
John Fowles

The Magus

Title: The Magus

Author: John Fowles

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Description

This daring literary thriller, rich with eroticism and suspense, is one of John Fowles's best-loved and bestselling novels and has contributed significantly to his international reputation as a writer of the first rank. At the center of *The Magus* is Nicholas Urfe, a young Englishman who accepts a teaching position on a remote Greek island, where he befriends a local millionaire. The friendship soon evolves into a deadly game in which reality and fantasy are deliberately manipulated, and Nicholas finds that he must fight not only for his sanity but for his very survival.

Insightful reviews

Oriana: Oh god, I totally totally hated this boring, rambling, long-as-shit book.

Casey: A month after finishing *The Magus*, I'm still not quite sure if I loved it or hated it. I suppose that is entirely due to my obsessions with clarity of plot and identification with characters... one moment, you trust and love a character, and think you know exactly where the story is going (or even, is at the moment); the next, the rug is pulled out from under you and all your alliances and expectations have to suddenly change. Frankly, I don't find that sensation particularly pleasant--even as I couldn't put the novel down, and was fascinated by the twists and turns. And the writing itself is wonderful. Pretentious language, but that is ostensibly the narrator's contribution, and thus not offensive.

It's a remarkable book, but not easy to recommend unless a reader knows what they are getting into!

James: While his novel *The Collector* was my introduction to the work of John Fowles I was not nearly as impressed with that novel as I was with *The Magus*. In it I found an intense, engrossing novel that maintained my interest in several ways.

The plot of the novel is a story of a young unhappy man who considers himself a poet and a philosopher. He takes a job at an English boarding school on a Greek island to escape what could become a complicated situation after a young woman with whom he is involved falls in love with him. Having used up his "charm with women," as one of the characters puts it, he sees this a better alternative. On this Greek island, he meets a millionaire named "Conchis" who tells the young man, Nicholas, stories of his life. To Nicholas' surprise, the characters in the stories begin to appear on the estate in what Fowles (in the prologue to the revised edition) describes as a kind of magical realism. While the novel seems to explore the ideas of conflict in mythology and philosophy, it rapidly turns into a kind of psychological mystery as Nicholas becomes more and more enmeshed in Conchis' mind games and it becomes more difficult for him--and the reader--to tell the difference between reality and fiction.

While, I found a certain resonance with *Le Grand Meaulnes*, by Alain-Fournier, in the showing of a secret hidden world to be explored along with reference to Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, the novel seems as much about the idea of "freedom" in the twentieth century. It

also explores the definition of meaningful experiences, both inter-personal and intra-personal. While always artistic even while it sometimes seemed a bit bewildering it was ultimately a great read due to the uniqueness of its structure and its exploration of ideas. Combined with Fowles's beautiful prose that proved to be the right potion for a great novel.

Simon: SPOILERS! Well, every thing one may possibly say approximately this booklet might be taken as a spoiler, together with this very remark. The ebook is an effective read, or it should were if it had weighed in at 200 or so pages shorter. And, on condition that the e-book is completely a gentle denouement, one has to appreciate Fowles's ability in controlling it over this type of lengthy span, like a musician creating a highly lengthy crescendo. But I suppose within the end, I did not very similar to the book. Within the 'trial' scene, a document is learned out in regards to the narrator of which the narrator himself admits a large number of validity. and that I can not help feeling that it indicts (and is meant to indict) the writer himself. The publication is narcissistic within the extreme. A narcissistic younger man, even more immature than he thinks he is, turns into the thing of a mental experiment? or intervention? carried out by way of a bunch of vastly prosperous those that level deal with every type of peculiar events on a gorgeous Greek island. They comprise a couple of gorgeous younger girl twins (yes, two!, count number 'em) of which one (and it truly is transparent it may possibly were both) does every kind of great issues to his deepest parts. they're all so drawn to him. is not that cool? Apparently, he is in basic terms the most recent in a succession of such experiments/interventions all conducted, you guessed it, on narcissistic younger males who're even more immature than they believe they are! And it kind of feels they have all concerned kinky events during which the limits of bourgeois morality are swept away within the identify of a few unnamed and unspecified better truth. precisely why those individuals are doing what they're doing, no matter if quite out of benevolent hindrance for a lot of these younger men, or out of dedication to a couple liberated science, isn't precisely made clear. (Clearly, any resolution to this might be too 'little' or parochial to justify the entire motion that the gang generates, so it quite can't be defined with no deflating the full book. yet that is by no means an exceptional factor in a book, whilst it has to maintain silent on anything in order to not look silly.) And the attitudes to gender in the course of the book! OK, granted, it truly is partially approximately how the narrator involves become aware of he is fucked up approximately this, yet six hundred pages of determined hope for the feminine muse alternating with enraged wish to whip (literally) and weigh down (metaphorically) a variety of of the ladies all for the narrator's 'education', by means of 50 pages of "oh I have to try to do better".... Well, I am not convinced. The booklet turns out an uncongenial younger man's jerk off delusion (which makes his regulate of the book's crescendo over this type of lengthy span all of the extra impressive, I suppose). There's additionally a complete epistemological subject to the book. How, it asks, will we understand what is real? How inform what is true? yet I am damned if I see what the booklet is meant to assert approximately that. No-one who stumbles into the superbly finished plans of wealthy eccentrics with limitless assets to manage goes in an effort to separate truth from illusion. I mean, come on. Descartes's evil genius has not anything on Maurice Conchis. So, ultimate verdict: the e-book is callow and jejune. and never in a pleasant way.

Chris: whatever of an existentialist manifesto disguised as fiction, I believe it is a booklet that you simply both get or don't--or that you simply purchase or don't. either bleak and beautiful, I feel it really is worthy every body giving a shot, simply because if it resonates with you, you will

have chanced on anything really outstanding. Or you may be bored on web page 35 and will cease there.

Vegantrav: This ebook is at the record of the trendy Library of the World's top Books. I have to disagree with this assessment. Even though the plot is firstly rather intriguing, not one of the characters--not the protagonist Nicholas Urfe, now not his love pursuits (Alison and Lily), and never the antagonist (Maurice Conchis)--is even likable or particularly even psychologically interesting, and the plot turns into easily unimaginable because the novel advances. Fowles by no means rather offers any explanation for the rigors and tribulations by which Nicholas suffers, and the "lesson" he learns turns out all too obvious, whatever most folk examine fairly simply and with no all of the drama that Nicholas is pressured to endure via Conchis and his cohorts; moreover, the price and extremes to which Conchis lodges to be able to "educate" Nicholas appear totally ridiculous. Additionally, the erotic scenes are atrocious: they seem to have been written by way of a second-rate romance novelist. [*****SPOILER ALERT*****:] Finally, the ending, deliberately left open and obscure through Fowles is sort of frustrating; his refusal to deliver the radical to a definitive end leaves the reader feeling really unfulfilled, particularly after trudging via over seven hundred pages (in the hardback version).

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