



The Devil in the Flesh (Neversink)

By Raymond Radiguet

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The Devil in the Flesh (Neversink) By Raymond Radiguet

Hailed by Jean Cocteau as a "masterpiece," and by the *Guardian* as "Bret Easton Ellis's *Less Than Zero, avant la lettre*," this taut tale written by a teenager in the form of a frank "confession" is a gem of early twentieth century romanticism. Long unavailable in the U.S., it is here presented in a sparkling new translation.

Set in Paris during the First World War, it tells the story of Francois, the 16-year-old narrator, who falls in love with Marthe, an older, married woman whose husband is off fighting at the front. What seems to begin as a charming tale of puppy love quickly darkens, and they launch into a steamy affair. In the tense environment of the wartime city, their love takes on a desperation transcending their youthfulness.

And as the badly-kept secret of their relationship unfolds, scandal descends, leading the story to a final, startling conclusion—and causing the book itself to become a scandal when it was first published in 1923, just before the author's death at the age of 20.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A triumph of the poetic intelligence: a masterpiece.”

—*New Statesman*

“Christopher Moncrieff’s new translation carries Radiguet’s frank, staccato prose well. The confessional honesty of the language is what makes the book both shocking and sad.”

—*Times Literary Supplement*

“*The Devil in the Flesh* is unretouched and seems shocking, but nothing so resembles cynicism as clairvoyance. No adolescent before Radiguet has delivered to us the secret of that age: we have all falsified it.” —**Francois Mauriac**

“Although Radiguet was so young, he had managed to zone in on the perversity of human love with an accuracy which anticipates, or is in parallel development with, Freud. . . . His insights compel us to keep reading, in the unpleasant knowledge that we may learn something, possibly even about ourselves. . . . One of the measures of the book’s brilliance is that its morality, or its amorality, is not clear-cut.” —*The Guardian*

“A masterpiece of promise.” —**Jean Cocteau**

About the Author

RAYMOND RADIGUET was born in 1903 in Saint-Maur, a small town outside Paris. He was the son of a cartoonist, but little else is known about his childhood until, at age 16, he dropped out of school after an affair with the wife of a soldier off fighting in the first World War, to go to Paris. Once there he quickly began writing for the magazine *Sic*, alongside writers such as Louis Aragon and Andre Breton, and he befriended many notable Modernists, including Pablo Picasso and Jean Cocteau. Despite his age, he also quickly developed a reputation for fast living; Ernest Hemingway would later accuse him of sleeping with Cocteau, among others, to advance his career. At the age of 18, after writing a collection of poems that would only be published posthumously, *Les joues en feu*, Radiguet moved to a fishing village near Toulon to work on the novel that would become his masterpiece, *The Devil in the Flesh*, which was based on his high school affair. Cocteau would later claim that he’d had to lock Radiguet in his hotel room to keep him from drinking binges rather than writing. The author’s youth and the scandalous story made the book a sensation, but Radiguet did not have long to enjoy his fame. Less than a year later, shortly after taking a trip with Cocteau to the country to finish a second novel, *Le Bal du comte d’Orgel*, Radiguet died of typhoid fever at age 20. Composer Francis Poulenc said of his death, “For two days I was unable to do anything, I was so stunned.”

CHRISTOPHER MONCRIEFF is one of the world’s premier French translators. He has translated the work of Gustave Flaubert, Victor Hugo, and numerous other French masters.

Users Review

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Davis Miller:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have a lot more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their very own spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open as well as read a book called The Devil in the Flesh (Neversink)? Maybe it is to become best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time using your favorite's book, you can smarter than before. Do you agree with its opinion or you have some other opinion?

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Scott Foust:

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