: Yes, urban planning solutions include creating parks, green roofs, daylighting strategies, sustainable zoning laws, and encouraging mixed-use developments with open spaces to improve access to the sky and natural light.

Q: How is shutting out the sky represented in art and culture?

A: In art and culture, shutting out the sky is often used as a symbol of confinement, loss, and isolation, appearing in photography, literature, films, and public art that highlight the emotional impact of dense urban living.

Q: Do green spaces help counteract the effects of shutting out the sky?

A: Green spaces help counteract the effects by providing open areas for sunlight, recreation, and social interaction, improving air quality, and enhancing the overall quality of urban life.

Q: What role does technology play in addressing shutting out the sky?

A: Technology plays a role by enabling smart building designs, energy-efficient materials, and urban planning tools that prioritize daylight access, green spaces, and sustainable development practices.

Q: Why is shutting out the sky a growing concern in megacities?

A: It is a growing concern because megacities face extreme population density, rapid vertical expansion, and limited available land, making it challenging to maintain open views and access to natural environments.

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Shutting Out the Sky: Exploring Light Pollution and its Impact

Have you ever looked up at the night sky and been disappointed by the faint glimmer of a few stars, overwhelmed by the pervasive glow of city lights? This experience, increasingly common across the globe, is a stark reminder of the pervasive impact of light pollution – the phenomenon of "shutting out the sky." This blog post delves into the causes, consequences, and potential solutions to this growing environmental and astronomical problem, offering a comprehensive understanding of its far-reaching effects. We'll explore the science behind light pollution, its impact on human health and wildlife, and what you can do to help bring back the stars.

Understanding the Science of Shutting Out the Sky: Light Pollution Explained

Light pollution, simply put, is excessive or obtrusive artificial light. It's not just about the brightness; it's about the type of light, its direction, and its duration. Poorly designed lighting – including unshielded lights that shine upwards, overly bright lights, and lights left on unnecessarily –

contributes significantly to the problem. This excessive light masks the natural darkness of night, reducing our ability to see the stars and disrupting natural ecosystems.

The Glare Effect and Skyglow: Two Major Components

Two primary components of light pollution are glare and skyglow. Glare refers to the direct light from a source that overwhelms our vision, making it difficult to see fainter objects. Skyglow, on the other hand, is the diffuse brightening of the night sky caused by the scattering of light in the atmosphere. This diffused light washes out the stars, leaving us with a pale imitation of the naturally dark night sky.

The Impact of Shutting Out the Sky: Consequences for Humans and Wildlife

The consequences of light pollution extend far beyond a diminished view of the night sky. It significantly impacts both human health and the delicate balance of natural ecosystems.

Human Health Impacts: Sleep Disruption and More

Studies have linked light pollution to sleep disorders, increased risk of certain cancers, and negative impacts on mental well-being. Our bodies rely on the natural cycle of light and darkness to regulate our circadian rhythms, and artificial light at night can disrupt this crucial process.

Wildlife Disruptions: Migration, Reproduction, and Predation

For wildlife, the effects are equally severe. Migratory birds, for instance, rely on the stars for navigation, and light pollution can disorient them, leading to collisions with buildings and exhaustion. Nocturnal animals' behaviors, such as hunting and breeding, are also significantly impacted, affecting their survival and reproductive success. Light pollution can also disrupt plant growth and development, affecting entire ecosystems.

Solutions and Steps to Combat Light Pollution: Bringing Back the Stars

While the problem seems vast, individual and collective action can make a significant difference in combating light pollution. We can "reclaim the night" through various strategies:

Choosing Responsible Lighting

This is perhaps the most crucial step. Opting for fully shielded lighting fixtures that direct light downwards prevents upward spill, significantly reducing skyglow. Using lower-wattage bulbs and employing motion sensors can also reduce unnecessary light usage.

Advocating for Better Lighting Policies

Contacting local governments and advocating for responsible lighting ordinances is vital. This includes encouraging the use of amber-colored lighting, which is less disruptive to wildlife and human circadian rhythms, compared to white or blue light.

Raising Awareness and Educating Others

Spreading awareness about the problem and its consequences is crucial to inspire collective action. Sharing this information with friends, family, and community members can encourage widespread adoption of more responsible lighting practices.

Participating in Citizen Science Initiatives

Many citizen science projects focus on monitoring light pollution and its effects. Participating in these initiatives can contribute valuable data and help researchers better understand and address the problem.

Conclusion: Reclaiming Our Night Sky

Shutting out the sky is not just an aesthetic issue; it's a significant environmental and public health concern. By understanding the causes and consequences of light pollution, and by implementing responsible lighting practices and advocating for change, we can reclaim the beauty and ecological importance of a naturally dark night sky, restoring the wonder of a starlit night for generations to come.

FAQs

1. What is the difference between light pollution and air pollution? Light pollution refers to excessive or misdirected artificial light, while air pollution involves the presence of harmful substances in the atmosphere. They are distinct but interconnected environmental problems.
2. Can light pollution affect my sleep? Yes, exposure to artificial light at night can disrupt your circadian rhythm, making it harder to fall asleep and affecting the quality of your sleep.
3. Are there any health benefits to experiencing natural darkness? Exposure to natural darkness allows your body to produce melatonin, a hormone essential for regulating sleep and boosting your immune system.
4. What types of lighting are best for reducing light pollution? Fully shielded, downward-facing lights with warm-colored (amber) LEDs are the most effective in minimizing light pollution.

