



The Human Factor (Penguin Classics)

By Graham Greene

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The Human Factor (Penguin Classics) By Graham Greene

Maurice Castle is a high-level operative in the British secret service during the Cold War. He is deeply in love with his African wife, who escaped apartheid South Africa with the help of his communist friend. Despite his misgivings, Castle decides to act as a double agent, passing information to the Soviets to help his in-laws in South Africa. In order to evade detection, he allows his assistant to be wrongly identified as the source of the leaks. But when suspicions remain, Castle is forced to make an even more excruciating sacrifice to save himself. Originally published in 1978, *The Human Factor* is an exciting novel of espionage drawn from Greene's own experiences in MI6 during World War II, and ultimately a deeply humanistic examination of the very nature of loyalty. This edition features a new introduction by Colm Tóibín.

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Editorial Review

Review

The Human Factor is Greene's most extensive attempt to incorporate into fiction what he had learned of espionage when recruited by MI6 during World War II . . . What it offers is a veteran excursion into Greene's imaginative world . . . Sometimes seen as a brooding prober into the dark recesses of the soul where sins and scruples alike fester, he is equally at home in sending a narrative careering along at break-neck pace . . . Raising the demarcation line between 'serious' fiction and fast-plotted entertainment, Greene ensures that components of both jostle energizingly together in his pages." –from the Introduction by Peter Kemp

From the Inside Flap

Introduction by Peter Kemp

About the Author

Graham Greene (1904-1991), whose long life nearly spanned the length of the twentieth century, was one of its greatest novelists. Educated at Berkhamsted School and Balliol College, Oxford, he started his career as a sub-editor of *The Times of London*. He began to attract notice as a novelist with his fourth book, *Orient Express*, in 1932. In 1935, he trekked across northern Liberia, his first experience in Africa, recounted in *A Journey Without Maps* (1936). He converted to Catholicism in 1926, an edifying decision, and reported on religious persecution in Mexico in 1938 in *The Lawless Roads*, which served as a background for his famous *The Power and the Glory*, one of several "Catholic" novels (*Brighton Rock*, *The Heart of the Matter*, *The End of the Affair*). During the war he worked for the British secret service in Sierra Leone; afterward, he began wide-ranging travels as a journalist, which were reflected in novels such as *The Quiet American*, *Our Man in Havana*, *The Comedians*, *Travels with My Aunt*, *The Honorary Consul*, *The Human Factor*, *Monsignor Quixote*, and *The Captain and the Enemy*. In addition to his many novels, Graham Greene wrote several collections of short stories, four travel books, six plays, two books of autobiography—*A Sort of Life* and *Ways of Escape*—two biographies, and four books for children. He also contributed hundreds of essays and film and book reviews to *The Spectator* and other journals, many of which appear in the late collection *Reflections*. Most of his novels have been filmed, including *The Third Man*, which the author first wrote as a film treatment. Graham Greene was named Companion of Honour and received the Order of Merit among numerous other awards.

Colm Tóibín is the award-winning author of five novels: *The South*, winner of the Irish Times/Aer Lingus Literature Prize; *The Heather Blazing*, winner of the Encore Award for best second novel; *The Story of the Night*; *The Blackwater Lightship*, which was a finalist for the Booker Prize and the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award; and, most recently, *The Master*, a finalist for the Man Booker Prize. His non-fiction includes *Bad Blood: A Walk Along the Irish Border*; *Homage to Barcelona*; *The Sign of the Cross: Travels in Catholic Europe*; and, most recently, *Love in a Dark Time*. He is also the co-author, with Carmen Callil, of *The Modern Library: The 200 Best Novels in English Since 1950*. He lives in Dublin, Ireland.

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