

La Insoportable Levedad Del Ser De Milan Kundera

[#The Unbearable Lightness of Being](#) [#Milan Kundera](#) [#Existentialist novel](#) [#Philosophical fiction](#) [#Czech literature](#)

Milan Kundera's iconic 'The Unbearable Lightness of Being' delves into the intricate lives of individuals against the backdrop of the 1968 Prague Spring, exploring profound themes of love, fate, choice, and the existential weight of human existence. This philosophical novel masterfully intertwines personal stories with deep intellectual inquiry, challenging readers to consider the 'lightness' and 'weight' of their own being.

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La insoportable levedad del ser

Esta es una extraordinaria historia de amor, o sea de celos, de sexo, de traiciones, de muerte y también de las debilidades y paradojas de la vida cotidiana de dos parejas cuyos destinos se entrelazan irremediabilmente. En efecto, los celos de Teresa por Tomás, el terco amor de éste por ella opuesto a su irrefrenable deseo de otras mujeres, el idealismo lírico y cursi de Franz, amante de Sabina, y la necesidad de ésta, amante también de Tomás, de perseguir incansable una libertad que tan sólo la conduce a la insoportable levedad del ser, se convierten de simple anécdota en reflexión sobre problemas filosóficos, que afectan a cada uno directamente, cada día.

La insoportable levedad del ser

Una brillante disección del amor en nuestros días que se ha convertido en uno de los grandes hitos de la literatura contemporánea. Ésta es una historia de amor, o sea de celos, de sexo, de traiciones y también de las debilidades y paradojas de la vida cotidiana de dos parejas cuyos destinos se entrelazan. Los celos de Teresa por Tomás, el terco amor de éste por ella, opuesto a su irrefrenable deseo de otras mujeres, el idealismo de Franz, amante de Sabina, y la necesidad de ésta, amante también de Tomás, de perseguir una libertad que tan sólo la conduce a la insoportable levedad del ser, se convierten de simple anécdota en reflexión sobre problemas que nos afectan a todos.

La insoportable levedad del ser de Milan Kundera (Guía de lectura)

ResumenExpress.com presenta y analiza en esta guía de lectura La insoportable levedad del ser de Milan Kundera. Al leer esta novela el lector se verá inmerso en un mundo que mezcla con elegancia la novela histórica, la reflexión política, las preguntas filosóficas sobre la existencia y el erotismo; una elegancia que no deja duda de que se trata de la pieza más importante de Kundera. ¡Ya no tienes que leer y resumir todo el libro, nosotros lo hemos hecho por ti! Esta guía incluye: • Un resumen completo del libro • Un estudio de los personajes • Las claves de lectura • Pistas para la reflexión ¿Por qué

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The Unbearable Lightness of Being

'A cult figure.' Guardian'A dark and brilliant achievement.' Ian McEwan'Shamelessly clever ... Exhilaratingly subversive and funny.' Independent'A modern classic ... As relevant now as when it was first published.' John BanvilleA young woman is in love with a successful surgeon; a man torn between his love for her and his womanising. His mistress, a free-spirited artist, lives her life as a series of betrayals; while her other lover stands to lose everything because of his noble qualities. In a world where lives are shaped by choices and events, and everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance and weight - and we feel 'the unbearable lightness of being'.The Unbearable Lightness of Being encompasses passion and philosophy, infidelity and ideas, the Prague Spring and modern America, political acts and private desires, comedy and tragedy - in fact, all of human existence.What readers are saying:'Some books change your mind, some change your heart, the very best change your whole world ... A mighty piece of work, that will shape your life forever.'"One of the best books I've ever read ... A book about love and life, full of surprises. Beautiful."This book is going to change your life ... It definitely leaves you with a hangover after you're done reading."A must read - loved it, such beautiful observations on life, love and sexuality."Kundera writes about love as if in a trance so the beauty of it is enchanting and dreamy ... Will stay with you forever."A beautiful novel that helps you understand life better ... Loved it."One of those rare novels full of depth and insight into the human condition ... Got me reading Camus and Sartre."One of the best books I have ever read ... An intellectual love story if ever there was one.'