5. How can I find out about light pollution levels in my area? Several online resources and apps provide information on light pollution maps and levels, allowing you to assess the darkness of your location.

shutting out the sky: *Coming to America* Katharine Emsden, 1993 Excerpts from diaries and letters provide glimpses into the lives of Russian, Lithuanian, Italian, Greek, Swedish, and Irish immigrants who passed through Ellis Island around the turn of the century.

shutting out the sky: *Things that Fall from the Sky* Kevin Brockmeier, 2007-12-18 Weaving together loss and anxiety with fantastic elements and literary sleight-of-hand, Kevin Brockmeier's richly imagined *Things That Fall from the Sky* views the nagging realities of the world through a hopeful lens. In the deftly told "These Hands," a man named Lewis recounts his time babysitting a young girl and his inconsolable sense of loss after she is wrenched away. In "Apples," a boy comes to terms with the complex world of adults, his first pangs of love, and the bizarre death of his Bible coach. "The Jesus Stories" examines a people trying to accelerate the Second Coming by telling the story of Christ in every possible way. And in the O. Henry Award winning "The Ceiling," a man's marriage begins to disintegrate after the sky starts slowly descending. Achingly beautiful and deceptively simple, *Things That Fall from the Sky* defies gravity as one of the most original story collections seen in recent years.

shutting out the sky: *The Only Plane in the Sky* Garrett M. Graff, 2019-09-10 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER "This is history at its most immediate and moving...A marvelous and memorable book." —Jon Meacham "Remarkable...A priceless civic gift...On page after page, a reader will encounter words that startle, or make him angry, or heartbroken." —The Wall Street Journal "Had me turning each page with my heart in my throat...There's been a lot written about 9/11, but nothing like this. I urge you to read it." —Katie Couric The first comprehensive oral history of September 11, 2001—a panoramic narrative woven from voices on the front lines of an unprecedented national trauma. Over the past eighteen years, monumental literature has been published about 9/11, from Lawrence Wright's *The Looming Tower* to The 9/11 Commission Report. But one perspective has been missing up to this point—a 360-degree account of the day told through firsthand. Now, in *The Only Plane in the Sky*, Garrett Graff tells the story of the day as it was lived—in the words of those who lived it. Drawing on never-before-published transcripts, declassified documents, original interviews, and oral histories from nearly five hundred government officials, first responders, witnesses, survivors, friends, and family members, he paints the most vivid and human portrait of the September 11 attacks yet. Beginning in the predawn hours of airports in the Northeast, we meet the ticket agents who unknowingly usher terrorists onto their flights, and the flight attendants inside the hijacked planes. In New York, first responders confront a scene of unimaginable horror at the Twin Towers. From a secret bunker under the White House, officials watch for incoming planes on radar. Aboard unarmed fighter jets in the air, pilots make a pact to fly into a hijacked airliner if necessary to bring it down. In the skies above Pennsylvania, civilians aboard United 93 make the ultimate sacrifice in their place. Then, as the day moves forward and flights are grounded nationwide, Air Force One circles the country alone, its passengers isolated and afraid. More than simply a collection of eyewitness testimonies, *The Only Plane in the Sky* is the historic narrative of how ordinary people grappled with extraordinary events in real time: the father and son caught on different ends of the impact zone; the firefighter searching for his wife who works at the World Trade Center; the operator of in-flight telephone calls who promises to share a passenger's last words with his family; the beloved FDNY chaplain who bravely performs last rites for the dying, losing his own life when the Towers collapse; and the generals at the Pentagon who break down and weep when they are barred from trying to rescue their colleagues. At once a powerful tribute to the courage of everyday Americans and an essential addition to the literature of 9/11, *The Only Plane in the Sky* weaves together the unforgettable personal experiences of the men and women who found themselves caught at the center of an unprecedented human drama. The

result is a unique, profound, and searing exploration of humanity on a day that changed the course of history, and all of our lives.

shutting out the sky: *The Sky So Heavy* Claire Zorn, 2013-08-01 This haunting dystopian novel thrillingly and realistically looks at a nuclear winter from an Australian perspective. For Fin it's just like any other day—racing for the school bus, bluffing his way through class, and trying to remain cool in front of the most sophisticated girl in his universe. Only it's not like any other day because, on the other side of the world, nuclear missiles are being detonated. When Fin wakes up the next morning, it's dark, bitterly cold, and snow is falling. There's no internet, no phone, no TV, no power, and no parents. Nothing Fin's learned in school could have prepared him for this. With his parents missing and dwindling food and water supplies, Fin and his younger brother Max must find a way to survive all on their own. When things are at their most desperate, where can you go for help?

shutting out the sky: Seedfolks Paul Fleischman, 2013-07-30 ALA Best Book for Young Adults • School Library Journal Best Book • Publishers Weekly Best Book • IRA/CBC Children's Choice • NCTE Notable Children's Book in the Language Arts A Vietnamese girl plants six lima beans in a Cleveland vacant lot. Looking down on the immigrant-filled neighborhood, a Romanian woman watches suspiciously. A school janitor gets involved, then a Guatemalan family. Then muscle-bound Curtis, trying to win back Lateesha. Pregnant Maricela. Amir from India. A sense of community sprouts and spreads. Newbery-winning author Paul Fleischman uses thirteen speakers to bring to life a community garden's founding and first year. The book's short length, diverse cast, and suitability for adults as well as children have led it to be used in countless one-book reads in schools and in cities across the country. Seedfolks has been drawn upon to teach tolerance, read in ESL classes, promoted by urban gardeners, and performed in schools and on stages from South Africa to Broadway. The book's many tributaries—from the author's immigrant grandfather to his adoption of two brothers from Mexico—are detailed in his forthcoming memoir, *No Map, Great Trip: A Young Writer's Road to Page One*. The size of this slim volume belies the profound message of hope it contains. —Christian Science Monitor And don't miss Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices, the Newbery Medal-winning poetry collection!

