



Main Street

Sinclair Lewis (February 7, 1885 – January 10, 1951)

Read by:	Multiple Readers	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	18 hours 16 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1147
Language:	English	UPC:	0683422134647
Style:	Collaborative	MSLP:	\$11.99
Genre:	Fiction		

Main Street (1920) is Sinclair Lewis' most significant work, and along with *Babbitt*, established him as the premier critic and satirist of small town America in the early 20th century. Set in the 1910's and spanning the First World War and the onset of Prohibition, the story centers on the frustrations of Carol Milford, a liberal free spirit from St. Paul, Minnesota, who marries Will Kennicott, a doctor from Gopher Prairie, who persuades her to settle there. Stunned by the town's conservative, backward ways and lack of beauty, she gamely joins in and tries to liven things up and bring about progressive change, only to meet with derision from the in crowd. She manages to find companionship outside her class, but these connections are gradually broken.

Reaching bottom, she leaves her husband and moves to Washington, DC, but eventually returns, disappointed but undefeated.

Not surprisingly, the book created a backlash when it was published; it was banned in Alexandria, MN. Some thought it exceptionally bleak and humorless. Today it is listed number 68 by the Modern Library on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

Harry Sinclair Lewis (February 7, 1885 – January 10, 1951) was an American author known for his novels and short stories of middle class American life between the World Wars. He was the youngest of three boys born and raised in the town of Sauk Center, Minnesota. He attended Oberlin Academy and Yale University, where he became editor of the Yale Literary Magazine. Following graduation in 1908 he wrote for magazines and newspapers, developing a gift for producing shallow but popular stories, and started publishing novels in 1914. He struck gold in 1920 with *Main Street*, an exceptionally realistic novel about small town life that sold 180,000 copies in the first six months and over two million within a few years. He followed with *Babbitt* in 1922, the Pulitzer Prize winner *Arrowsmith* in 1925, *Elmer Gantry* in 1927, and *Dodsworth* in 1929. The strength of these works earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1930, the first American to receive the honor. He wrote eleven more novels, notably *It Can't Happen Here* in 1935 about the election of a fascist President. His friend William Shirer summarized his career by noting that "compared to ... Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Dos Passos, and Faulkner ... Lewis lacked style. Yet his impact on modern American life ... was greater than all of the other four writers together."