The Unbearable Lightness of Being

"Far more than a conventional novel. It is a meditation on life, on the erotic, on the nature of men and women and love . . . full of telling details, truths large and small, to which just about every reader will respond." — People In The Unbearable Lightness of Being, Milan Kundera tells the story of two couples, a young woman in love with a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing, and one of his mistresses and her humbly faithful lover. In a world in which lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and by fortuitous events, a world in which everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance, its weight. Hence, we feel "the unbearable lightness of being" not only as the consequence of our pristine actions but also in the public sphere, and the two inevitably intertwine. This magnificent novel is a story of passion and politics, infidelity and ideas, and encompasses the extremes of comedy and tragedy, illuminating all aspects of human existence.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being

When The Unbearable Lightness of Being was first published in English, it was hailed as "a work of the boldest mastery, originality, and richness" by critic Elizabeth Hardwick and named one of the best books of 1984 by the New York Times Book Review. It went on to win the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction and quickly became an international bestseller. Twenty years later, the novel has established itself as a modern classic. To commemorate the anniversary of its first English-language publication, HarperCollins is proud to offer a special hardcover edition. A young woman in love with a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing; one of his mistresses and her humbly faithful lover -- these are the two couples whose story is told in this masterful novel. Controlled by day, Tereza's jealousy awakens by night, transformed into ineffably sad death-dreams, while Tomas, a successful surgeon, alternates loving devotion to the dependent Tereza with the ardent pursuit of other women. Sabina, an independent, free-spirited artist, lives her life as a series of betrayals -- of parents, husband, country, love itself -- whereas her lover, the intellectual Franz, loses all because of his earnest goodness and fidelity. In a world in which lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and by fortuitous events, a world in which everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance, its weight. Hence we feel, says the novelist, "the unbearable lightness of being" -- not only as the consequence of our private acts but also in the public sphere, and the two inevitably intertwine. This magnificent novel encompasses the extremes of comedy and tragedy, and embraces, it seems, all aspects of human existence. It juxtaposes geographically distant places (Prague, Geneva, Paris, Thailand, the United States, a forlorn Bohemian village); brilliant and playful reflections (on "eternal return," on kitsch, on man and animals -- Tomas

and Tereza have a beloved one named Karenin); and a variety of styles (from the farcical to the elegiac) to take its place as perhaps the major achievement of one of the world's truly great writers.

La Insoportable Levedad del Ser

Una brillante disección del amor que se ha convertido en uno de los grandes hitos de la literatura contemporánea. Más de 1.000.000 de ejemplares vendidos. Un clásico de la novela contemporánea. La insoportable levedad del ser narra una extraordinaria historia de amor, es decir, de celos, sexo, traiciones, muerte y, también, de las debilidades y paradojas de Teresa, Tomás, Franz y Sabina, cuyos destinos se entrelazan irremediabilmente. Los celos de Teresa hacia Tomás, el terco amor de éste por ella -junto con su irrefrenable deseo de otras mujeres-, el idealismo de Franz, amante de Sabina, y la necesidad de Sabina de perseguir una libertad que sólo conduce a una insoportable levedad, se convierten en una reflexión sobre los problemas filosóficos que afectan a nuestra existencia.

La insoportable levedad del ser

In this story of irreconcilable loves and infidelities, Milan Kundera addresses himself to the nature of 20th century 'Being'. The novel encompasses the extremes of comedy and tragedy, and embraces, it seems, all aspects of human existence.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being

- En 1972, el joven director de teatro francés Georges Werler fue a ver a Milan Kundera a Praga y a su regreso consiguió, pese a los controles de la frontera, introducir en Francia el manuscrito de su obra de teatro Jacques y su amo. Kundera la había escrito después de la invasión soviética, cuando toda su obra, pasada y futura, había quedado borrada de las letras checoslovacas. Jacques y su amo relata tres historias de amor que se entrecruzan durante el viaje que emprenden Jacques y su amo: la del amo, la de Jacques y la de Madame de la Pommeraye; tres historias que se entremezclan polifónicamente, donde cada una es, a su vez, variación de la otra, y juntas conforman una comedia sobre los problemas existenciales de la pasión amorosa.

Jacques y su amo

A novel on the theme that the pleasure inherent in a slower rhythm of life has disappeared from our speed-obsessed age. The protagonists are two men, one who has a romance in the 18th Century, the other in the 20th Century. Subsequently, they meet for a morning-after chat. By the author of The Unbearable Lightness of Being.