shutting out the sky: *What Falls from the Sky* Esther Emery, 2016-12-13 Esther Emery was a successful playwright and theater director, wife and mother, and loving it all - until, suddenly, she wasn't. When a personal and professional crisis of spectacular extent leaves her reeling, Esther is left empty, alone in her marriage, and grasping for identity that does not define itself by busyness and a breakneck pace of life. Something had to be done. *What Falls from the Sky* is Esther's fiercely honest, piercingly poetic account of a year without Internet - 365 days away from the good, the bad, and the ugly of our digital lives - in one woman's desperate attempt at a reset. Esther faces her addiction to electronica, her illusion of self-importance, and her longing to return to simpler days, but then the unexpected happens. Her experiment in analog is hijacked by a spiritual awakening, and Esther finds herself suddenly, inexplicably drawn to the faith she had rejected for so long. Ultimately, Esther's unplugged pilgrimage brings her to a place where she finally finds the peace - and the God who created it - she has been searching for all along. *What Falls from the Sky* offers a path for you to do the same. For all the ways the Internet makes you feel enriched and depleted, genuinely connected and wildly insufficient, *What Falls from the Sky* reveals a new way to look up from your screens and live with palms wide open in a world brimming with the good gifts of God.

shutting out the sky: When I Fell From The Sky Juliane Koepcke, 2012-03-22 On December 24th 1971, the teenage Juliane boarded the packed flight in Peru to meet her father for Christmas. She and her mother fought to get some of the last seats available and felt thankful to have made the flight. The LANSA airplane flew into a heavy thunderstorm and went down in dense Amazon jungle hundreds of miles from civilization. She fell two miles from the sky, still strapped to her plane seat, into the jungle. She was the sole survivor among the 92 passengers, which included her mother, and Juliane's unexplainable survival has been called a modern-day miracle. With incredible courage, instinct and ingenuity, she crawled and walked alone for eleven days in the green hell of the Amazon. She survived using the skills she'd learned in assisting her parents on their research trips

into the jungle before coming across a loggers hut, and, with it, safety. Now she tells her fascinating story for the first time and on its 40th anniversary she shares not only the private moments of her survival and rescue but her inspiring life in the wake of the disaster.

shutting out the sky: Watch the Sky Kirsten Hubbard, 2015-04-07 The signs are everywhere. Jory's stepfather, Caleb, says. Red leaves in the springtime. Pages torn from a library book. All the fish in an aquarium facing the same way. A cracked egg with twin yolks. Everywhere and anywhere. And because of them, Jory's life is far from ordinary. He must follow a very specific set of rules: don't trust anyone outside the family, have your work boots at the ready just in case, and always, always watch out for the signs. The end is coming, and they must be prepared. School is Jory's only escape from Caleb's tight grasp, and with the help of new friends, he begins to explore a world beyond his family's desert ranch. As Jory's friendships grow, Caleb notifies Jory's mother and siblings that the time has come for final preparations. They begin an exhausting schedule, digging a shelter where they will live until the disaster is over. But as the hole gets deeper, so does the family's doubt about whether Caleb's prophecy is true. When the stark reality of what it will mean to live underground becomes clear, Jory must choose between living his own life or following behind Caleb, shutting his eyes to the bright world he's just begun to see.

shutting out the sky: Leave the World Behind Rumaan Alam, 2020-10-06 SOON TO BE A MAJOR GLOBAL NETFLIX ADAPTATION STARRING JULIA ROBERTS, KEVIN BACON, ETHAN HAWKE AND MAHERSHALA ALI *A THE TIMES #1 BESTSELLER* *THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER* *A BARACK OBAMA SUMMER READING PICK 2021* 'Easily the best thing I have read all year' KILEY REID, AUTHOR OF SUCH A FUN AGE 'Intense, incisive, I loved this and have still not quite shaken off the unease' DAVID NICHOLLS 'I was hooked from the opening pages' CLARE MACKINTOSH 'Simply breathtaking . . . An extraordinary book, at once smart, gripping and hallucinatory' OBSERVER _____ A magnetic novel about two families, strangers to each other, who are forced together on a long weekend gone terribly wrong Amanda and Clay head to a remote corner of Long Island expecting a holiday: a quiet reprieve from life in New York City, quality time with their teenage son and daughter and a taste of the good life in the luxurious home they've rented for the week. But with a late-night knock on the door, the spell is broken. Ruth and G. H., an older couple who claim to own the home, have arrived there in a panic. These strangers say that a sudden power outage has swept the city, and - with nowhere else to turn - they have come to the country in search of shelter. But with the TV and internet down, and no phone service, the facts are unknowable. Should Amanda and Clay trust this couple - and vice versa? What has happened back in New York? Is the holiday home, isolated from civilisation, a truly safe place for their families? And are they safe from one another? _____ FINALIST FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD 2020 FINALIST FOR THE ORWELL PRIZE 2021 A DAILY TELEGRAPH, GUARDIAN, OBSERVER, IRISH TIMES AND TIME BOOK OF THE YEAR Everyone is talking about LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND 'You will probably need to read it in as close to one sitting as possible' Sunday Times 'A page-turner taking in themes of isolation, race and class' Guardian 'A book that could have been tailor-made for our times' The Times 'A literary page-turner that will keep you awake even after it ends' Mail on Sunday 'An exceptional examination of race and class and what the world looks like when it's ending' Roxane Gay 'A thrilling book - one that will speak to readers who have felt the terror of isolation in these recent months and one that will simultaneously, as great books do, lift them out of it' Vogue 'Explores complex ideas about privilege and fate with miraculous wit and grace' Jenny Offill 'For the reader, the invisible terror outside in Leave the World Behind echoes the sense of disquiet today in a world convulsed by the pandemic' Financial Times 'Alam's achievement is to see that his genre's traditional arc, which relies on the idea of aftermath, no longer makes sense. Today, disaster novels call for something different' New Yorker 'Read it with the lights on' Jenna Bush Hager, October Book Club pick

