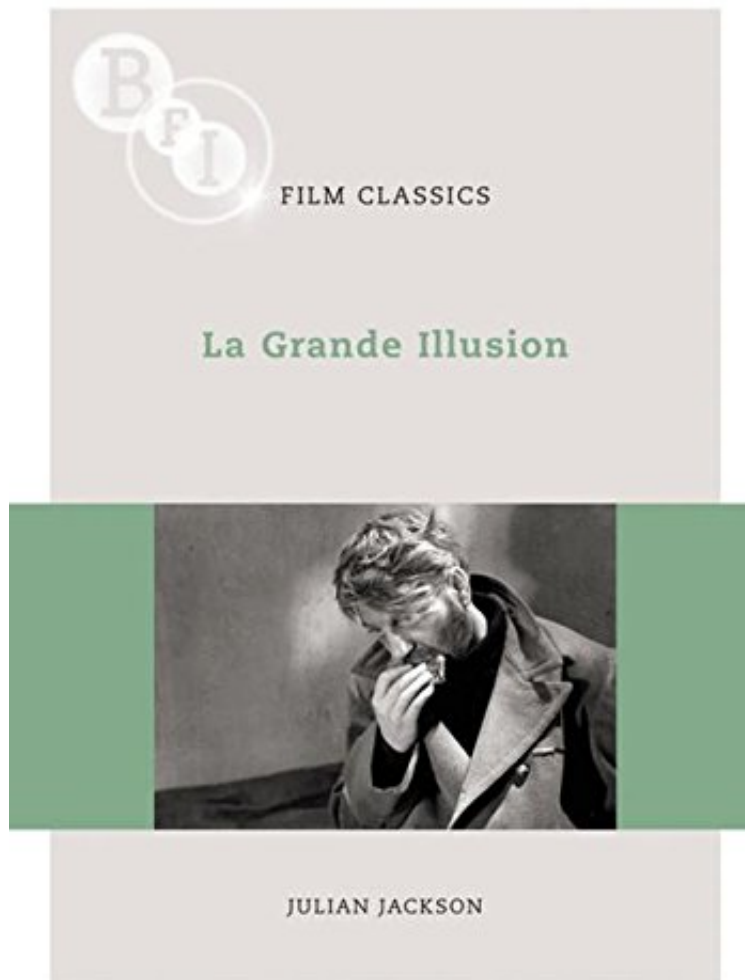


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La Grande Illusion (BFI Film Classics)

Julian Jackson

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Julian Jackson : La Grande Illusion (BFI Film Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised La Grande Illusion (BFI Film Classics):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy CRA wonderful, insightful, concise overview to a timeless classic.

Jean Renoir's 1937 film La Grande Illusion is set during the First World War, but its themes of Franco-German conflict, divided loyalties in a time of war and the rise of anti-Semitism made it compelling and controversial viewing. Julian Jackson traces the film's historical context and its reception history.

...clear, to the point and packed with black and white stills...' Total Film '...Jackson's commentary on the film is passionate and informed...' - H-France " ...clear, to the point and packed with black and white stills...' Total Film'...Jackson's commentary on the film is passionate and informed...' - H-France From the Back Cover

Jean Renoir's masterpiece *La Grande Illusion* (1937) tells the story of two French prisoners of war escaping through Germany towards France during World War I. Its themes of divided class, racial and national loyalties and the conflict between patriotism and pacifism made it a controversial film on its release on the eve of World War II. Goebbels, who had once declared the film 'Cinematic Public Enemy Number 1', ordered the prints to be confiscated during the Nazi Occupation of France. Julian Jackson's compelling study places the film in the context of Renoir's involvement with the left-wing Popular Front, which was split between supporters of an anti-Fascist war and believers in peace at all costs. Jackson highlights the film's ambiguity in its treatment of patriotism and pacifism and argues that it is suspended between two historical moments: the Popular Front of the 1930s and the Vichy regime of the 1940s. He traces the film's history after its release: it was banned during the 'phony war' for its pacifist undertones; banned by the Nazis for being too patriotic; disliked by the Resistance for portraying the Germans too sympathetically and for its treatment of anti-Semitism. Jackson discusses the unforgettable performances of Jean Gabin as the working-class Lieutenant Marchal, Pierre Fresnay as the aristocratic Captain de Boldieu, Erich von Stroheim as the upper-class Captain von Rauffenstein and Marcel Dalio as the French Jew Rosenthal. He analyses Renoir's highly individual filming style and explores his conception of cinematic 'realism'. Finally, he offers his own answer to the mystery of the film's title: what was the great illusion?

JULIAN JACKSON is Professor of Modern History at Queen Mary, University of London. His publications include *The Popular Front in France: Defending Democracy 1934-1938* (1988), *France: The Dark Years 1940-1944* (2001) and *The Fall of France* (2003), which was the joint winner of the 2004 Wolfson Prize for history. He is a fellow of the British Academy and Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques.