



# The Accursed: A Novel

By Joyce Carol Oates

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Princeton, New Jersey, at the turn of the twentieth century: a genteel town for genteel souls. But something dark and dangerous lurks at its edges, corrupting and infecting its residents. Vampires and ghosts haunt the dreams of the innocent and a powerful curse besets the families of the elite—their daughters begin disappearing. And in the Pine Barrens that border the town, a lush and terrifying underworld opens up.

When a shape-shifting, vaguely European prince, who might just be the devil, abducts a young bride on the verge of the altar, her brother sets out against all odds to find her. His path will cross those of Princeton's most formidable people, including Grover Cleveland, fresh out of his second term in the White House, soon-to-be commander in chief Woodrow Wilson, a complex individual obsessed to the point of madness with his need to retain power, the young idealist Upton Sinclair and his charismatic comrade Jack London, and the most famous writer of the era, Mark Twain—all of whom are plagued by "accursed" visions.

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## **The Accursed: A Novel** By Joyce Carol Oates Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

\*Starred Review\* Soon after arriving at Princeton University, where she continues to teach, Oates completed *Bellefleur* (1980), launching a series of sly gothic novels. One manuscript, *The Crosswicks Horror*, was left unfinished, and Oates has now resurrected it as a lush, arch, and blistering fusion of historical fact, supernatural mystery, and devilish social commentary. High-strung and ambitious Woodrow Wilson is the president of Princeton. Anxious over festering conflicts and appalled by what he learns about his distant relative and protégé after the nearby lynching of an African American man and his pregnant sister, Wilson seeks advice from retired Reverend Winslow Slade, who would rather think about the upcoming wedding of his granddaughter, Annabel. But this fair maiden is in danger of falling under the spell of a handsome stranger with otherworldly eyes. As an elite WASP enclave finds itself caught in the grip of inexplicable terror, readers will be bewitched by a fantastically dramatic, supremely imaginative plot rife with ghosts, vampires, demons, and human folly. Oates brings her nightshade humor and extraordinary fluency in eroticism and violence, American history and literature (her magnetizing characters include Mark Twain, Jack London, and Upton Sinclair) to this piercing novel of the devastating toll of repression and prejudice, sexism and class warfare. A diabolically enthralling and subversive literary mash-up. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Propelled by a lavish national tour and multimedia campaign, *The Accursed* is destined to be one of Oates' most widely appealing and avidly read novels. --Donna Seaman

### Review

"Joyce Carol Oates has written what may be the world's finest postmodern Gothic novel: E.L. Doctorow's 'Ragtime' set in Dracula's castle. It's dense, challenging, problematic, horrifying, funny, prolix and full of crazy people. You should read it... Oates's hypnotic prose has never been better displayed." (Stephen King, *New York Times Book Review* (Cover Review))

"Spectacular. . . With its vast scope, its mingling of comic and tragic tones, its omnivorous gorging on American literature, and especially its complex reflection on the major themes of our history, *The Accursed* is the kind of outrageous masterpiece only Joyce Carol Oates could create." (Ron Charles, *Washington Post*)

"A brilliant Gothic mystery that has the punch of historical fiction. Currents of race, class and academic intrigue swirl under the surface, but it's the demonic curse that propels the action... Oates casts a powerful spell. You'll close *The Accursed* and want to start it all over again." (People (4 Stars))

"*The Accursed* is a unique, vast multilayered narrative; a genre bending beast of a book, utterly startling from start to finish, compulsive and engaging, the writing crackling with energy and wit. This is an elaborately conceived work." (*New York Review of Books*)

"[*The Accursed*] is in addition to being a thrilling tale in the best gothic tradition, a lesson in master craftsmanship...The story sprawls, reaches, demands, tears, and shrieks in homage to the traditional gothic, yet with fresh, surprising twists and turns... Oates has given us a brilliantly crafted work ." (Publishers Weekly (starred review))