shutting out the sky: *We Had to Be Brave: Escaping the Nazis on the Kindertransport* (Scholastic Focus) Deborah Hopkinson, 2020-02-04 Sibert Honor author Deborah Hopkinson illuminates the true stories of Jewish children who fled Nazi Germany, risking everything to escape

to safety on the Kindertransport. An NCTE Orbis Pictus recommended book and a Sydney Taylor Book Award Notable Title. Scholastic Focus is the premier home of thoroughly researched, beautifully written, and thoughtfully designed works of narrative nonfiction aimed at middle-grade and young adult readers. These books help readers learn about the world in which they live and develop their critical thinking skills so that they may become dynamic citizens who are able to analyze and understand our past, participate in essential discussions about our present, and work to grow and build our future. Ruth David was growing up in a small village in Germany when Adolf Hitler rose to power in the 1930s. Under the Nazi Party, Jewish families like Ruth's experienced rising anti-Semitic restrictions and attacks. Just going to school became dangerous. By November 1938, anti-Semitism erupted into Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, and unleashed a wave of violence and forced arrests. Days later, desperate volunteers sprang into action to organize the Kindertransport, a rescue effort to bring Jewish children to England. Young people like Ruth David had to say good-bye to their families, unsure if they'd ever be reunited. Miles from home, the Kindertransport refugees entered unrecognizable lives, where food, clothes -- and, for many of them, language and religion -- were startlingly new. Meanwhile, the onset of war and the Holocaust visited unimaginable horrors on loved ones left behind. Somehow, these rescued children had to learn to look forward, to hope. Through the moving and often heart-wrenching personal accounts of Kindertransport survivors, critically acclaimed and award-winning author Deborah Hopkinson paints the timely and devastating story of how the rise of Hitler and the Nazis tore apart the lives of so many families and what they were forced to give up in order to save these children.

shutting out the sky: *The Sky is Mine* Amy Beashel, 2020-02-06 Shortlisted for the Bristol Teen Book Award 2020 Longlisted for the Branford Boase Award 2021 Nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal 2021 'Izzy is my hero, and her voice deserves to be heard around the world. Stunning.' Jennifer Niven, author of *All the Bright Places* 'Amy Beashel holds nothing back when confronting rape culture and toxicity; this beautiful book will floor you and deserves to be on every shelf, everywhere.' Kathleen Glasgow, author of *Girl in Pieces* Izzy feels invisible. Trapped under the weight of expectation and censored by shame. Her mum Steph and best friend Grace have always been there to save her. But with one under the control of her stepfather and the other caught in the throes of new love, Izzy is falling between the cracks. As threats to her safety grow, Izzy wants to scream. But first she must find her voice. And if the sky is the limit, then the sky is hers. [This book contains material which some readers may find distressing, including discussions of rape, coercive behaviour, domestic violence and abuse.]

shutting out the sky: *Mrs. Dalloway* Virginia Woolf, 2023-12-16 Mrs Dalloway, Virginia Woolf's fourth novel, offers the reader an impression of a single June day in London in 1923. Clarissa Dalloway, the wife of a Conservative member of parliament, is preparing to give an evening party, while the shell-shocked Septimus Warren Smith hears the birds in Regent's Park chattering in Greek. There seems to be nothing, except perhaps London, to link Clarissa and Septimus. She is middle-aged and prosperous, with a sheltered happy life behind her; Smith is young, poor, and driven to hatred of himself and the whole human race. Yet both share a terror of existence, and sense the pull of death. The world of Mrs Dalloway is evoked in Woolf's famous stream of consciousness style, in a lyrical and haunting language which has made this, from its publication in 1925, one of her most popular novels.

shutting out the sky: A Bandit's Tale: The Muddled Misadventures of a Pickpocket Deborah Hopkinson, 2016-04-05 From an award-winning author of historical fiction comes a story of survival, crime, adventure, and horses in the streets of 19th century New York City. Eleven-year-old Rocco is an Italian immigrant who finds himself alone in New York City after he's sold to a padrone by his poverty-stricken parents. While working as a street musician, he meets the boys of the infamous Bandits' Roost, who teach him the art of pickpocketing. Rocco embraces his new life of crime—he's good at it, and it's more lucrative than banging a triangle on the street corner. But when he meets Meddlin' Mary, a strong-hearted Irish girl who's determined to help the horses of New York City, things begin to change. Rocco begins to reexamine his life—and take his future into his

own hands.

shutting out the sky: The Rock from the Sky Jon Klassen, 2021-04-13 Look up! From the Caldecott Medal-winning creator of the hat trilogy comes a new deadpan gem. There is a spot. It is a good spot. It is the perfect spot to stand. There is no reason to ever leave. But somewhere above there is also a rock. A rock from the sky. Here comes *The Rock from the Sky*, a hilarious meditation on the workings of friendship, fate, shared futuristic visions, and that funny feeling you get that there's something off somewhere, but you just can't put your finger on it. Merging broad visual suspense with wry wit, celebrated picture book creator Jon Klassen gives us a wholly original comedy for the ages.

shutting out the sky: The Weight of Our Sky Hanna Alkaf, 2019-02-05 A music loving teen with OCD does everything she can to find her way back to her mother during the historic race riots in 1969 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in this heart-pounding literary debut. Melati Ahmad looks like your typical movie-going, Beatles-obsessed sixteen-year-old. Unlike most other sixteen-year-olds though, Mel also believes that she harbors a djinn inside her, one who threatens her with horrific images of her mother's death unless she adheres to an elaborate ritual of counting and tapping to keep him satisfied. A trip to the movies after school turns into a nightmare when the city erupts into violent race riots between the Chinese and the Malay. When gangsters come into the theater and hold movie-goers hostage, Mel, a Malay, is saved by a Chinese woman, but has to leave her best friend behind to die. On their journey through town, Mel sees for herself the devastation caused by the riots. In her village, a neighbor tells her that her mother, a nurse, was called in to help with the many bodies piling up at the hospital. Mel must survive on her own, with the help of a few kind strangers, until she finds her mother. But the djinn in her mind threatens her ability to cope.

shutting out the sky: The Sky Blues Robbie Couch, 2021-04-06 Sky's small town turns absolutely claustrophobic when his secret promposal plans get leaked to the entire school in this witty, heartfelt, and ultimately hopeful debut novel for fans of *What if it's Us?* and *I Wish You All the Best*. Sky Baker may be openly gay, but in his small, insular town, making sure he was invisible has always been easier than being himself. Determined not to let anything ruin his senior year, Sky decides to make a splash at his high school's annual beach bum party by asking his crush, Ali, to prom—and he has thirty days to do it. What better way to start living loud and proud than by pulling off the gayest promposal Rock Ledge, Michigan, has ever seen? Then, Sky's plans are leaked by an anonymous hacker in a deeply homophobic e-blast that quickly goes viral. He's fully prepared to drop out and skip town altogether—until his classmates give him a reason to fight back by turning his thirty-day promposal countdown into a school-wide hunt to expose the e-blast perpetrator. But what happens at the end of the thirty days? Will Sky get to keep his hard-won visibility? Or will his small-town blues stop him from being his true self?

shutting out the sky: Stand on the Sky Erin Bow, 2019 An exquisitely written, uplifting middle grade debut by acclaimed author, Erin Bow, about a young girl who defies her family's expectations in order to save her brother and become an eagle hunter, perfect for fans of *PAX*. It goes against all tradition for Aisulu to train an eagle, for among the Kazakh nomads, only men can fly them. But everything changes when Aisulu discovers that her brother, Serik, has been concealing a bad limp that risks not just his future as the family's leader, but his life too. When her parents leave to seek a cure for Serik in a distant hospital, Aisulu finds herself living with her intimidating uncle and strange auntie--and secretly caring for an orphaned baby eagle. To save her brother and keep her family from having to leave their nomadic life behind forever, Aisulu must earn her eagle's trust and fight for her right to soar. Along the way, she discovers that family are people who choose each other, home is a place you build, and hope is a thing with feathers. Erin Bow's lyrical middle grade debut is perfect for fans of original animal-friendship stories like *Pax* and *Because of Winn Dixie*.

shutting out the sky: Courage & Defiance: Stories of Spies, Saboteurs, and Survivors in World War II Denmark (Scholastic Focus) Deborah Hopkinson, 2015-08-25 Critically acclaimed Sibert Honor author Deborah Hopkinson brings to bold life the remarkable story of the Danish resistance and rescue of over 7,000 Jews during WWII. When the Nazis invaded Denmark the

morning of Tuesday, April 9, 1940, the people of this tiny country to the north of Germany awoke to a devastating surprise. The government of Denmark surrendered quietly, and the Danes were ordered to go about their daily lives as if nothing had changed. But everything had changed. Award-winning author Deborah Hopkinson traces the stories of the heroic young men and women who would not stand by as their country was occupied. Rather, they fought back. Some were spies, passing tactical information to the British; some were saboteurs, who aimed to hamper and impede Nazi operations in Denmark; and 95% of the Jewish population of Denmark were survivors, rescued by their fellow countrymen, who had the courage and conscience that drove them to act. With her extraordinary talent for digging deep in her research and weaving real voices into her narratives, Hopkinson reveals the thrilling truth behind one of WWII's most daring resistance movements.

shutting out the sky: Jump into the Sky Shelley Pearsall, 2013-08-06 It's May 5, 1945. Carrying nothing but a suitcase and a bag of his aunt's good fried chicken, 13-year-old Levi Battle heads south to a U.S. Army post in search of his father—a lieutenant in an elite unit of all black paratroopers. The fact that his father doesn't even know he's coming turns out to be the least of his problems. As Levi makes his way across the United States, he learns hard lessons about the way a black boy is treated in the Jim Crow South. And when he arrives at his destination, his struggles are far from over. The war may be ending, but his father's secret mission is just beginning—and it's more dangerous than anybody imagined. . . . Shelley Pearsall has created an unforgettable character in Levi and gives readers a remarkable tour of 1945 America through his eyes. *Jump into the Sky* is a tour de force of historical fiction from a writer at the very top of her game.