La inmortalidad [grabación]

Esta es una extraordinaria historia de amor, o sea de celos, de sexo, de traiciones, de muerte y también de las debilidades y paradojas de la vida cotidiana de dos parejas cuyos destinos se entrelazan irremediabilmente. Y el lector no puede sino terminar siendo el mismo personaje, cuando no todos a la vez. Y es que esta novela va dirigida al corazón, pero también a la cabeza del lector. En efecto, los celos de Teresa por Tomás, el terco amor de éste por ella opuesto a su irrefrenable deseo de otras mujeres, el idealismo lírico y cursi de Franz, amante de Sabina, y la necesidad de ésta, amante también de Tomás, de perseguir incansable, una libertad que tan sólo la conduce a la insoportable levedad del ser, se convierten de simple anécdota en reflexión sobre problemas filosóficos que, afectan a cada uno directamente, cada día.

La insoportable levedad del ser

A young woman is in love with a successful surgeon, a man torn between his love for her and his incorrigible womanizing. His mistress, a free-spirited artist, lives her life as a series of betrayals—while her other lover, earnest, faithful, and good, stands to lose everything because of his noble qualities. In a world where lives are shaped by irrevocable choices and fortuitous events, and everything occurs but once, existence seems to lose its substance, its weight. Hence we feel “the unbearable lightness of being.” A major achievement from one of the world's truly great writers, Milan Kundera's magnificent novel of passion and politics, infidelity and ideas, encompasses the extremes of comedy and tragedy, illuminating all aspects of human existence.

La lentitud

With the same dazzling mix of emotion and idea that characterizes his novels he illuminates the art and artists who remain important to him and whose work helps us better understand the world. An astute and brilliant reader of fiction, Kundera applies these same gifts to the reading of Francis Bacon's paintings, Leos Janáček's music, the films of Federico Fellini, as well as to the novels of Philip Roth, Dostoyevsky, and García Márquez, among others. He also takes up the challenge of restoring to their rightful place the work of major writers like Anatole France and Curzio Malaparte who have fallen into obscurity. Milan Kundera's signature themes of memory and forgetting, the experience of exile, and his spirited championing of modernist art mark these essays. Art, he argues, is what we have to cleave to in the face of evil, against the expression of the darker side of human nature. Elegant, startlingly original and provocative, *Encounter* follows Kundera's essay collections, *The Art of the Novel*, *Testaments Betrayed* and *The Curtain*.

La insoportable levedad del ser TD

Es un ensayo escrito como una novela.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being

Tal vez por haber sido escritas en el periodo (entre 1959, y 1968) más feliz de la vida de Milan Kundera, según sus propias palabras, estas narraciones son las más alegres, las más seriamente desvergonzadas y las más reflexivamente divertidas de su obra. La farándula de personajes hedonistas que desfila aquí ante nosotros en busca de los juegos múltiples y contradictorios de la amistad, el amor y el sexo no puede sino incitar a la risa, atrapados como están en el mundo loco de severidad, hermetismo e inquisición que les rodea. Una risa auténtica, traviesa; un humor sabio, sagaz y gozador, al que ya nos tiene acostumbrados el autor de *La insoportable levedad del ser*.

La insoportable levedad del ser

Unlock the more straightforward side of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* with this concise and insightful summary and analysis! This engaging summary presents an analysis of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* by Milan Kundera, an intricate, cyclical novel which charts the lives of Tomas, a successful surgeon, his wife Tereza, his lover Sabina, and Sabina's lover Franz. The narrative skilfully blends the characters' experiences of love, political activism and happiness with philosophical musings on the "lightness" of existence, creating an engaging novel which encourages readers to reflect on the meaning of their own lives. Milan Kundera was born in Czechoslovakia, where he had a successful career as a university lecturer and author until the country was invaded by Soviet forces in 1968 following the Prague Spring. His books were banned by the Communist regime, and he moved to France in 1975. He has won a number of prestigious literary awards, including the Jerusalem Prize (1985) and the Czech State Literature Prize (2007). Find out everything you need to know about *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* in a fraction of the time! This in-depth and informative reading guide brings you: •A complete plot summary •Character studies •Key themes and symbols •Questions for further reflection Why choose BrightSummaries.com? Available in print and digital format, our publications are designed to accompany you on your reading journey. The clear and concise style makes for easy understanding, providing the perfect opportunity to improve your literary knowledge in no time. See the very best of literature in a whole new light with BrightSummaries.com!

Encounter

«El novelista no tiene que dar cuentas a nadie, salvo a Cervantes.» Del autor de *La insoportable levedad del ser*. «No me siento ligado a nada, salvo a la desprestigiada herencia de Cervantes», afirma orgulloso Kundera. Y a reivindicar esta nobilísima herencia dedica el autor checo estos apasionantes ensayos donde expone su concepción de la novela europea y sus consideraciones sobre su origen --un arte nacido de la risa de Dios-- y su problemático futuro. ¿Estará tocando a su fin como género moderno? En esta época de «paradojas terminales», Kundera sostiene que la novela ya no puede vivir en paz con el espíritu de nuestro tiempo: «si aún quiere "progresar" como novela, no puede sino hacerlo en contra del progreso del mundo». Y, a propósito de autores como Rabelais, Cervantes, Flaubert o Musil, discurre sobre el arte de la composición novelesca, la polifonía o la creación de personajes.

Los testamentos traicionados

This breathtaking, reverberating survey of human nature finds Kundera still attempting to work out the meaning of life without losing his acute sense of humour. It is one of those great unclassifiable masterpieces that appear once every twenty years or so. 'It will make you cleverer, maybe even a better lover. Not many novels can do that.' Nicholas Lezard, GQ

El libro de los amores ridículos

- UN ENCUENTRO nos da a conocer a un KUNDERA, en cierto modo, inédito. En efecto, aunque el autor reflexione, como confiesa al principio del libro, sobre sus «viejos temas existenciales y estéticos», lo cierto es que en este apasionado -y apasionante- «encuentro» con algunas obras maestras de la literatura, la música y la pintura, el escritor checo aborda cuestiones hasta ahora poco o nada transitadas en sus libros anteriores. Así, explora lo que la novela -y sólo la novela, esa «sonda existencial»- puede explicar sobre el ser humano, e indaga asimismo en las repercusiones, no siempre negativas, que el exilio tiene para el creador (con una emocionante comparación entre las dos Primaveras del 68, la de París y la de Praga). También desentraña el papel de la memoria ante las tragedias del siglo XX y habla de la lucha desesperada del verdadero artista por asumir lo mejor de la tradición de su arte (con una irónica pregunta sobre lo que la posteridad conserva finalmente de los autores). Por último, sostiene que sólo un análisis profundo de la composición formal de una obra revela las intenciones estéticas de su autor (y lo demuestra con un breve y fascinante ensayo dedicado a KAPUTT y a la que califica de genial «archinovela», LA PIEL, de Curzio Malaparte).

The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera (Book Analysis)

A deliciously witty and entertaining "variation" on Diderot's novel Jacques le Fatalist, written for Milan Kundera's "private pleasure" in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. When the "heavy Russian irrationality" fell on Czechoslovakia, Milan Kundera explains, he felt drawn to the spirit of the eighteenth century—"And it seemed to me that nowhere was it to be found more densely concentrated than in that banquet of intelligence, humor, and fantasy, Jacques le Fataliste." The upshot was this "Homage to Diderot," which has now been performed throughout the United States and Europe. Here, Jacques and His Master, newly translated by Simon Callow, is a text that will delight Kundera's admirers throughout the English-speaking world.

El Arte de la Novela

A budding poet and his adoring mother are the central characters of this intriguing early novel by Milan Kundera. He takes us through the young man's fantasies and love affairs in a characteristic tour de force, alive with wit, eroticism and ideas.

Immortality

Published simultaneously with Identity, his new novel, here is a masterful new translation of Milan Kundera's most brilliantly plotted and sheerly entertaining novel -- a dark farce of sex, murder, and motherhood. Set in an Old-Fashioned Central European Spa Town, Farewell Waltz follows the lives of eight characters: a pretty nurse and her repairman boyfriend; an oddball gynecologist; a rich American who is at once a saint and a Don Juan; a popular trumpeter and his beautiful obsessively jealous wife; a disillusioned former political prisoner about to leave his country and his young female ward. Perhaps the most accessible of Milan Kundera's novels, Farewell Waltz poses the most serious questions with a blasphemous lightness that makes us see that the modern world has deprived us even of the right to tragedy. Translated from the French text prepared by the author himself a quarter century after the novel was originally written, Farewell Waltz sparkles anew with wit, humor, and irony. A valuable addition to HarperFleming's impressive Kundera backlist, it offers readers a chance to discover, or rediscover, one of the very best works of a legendary writer. "It is hard to imagine anything more chilling and profound than Kundera's apparent lightheartedness". -- Elizabeth Pochoda "Kundera ... remains faithful to this subtle, wily, devious talent for a fiction of 'erotic possibilities'. -- New York Times Book Review

Un encuentro

A chance encounter leads a man to spend the afternoon with an older woman, now a widow, who escaped him fifteen years earlier. Neither of them doubts that the day will end in disgust, but for one intimate moment each finds a way to overcome mortality. Written in 1969, before Milan Kundera was

known to English-speaking readers, this story renders male and female characters painful equals, and prompted Philip Roth to admire its 'detached Chekhovian tenderness'.

Jacques and His Master

The Joke, Milan Kundera's first novel, gained him a huge following in his own country, and launched his worldwide literary reputation. 'Kundera is the saddest, funniest and most lovable of authors.' The Times

Life is Elsewhere

Slowness was Milan Kundera's first novel written in French. Disconcerted and enchanted, the reader follows him through a midsummer's night in which two tales of seduction, separated in time by more than two hundred years, interweave and oscillate between the sublime and ridiculous. As Kundera's readers would expect, Slowness is at the same time a formidable display of existential analysis. Slowness (and rapidity), discretion (and exhibitionism) are the principal concepts, and those which are to the reader like vital keys for understanding life in our contemporary world.

The Farewell Party

El doctor Havel, la enfermera Alzbeta, Eduard, Alice, Kiara y una falsa autoestopista son algunos de los inolvidables personajes que se entregan a los múltiples y contradictorios juegos propiciados por la amistad, el amor y el sexo. En un entorno inquisitivo y sofocante, ellos protagonizan siete aventuras, siete encuentros y desencuentros con los que Kundera, con la brillantez que lo caracteriza, incita a una risa traviesa, a un humor sabio, refinado y gozoso.

El Libro de Los Amores Ridículos

A man and a woman meet by chance while returning to their homeland, which they had abandoned twenty years earlier when they chose to become exiles. Will they manage to pick up the thread of their strange love story, interrupted almost as soon as it began and then lost in the tides of history? The truth is that after such a long absence 'their memories no longer match'. We always believe that our memories coincide with those of the person we loved, that we experienced the same thing. But this is just an illusion. Then again, what can we expect of our weak memory? It records only 'an insignificant, minuscule particle' of the past, 'and no-one knows why it's this bit and not any other bit'. We live our lives sunk in a vast forgetting, a fact we refuse to recognise. Only those who return after twenty years, like Odysseus returning to his native Ithaca, can be dazzled and astounded by observing the goddess of ignorance first-hand. Milan Kundera is the only author today who can take such dizzying concepts as absence, memory, forgetting, and ignorance, and transform them into material for a novel, masterfully orchestrating them into a polyphonic and moving work.

Let the Old Dead Make Room for the New Dead

'This book is a novel in the form of variations. The various parts follow each other like the various stages of a voyage leading into the interior of a theme, the interior of a thought, the interior of a single, unique situation the understanding of which recedes from my sight into the distance. It is a book about laughter and about forgetting, about forgetting and about Prague, about Prague and about the angels.' The Book of Laughter and Forgetting is the most secret of Kundera's novels. This new translation is the first to be fully authorized by Milan Kundera.

The Joke

Laughable Loves is a collection of stories that first appeared in print in Prague before 1968, but was then banned. The seven stories are all concerned with love, or rather with the complex erotic games and stratagems employed by women and especially men as they try to come to terms with needs and impulses that can start a terrifying train of events. Sexual attraction is shown as a game that often turns sour, an experience that brings with it painful insights and releases uncertainty, panic, vanity and a constant need for reassurance. Thus a young couple on holiday start a game of pretence that threatens to destroy their relationship, two middle-aged men go in search of girls they don't really want, a young man renews contact with an older woman who feels humiliated by her ageing body, an elderly doctor uses his beautiful wife to increase his attraction and minister to his sexual vanity. In Laughable

Loves, Milan Kundera shows himself, once again, as a master of fiction's most graceful illusions and surprises.

Slowness

"Kundera once more delivers a seductive, intelligent entertainment ... [with] elegance and grace." — Washington Post Book World "Nothing short of masterful." — Newsweek A brilliant novel set in contemporary Prague, by one of the most distinguished writers of our time. A man and a woman meet by chance while returning to their homeland, which they had abandoned 20 years earlier when they chose to become exiles. Will they manage to pick up the thread of their strange love story, interrupted almost as soon as it began and then lost in the tides of history? The truth is that after such a long absence "their memories no longer match." We always believe that our memories coincide with those of the person we loved, that we experienced the same thing. But this is just an illusion. Only those who return after 20 years, like Ulysses returning to his native Ithaca, can be dazzled and astounded by observing the goddess of ignorance first-hand. Kundera is the only author today who can take dizzying concepts such as absence, memory, forgetting, and ignorance, and transform them into material for a novel, masterfully orchestrating them into a polyphonic and moving work.

