

Zombies of Berlin

author: Ralph Martin

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Synopsis

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For generations, the big city has promised romance, danger, opportunity. But what happens when you wake up one hungover morning and realize the promise is gone...along with your cheap apartment? That your whole existence in Berlin - 10 years of easy living based on cheap rent and the ability to just barely make it in the creative industry - was just a historical accident, the cheap rent and Bohemian setting products of a perverse economy, a miracle that couldn't possibly last? What does it do to your sense of place to realize that Berlin is following cluelessly in New York's footsteps, from artsy wonderland to real estate boondoggle? Does that mean Berlin, like New York, is over? Or does it come back to you: Deep down, does it mean that you can't afford to go on fooling yourself?

Part amateur sociology, part autobiographical journey, *Zombies of Berlin* explores Ralph Martin's experience of gentrification in Berlin and New York and the dawning horror that these cities have windows of raw beauty: Blink and you might miss them. The author takes an anxiety-fueled trip to Leipzig to check out the 'better Berlin', with distinctly mixed results, thrown back upon himself as he tries to figure out whether we shouldn't all just move to the country.

Zombies is not a political pamphlet but a hauntingly melancholic and comical journey: a vivid portrait of status anxiety in the age of real estate. Ralph Martin is an ex-New Yorker, writer, and journalist. His work has appeared in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, in the *New York Times*, and elsewhere.

Reader's comments

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