shutting out the sky: Night Sky with Exit Wounds Ocean Vuong, 2017-04-04 Winner of the 2017 T. S. Eliot Prize 'Reading Vuong is like watching a fish move: he manages the varied currents of English with muscled intuition.' *New Yorker* An extraordinary debut from a young Vietnamese American, *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* is a book of poetry unlike any other. Steeped in war and cultural upheaval and wielding a fresh new language, Vuong writes about the most profound subjects - love and loss, conflict, grief, memory and desire - and attends to them all with lines that feel newly-minted, graceful in their cadences, passionate and hungry in their tender, close attention: '...the chief of police/facedown in a pool of Coca-Cola./A palm-sized photo of his father soaking/beside his left ear.' This is an unusual, important book: both gentle and visceral, vulnerable and assured, and its blend of humanity and power make it one of the best first collections of poetry to come out of America in years. 'These are poems of exquisite beauty, unashamed of romance, and undaunted by looking directly into the horrors of war, the silences of history. One of the most important debut collections for a generation.' Andrew McMillan Winner of the 2017 Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection *A Guardian / Daily Telegraph Book of the Year* PBS Summer Recommendation

shutting out the sky: The Great Trouble Deborah Hopkinson, 2013-09-10 The suspenseful tale of two courageous kids and one inquisitive scientist who teamed up to stop an epidemic. "A delightful combination of race-against-the-clock medical mystery and outwit-the-bad-guys adventure." —*Publishers Weekly*, Starred Eel has troubles of his own: As an orphan and a "mudlark," he spends his days in the filthy River Thames, searching for bits of things to sell. He's being hunted by Fisheye Bill Tyler, and a nastier man never walked the streets of London. And he's got a secret that costs him four precious shillings a week to keep safe. But even for Eel, things aren't so bad until that fateful August day in 1854—the day the deadly cholera epidemic ("blue death") comes to Broad Street. Everyone believes that cholera is spread through poisonous air. But one man, Dr. John Snow, has a different theory. As the epidemic surges, it's up to Eel and his best friend, Florrie, to gather evidence to prove Dr. Snow's theory—before the entire neighborhood is wiped out. "Hopkinson illuminates a pivotal chapter in the history of public health. . . . Accessible . . . and entertaining." —*School Library Journal*, Starred "For [readers] who love suspense, drama, and mystery." —*TIME for Kids*

shutting out the sky: The Sky Is Everywhere (Movie Tie-In) Jandy Nelson, 2022-03-15 Jandy Nelson's beloved, critically adored debut is now an Apple TV+ and A24 original film starring

Jason Segel, Cherry Jones, Grace Kaufman, and Jacques Colimon. "Both a profound meditation on loss and grieving and an exhilarating and very sexy romance. —NPR Adrift after her sister Bailey's sudden death, Lennie finds herself torn between quiet, seductive Toby—Bailey's boyfriend who shares Lennie's grief—and Joe, the new boy in town who bursts with life and musical genius. Each offers Lennie something she desperately needs. One boy helps her remember. The other lets her forget. And she knows if the two of them collide, her whole world will explode. As much a laugh-out-loud celebration of love as a nuanced and poignant portrait of loss, Lennie's struggle to sort her own melody out of the noise around her makes for an always honest, often uproarious, and absolutely unforgettable read.

shutting out the sky: *Between the Lines* Jodi Picoult, Samantha van Leer, 2013-06-25 Told in their separate voices, sixteen-year-old Prince Oliver, who wants to break free of his fairy-tale existence, and fifteen-year-old Delilah, a loner obsessed with Prince Oliver and the book in which he exists, work together to seek his freedom.

shutting out the sky: *A Smidgen of Sky* Dianna Dorisi Winget, 2012 In this debut set in the deep South, 10-year-old Piper Lee struggles to accept her daddy's death, her mama's upcoming marriage, and the new stepfamily that will come along with it. But when her plan to call off the wedding spirals out of control, Piper Lee must face the consequences and figure out how to fix things.

shutting out the sky: Coming to America Betsy Maestro, 1996 Explores the evolving history of immigration to the United States, a long saga about people coming first in search of food and then, later in a quest for religious and political freedom, safety, and prosperity.

shutting out the sky: *Sky Chasers* Emma Carroll, 2018-01-04 Magpie witnesses a strange spectacle above the streets of Paris: a boy suspended in the air. It ends in disaster - even so, Magpie is enthralled by the idea of flying. But others, too, are determined to discover Montgolfier's secrets

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shutting out the sky: *Harley in the Sky* Akemi Dawn Bowman, 2020-03-10 "Earnest, poetic." —Booklist "Raw, engaging." —Kirkus Reviews The Greatest Showman meets This Is Us by way of Sarah Dessen in this heart-wrenching, hopeful contemporary novel about a multiracial teen who risks it all to follow her dreams by joining the circus, from the award-winning author of *Starfish*. Harley Milano has dreamed of becoming a trapeze artist for as long as she can remember. With parents who run a famous circus in Las Vegas, she spends almost every night in the big top watching their lead aerialist perform, wishing with all her heart and soul that she would be up there herself one day. After a huge fight with her parents, who continue to insist she go to school instead, Harley leaves home, betrays her family, and joins the rival traveling circus Maison du Mystère. There, she is thrust into a world that is both brutal and beautiful, where she learns the value of hard work, passion, and collaboration. At the same time, Harley must come to terms with the truth of her family and her past—and reckon with the sacrifices she made and the people she hurt in order to follow her dreams. From award-winning author Akemi Dawn Bowman comes a luminous, unforgettable examination of love, loyalty, and the hard choices we must make to find where we truly belong.

