My Personal Review:
In all his works, Jack Finney had that unique story-telling ability to make the reader feel comfortable and entertained. Without sounding condescending, as some writers do, Finney carefully and clearly explains the situation so well, that there is no risk of not understanding him. For Pete's sake, TIME AND AGAIN was loaded with illustrations so that you could see what and where he was talking about. In FORGOTTEN NEWS, Finney employs the same device. Focusing on what was the crime of the (19th) century--the murder of a dentist, Harvey Burdell--Finney explores the lives of the victim, the probable perpetrators, the witnesses, and, most importantly, the life of NYC in 1857. In fact, even before he launches into the narrative, he provides a brief but effective introduction to the world in which Dr. Burdell lived, including the rough-and-tumble world of the Dead Rabbits and Bowery Boys. The narrative itself is easily paced, peppered with humor just at the right moments, as when the grisly events of the murder might be upsetting the reader. The circus surrounding the investigation and trial of the suspect, Emma Cunningham, is mind-boggling even by today's standards. Careful, to avoid jumping to conclusions, Finney is admirable in reining in his opinion. There are hints galore that he thinks Ms. Cunningham committed the murder along with a shady accomplice, but he also acknowledges that there is no evidence. The story of Ms. Cunningham's faked pregnancy and her attempt to acquire an infant to claim is Burdell's, just so that she could continue her pursuit of his inheritance, is so outrageous, so unbelievable that the reader might forget that this is non-fiction. The second part of the book describes the shipwreck of the ?????. Just the fact that I can't remember the name of the boat is an indication that that narrative isn't quite as compelling as the murder of Burdell (at least to me). In fact, it was a little anti-climactic. Perhaps it should have come before the Burdell murder. And perhaps it's just me. In any event, track down this book. It is worth the read. And PLEASE, SOMEBODY OUT THERE, BRING THIS BOOK BACK INTO PRINT!!!Rocco Dormarunno, author of The Five Points

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