

The Innocent (Picador Books)



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lan McEwan

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The setting is Berlin. Into this divided city, wrenched between East and West, between past and present; comes twenty-five-year-old Leonard Marnham, assigned to a British-American surveillance team. Though only a pawn in an international plot that is never fully revealed to him, Leonard uses his secret work to escape the bonds of his ordinary life -- and to lose his unwanted innocence. The promise of his new life begins to be fulfilled as Leonard becomes a crucial part of the surveillance team, while simultaneously being initiated into a new world of love and sex by Maria, a beautiful young German woman. It is a promise that turns to horror in the course of one terrible evening -- a night when Leonard Marnham learns just how much of his innocence he's willing to shed.

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246 pages

Review

"A topical and brutal tour de force that somehow ascends from horror to a promise of goodness and grace." Michael Ondaatje"Pure literary pleasure it's McEwan's fascination with the inner sources of cruelty and conquest that gives The Innocent its frightening vitality." "LA Weekly""Deft, taut fiction. . . . Many English writers have been compared to Evelyn Waugh, often wrongly, but this book can stand with the master's best." "TIME""Never less than wholly entertaining." "The Wall Street Journal""Powerful and disturbing . . . a tour de force." "The New York Times""Impeccably constructed. . . . Though its plot rivals any thriller in narrative tension, this novel is also a character study--of a young man coming of age in bizarre circumstances." "Publishers Weekly" From the Publisher

'Crackles like thin ice with suspense' Mail on Sunday

'To call The Innocent a spy novel would be like calling Lord of the Flies a boy's adventure yarn...the plot crackles like thin ice with dread and suspense...it ensures McEwan's major staus' John Carey, Sunday Times'Generous in scale, simple in its hideous impact...Ironically, he has celebrated the obsequies of East-West spy thriller by writing one of the subtlest' David Hughes, Mail on Sunday'The sheer cleverness of the book is dazzling, and only fully to be appreciated as you turn the last page: but then cleverness is a real virtue here, the best guide possible to the questionable territory between innocence and whatever comes after' Michael Wood, London Review of Books From the Inside Flap

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