shutting out the sky: *Enemy of the State* Vince Flynn, Kyle Mills, 2017-09-07 THE NEW YORK TIMES NUMBER ONE BESTSELLING AUTHOR The enduring mystery of just who really was behind the 9/11 attacks in America has never been solved - but now Mitch Rapp thinks he has the culprits in his sights and he's out for blood. After 9/11, the United States made one of the most secretive and dangerous deals in its history. The evidence against the powerful Saudis who coordinated the attack would be buried. In return, King Faisal would promise to keep the oil flowing and deal with the conspirators in his midst. When the king's own nephew is discovered funding ISIS, the US president suspects that the Saudis never intended to live up to their agreement. He decides that the royalty needs to be sent a message and that Mitch Rapp is just the man to deliver it. The catch? Rapp must do it entirely on his own. Forced to make a decision that will change his life forever, Rapp quits the CIA and assembles a group of independent contractors to help him complete the mission. They've barely begun unravelling the connections between the Saudi government and ISIS when the brilliant

new head of the intelligence directorate discovers their efforts. With Rapp getting too close, he threatens to go public with the details of the post-9/11 agreement between the two countries. Facing an international incident that could end his political career, the President orders America's intelligence agencies to join the Saudis' effort to hunt the former CIA man down. Rapp is now at the centre of the most elaborate manhunt in history ... AMERICAN ASSASSIN, book one in the series, is now a MAJOR MOTION PICTURE starring Dylan O'Brien (Maze Runner), Taylor Kitsch (True Detective) and Michael Keaton. Praise for the Mitch Rapp series 'Sizzles with inside information and CIA secrets' Dan Brown 'A cracking, uncompromising yarn that literally takes no prisoners' The Times 'Vince Flynn clearly has one eye on Lee Child's action thriller throne with this twist-laden story. . . instantly gripping' Shortlist 'Action-packed, in-your-face, adrenalin-pumped super-hero macho escapist fiction that does exactly what it says on the label' Irish Independent 'Mitch Rapp is a great character who always leaves the bad guys either very sorry for themselves or very dead' Guardian

shutting out the sky: The Boy Who Fell Out of the Sky Ken Dornstein, 2007-06-12 The hugely satisfying story (The Boston Globe) of one man's search for the truth about his brother—and himself. David Dornstein was twenty-five years old, with dreams of becoming a great writer, when he boarded Pan Am Flight 103 on December 21, 1988. Thirty-eight minutes after takeoff, a terrorist bomb ripped the plane apart over Lockerbie, Scotland. Almost a decade later, Ken Dornstein set out to solve the riddle of his older brother's life, using the notebooks and manuscripts that David left behind. In the process, he also began to create a new life of his own.

shutting out the sky: The Sky is Yours Chandler Klang Smith, 2018 Navigating their burned-out, futuristic city home under constant threat from a pair of dragons circling the skies, three young people are forced to flee and confront challenges ranging from fire and conspiracies to taboo drugs and dragon-worshippers.

shutting out the sky: Steal the Sky Megan E O'Keefe, 2016-01-05 Detan Honding, a wanted conman of noble birth and ignoble tongue, has found himself in the oasis city of Aransa. He and his trusted companion Tibs may have pulled off one too many cons against the city's elite and need to make a quick escape. They set their sights on their biggest heist yet - the gorgeous airship of the exiled commodore Thratia. But in the middle of his scheme, a face changer known as a doppel starts murdering key members of Aransa's government. The sudden paranoia makes Detan's plans of stealing Thratia's ship that much harder. And with this sudden power vacuum, Thratia can solidify her power and wreak havoc against the Empire. But the doppel isn't working for Thratia and has her own intentions. Did Detan accidentally walk into a revolution and a crusade? He has to be careful - there's a reason most people think he's dead. And if his dangerous secret gets revealed, he has a lot more to worry about than a stolen airship. File Under: Fantasy [Sky Heist / Doppel Vision / Knives Out / Up Up & Away]

shutting out the sky: The Ant Explorer Clarence James Dennis, Vaughan Duck, 1990

shutting out the sky: Ruby in the Sky Jeanne Zulick Ferruolo, 2019-02-05 A Washington Post KidsPost Summer Book Club Read Twelve-year-old Ruby Moon Hayes does not want her new classmates to ask about her father. She does not want them to know her mother has been arrested. And she definitely does not want to make any friends. Ruby just wants to stay as silent and invisible as a new moon in the frozen sky. She and her mother won't be staying long in Vermont anyway, and then things can go back to the way they were before everything went wrong. But keeping to herself isn't easy when Ahmad Saleem, a Syrian refugee, decides he's her new best friend. Or when she meets "the Bird Lady," a recluse named Abigail who lives in a ramshackle shed near Ruby's house. Before long Ahmad and Abigail have become Ruby's friends—and she realizes there is more to their stories than everyone knows. As ugly rumors begin to swirl around the people Ruby loves, she must make a choice: break her silence, or risk losing everything that's come to mean so much to her. Ruby in the Sky is a story of the walls we hide behind, and the magic that can happen when we're brave enough to break free.