El Libro de Los Amores Rídiculos

A gem of a Marías story: Elvis and his entourage abandon their translator in a seedy cantina full of enraged criminals. "It all happened because of Elvis Presley." Elvis, down south of the border to film a movie, has insisted his producers hire a proper Spaniard so that he can pronounce his few lines in Spanish with a Castillian accent. But Ruibérriz has taken on much more than he bargained for. One fatal night, horseplay in a local bar goes too far: a fatuous drunken American insults the local kingpin, and when the thug insists that Ruibérriz translate, Elvis himself adds an even more stinging comment—and who must translate that?

Ignorance

Casting light on the most serious of problems and at the same time saying not one serious sentence; being fascinated by the reality of the contemporary world and at the same time completely avoiding realism—that's *The Festival of Insignificance*. Readers who know Kundera's earlier books know that the wish to incorporate an element of the "unserious" in a novel is not at all unexpected of him. In *Immortality*, Goethe and Hemingway stroll through several chapters together talking and laughing. And in *Slowness*, Vera, the author's wife, says to her husband: "you've often told me you meant to write a book one day that would have not a single serious word in it... I warn you: watch out. Your enemies are lying in wait." Now, far from watching out, Kundera is finally and fully realizing his old aesthetic dream in this novel that we could easily view as a summation of his whole work. A strange sort of summation. Strange sort of epilogue. Strange sort of laughter, inspired by our time, which is comical because it has lost all sense of humor. What more can we say? Nothing. Just read.

The Book of Laughter and Forgetting

- Ludvik Jahn, joven estudiante universitario y activo miembro del Partido Comunista checo, envía a una compañera de clase una postal en la que se burla del optimismo ideológico imperante. La broma no les hace la menor gracia a los dirigentes universitarios y, tras un juicio sumario, expulsan a Ludvik de la universidad y del Partido. Pero, paradójicamente, al caer en desgracia, se abre para Ludvik un mundo aún desconocido. Atrapado entre dos amores, el de Lucie, tierno y desesperado, y el de Helena, apasionado y cínico, Ludvik va, sin embargo, de tropiezo en tropiezo, transformando su vida en un cúmulo de situaciones a cual más grotesca y risible. De hecho, con el paso del tiempo, la vida de Ludvik se convertirá en una enorme broma pesada: ya no podrá culpar al destino, porque ya no puede sino culparse a sí mismo.

Laughable Loves

Barbara Mutch's stunning first novel tells a story of love and duty colliding on the arid plains of Apartheid-era South Africa When Cathleen Harrington leaves her home in Ireland in 1919 to travel to South Africa, she knows that she does not love the man she is to marry there —her fiance Edward, whom she has not seen for five years. Isolated and estranged in a small town in the harsh Karoo desert, her only real companions are her diary and her housemaid, and later the housemaid's daughter, Ada.

When Ada is born, Cathleen recognizes in her someone she can love and respond to in a way that she cannot with her own family. Under Cathleen's tutelage, Ada grows into an accomplished pianist and a reader who cannot resist turning the pages of the diary, discovering the secrets Cathleen sought to hide. As they grow closer, Ada sees new possibilities in front of her—a new horizon. But in one night, everything changes, and Cathleen comes home from a trip to find that Ada has disappeared, scorned by her own community. Cathleen must make a choice: should she conform to society, or search for the girl who has become closer to her than her own daughter? Set against the backdrop of a beautiful, yet divided land, *The Housemaid's Daughter* is a startling and thought-provoking novel that intricately portrays the drama and heartbreak of two women who rise above cruelty to find love, hope, and redemption.

Ignorance

Milan Kundera's *Identity* translated from the French by Linda Asher. There are situations in which we fail for a moment to recognize the person we are with, in which the identity of the other is erased while we simultaneously doubt our own. That also happens with couples -- indeed, above all with couples, because lovers fear more than anything else "losing sight" of the loved one. With stunning artfulness in expanding and playing variations on the meaningful moment, Milan Kundera has made this situation -- and the vague sense of panic it inspires -- the very fabric of his new novel. Here brevity goes hand in hand with intensity, and a moment of bewilderment marks the start of a labyrinthine journey during which the reader repeatedly crosses the border between the real and the unreal, between what occurs in the world outside and what the mind creates in its solitude. Of all contemporary writers, only Kundera can transform such a hidden and disconcerting perception into the material for a novel, one of his finest, most painful, and most enlightening. Which, surprisingly, turns out to be a love story.

Bad Nature, or With Elvis in Mexico (New Directions Pearls)

The Festival of Insignificance