"Carefully and densely plotted, chockablock with twists and turns and fleeting characters, her novel offers a satisfying modern rejoinder to the best of M.R. James—and perhaps even Henry James." (Kirkus Reviews (starred review))

“Oates’ atmospheric prose beautifully captures the flavor of gothic fiction . . . In Oates’ hands, this supernatural tale becomes a meditation on the perils of parochial thinking. It demands we think - with monsters - about our failure to face the darkest truths about ourselves and the choices we’ve made.” (NPR)

“A lush, arch, and blistering fusion of historical fact, supernatural mystery, and devilish social commentary... A diabolically enthralling and subversive literary mash-up.” (Booklist (starred review))

“A smart and relentlessly absorbing read.” (Library Journal)

“Joyce Carol Oates is at her gothic best... an astonishing fever dream of a novel.” (Los Angeles Times)

“For those who enjoy total immersion in this kind of historical fiction, *The Accursed* is good fun, as mesmerizing as a demon and as addictive as a patent cure.” (Boston Globe)

“A fascinating novel in which historical truth and imagination collide to create an unsettling vision of America as it entered the 20th century.” (Columbus Dispatch)

“*The Accursed* blends history, horror, fantasy and black comedy into a trippy literary brew. For fans of Oates’ gothic works, this is a heady draught indeed.” (Dallas Morning News)

“Regular readers of Oates will be familiar with the game. . . after [new readers make] their way through *The Accursed*, no one will find it easy to forget.” (St. Louis Post-Dispatch)

“Joyce Carol Oates is at the top of her game in her glorious new novel, *THE ACCURSED* - a long, lush account of perhaps-preternatural happenings in Princeton, N.J., a century ago.” (Buffalo News)

“This latest effort looks like a belated candidate for the Great Oates Novel . . . *The Accursed* is a big, mad, colourful romp, respectful of the literary traditions in which it participates, leavened with a piquant humour.” (Financial Times)

“*The Accursed* is very much in the American gothic tradition of Charles Brockden Brown, Hawthorne, Poe, and Faulkner.” (New York Review of Books)

“In this new novel Oates has achieved a nearly flawless combination of postmodernism, gothic horror, “traditional” narrative, politically engaged literature, historical novel, and popular bestseller—a heady and enjoyable mix.” (Harvard Review Online)

#### About the Author

Joyce Carol Oates is a recipient of the National Medal of Humanities, the National Book Critics Circle Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award, the National Book Award, and the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in Short Fiction. She is the Roger S. Berlind Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at Princeton University and has been a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters since 1978.

#### Users Review

##### From reader reviews:

**Janet Smith:**

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children till adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important usually. The book *The Accursed: A Novel* has been making you to know about other information and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The book *The Accursed: A Novel* is not only giving you considerably more new information but also to get your friend when you sense bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship using the book *The Accursed: A Novel*. You never experience lose out for everything in the event you read some books.

**Homer Douglas:**

Nowadays reading books become more and more than want or need but also be a life style. This reading addiction give you lot of advantages. Advantages you got of course the knowledge the particular information inside the book which improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of reserve you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with education and learning books but if you want really feel happy read one together with theme for entertaining such as comic or novel. The particular *The Accursed: A Novel* is kind of book which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

**Ryan Young:**

The book *The Accursed: A Novel* will bring that you the new experience of reading any book. The author style to describe the idea is very unique. In case you try to find new book to learn, this book very suitable to you. The book *The Accursed: A Novel* is much recommended to you to see. You can also get the e-book from official web site, so you can more easily to read the book.

**Juanita Geil:**

Reading a guide make you to get more knowledge from it. You can take knowledge and information from your book. Book is composed or printed or descriptive from each source that filled update of news. On this modern era like today, many ways to get information are available for you. From media social like newspaper, magazines, science publication, encyclopedia, reference book, fresh and comic. You can add your understanding by that book. Ready to spend your spare time to spread out your book? Or just seeking the *The Accursed: A Novel* when you required it?

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