shutting out the sky: The Invention of Everything Else Samantha Hunt, 2008 Before the

week is out, Louisa must come to terms with her own understanding of love, death, and the power of invention.--BOOK JACKET.

shutting out the sky: The Off Limits Rule Sarah Adams, 2020-12-13 I have found rock bottom. It's here, moving in with my older brother because I'm too broke to afford to live on my own. It's okay though, because we've always been close and I think I'm going to have fun living with him again. That is until I meet Cooper... Turns out, my brother has very strong opinions on the idea of me dating his best friend and is dead set against it. According to him, Cooper is everything I should stay away from: flirtatious, adventurous, non-committal, and freaking hot. (I added that last part because I feel like you need the whole picture.) My brother is right- I should stay away from Cooper James and his pretty blue eyes. He's the opposite of what I need right now. Nah-who am I kidding? I'm going for it. The Off Limits Rule is a closed door romance, perfect for readers who love lots of sizzle but no explicit content.

shutting out the sky: Out of the Dust (Scholastic Gold) Karen Hesse, 2012-09-01 Acclaimed author Karen Hesse's Newbery Medal-winning novel-in-verse explores the life of fourteen-year-old Billie Jo growing up in the dust bowls of Oklahoma. Out of the Dust joins the Scholastic Gold line, which features award-winning and beloved novels. Includes exclusive bonus content! Dust piles up like snow across the prairie. . . . A terrible accident has transformed Billie Jo's life, scarring her inside and out. Her mother is gone. Her father can't talk about it. And the one thing that might make her feel better -- playing the piano -- is impossible with her wounded hands. To make matters worse, dust storms are devastating the family farm and all the farms nearby. While others flee from the dust bowl, Billie Jo is left to find peace in the bleak landscape of Oklahoma -- and in the surprising landscape of her own heart.

shutting out the sky: The Map of the Sky Félix J. Palma, 2012-09-04 The fate of the earth hangs in the balance as H.G. Wells' The War of the Worlds is transformed from the work of one writer's imagination into a terrifying reality for all mankind. 1898. New York socialite Emma Harlow agrees to marry well-to-do Montgomery Gilmore, but only if he first accepts her audacious challenge: to reproduce the Martian invasion featured in H. G. Wells's popular novel The War of the Worlds. Meanwhile in London, Wells himself is unexpectedly made privy to certain objects, apparently of extraterrestrial origin, that were discovered decades earlier on an ill-fated expedition to the Antarctic. On that same expedition was an American crew member named Edgar Allan Poe, whose inexplicable experiences in the frozen wasteland would ultimately inspire him to create one of his most enduring works of literature. When eerie, alien-looking cylinders begin appearing in London, Wells is certain it is all part of some elaborate hoax. But soon, to his great horror, he realizes that a true invasion of Earth has indeed begun. As brave bands of citizens converge on a crumbling London to defend it against utter ruin, Emma and her suitor must confront the enigma that is their love, a bright spark of hope even against the darkening light of apocalypse. Palma dazzled readers with his instant New York Times bestseller The Map of Time. In The Map of the Sky, he embarks on an even more thrilling speculative journey, one that links the earth and the heavens, the familiar and the bizarre, the impossible and the inevitable.

shutting out the sky: Notes from a Small Island Bill Bryson, 2015 In 1995, before leaving his much-loved home in North Yorkshire to move back to the States for a few years with his family, Bill Bryson insisted on taking one last trip around Britain, a sort of valedictory tour of the green and kindly island that had so long been his home. His aim was to take stock of the nation's public face and private parts (as it were), and to analyse what precisely it was he loved so much about a country that had produced Marmite; a military hero whose dying wish was to be kissed by a fellow named Hardy; place names like Farleigh Wallop, Titsey and Shellow Bowells; people who said 'Mustn't grumble', and 'Ooh lovely' at the sight of a cup of tea and a plate of biscuits; and Gardeners' Question Time. Notes from a Small Island was a huge number-one bestseller when it was first published, and has become the nation's most loved book about Britain, going on to sell over two million copies.

shutting out the sky: Dear Emma Johanna Hurwitz, 2014-06-30 After spending a Fresh Air

Fund vacation discovering a new world on a Vermont farm, Dossi thought that returning home to the bustling New York of 1910 would be simple. Little did she know that, even in a familiar place, there are new things to experience.

shutting out the sky: A Ladder to the Sky John Boyne, 2018-11-13 The new novel from the beloved New York Times bestselling author of *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* and *The Heart's Invisible Furies*, a seductive Highsmithian psychodrama following one brilliant, ruthless man who will stop at nothing in his pursuit of fame. If you look hard enough, you can find stories pretty much anywhere. They don't even have to be your own. Or so would-be writer Maurice Swift decides very early on in his career. A chance encounter in a West Berlin hotel with celebrated novelist Erich Ackermann gives him an opportunity to ingratiate himself with someone more powerful. For Erich is lonely, and he has a story to tell. Whether or not he should do so is another matter. Once Maurice has made his name, he sets off in pursuit of other people's stories. He doesn't care where he finds them--or to whom they belong--as long as they help him rise to the top. Stories will make him famous but they will also make him beg, borrow and steal. They may even make him do worse. A psychological drama of cat and mouse, *A Ladder to the Sky* shows how easy it is to achieve the world if you are prepared to sacrifice your soul.

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