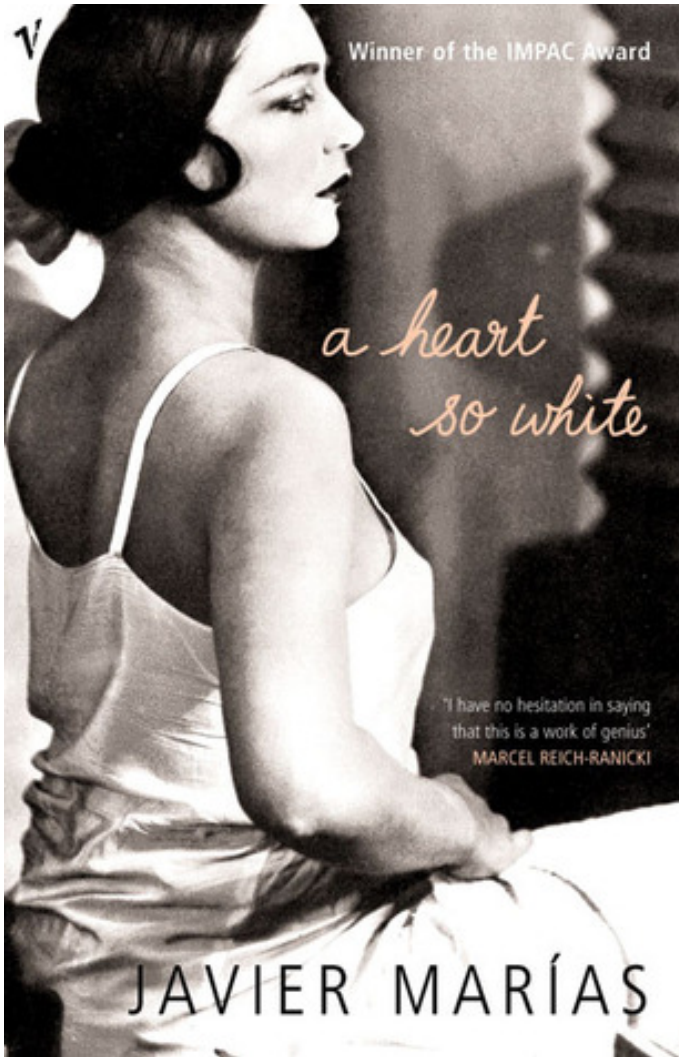

Javier Marías

A Heart So White



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Description

Juan knows little about his widowed father Ranz, a man with a troubled past. He does know, however, that before marrying Juan's mother, Ranz was married to her elder sister, who had committed suicide. The unspoken dialogue between father and son soon becomes a spelling out of the horrifying truth once Juan marries Luisa, who turns discreet confessor to the burdened old man. What gradually emerges into the cold light of day is a repetition of scenes already witnessed by Juan in the course of his travels: a married man blackmailed by his mistress in a Havana hotel, a woman in New York pursuing a sequence of shabby lovers through the lonely-hearts columns. Produced with remarkable skill and delicacy, this is a startling picture of two generations, two marriages, and the secret commerce between spouses that rests on the gossamer-thin threads of an unspoken accord.

Insightful reviews

Jeffrey Keeten: **"Listening is the most dangerous thing of all, listening means knowing, finding out about something and knowing what's going on, our ears don't have lids that can instinctively close against the words uttered, they can't hide from what they sense they're about to hear, it's always too late."**

Juan is trained to listen to people. He is a professional translator, so when he is listening to conversations it comes in his ears in one language and comes out his mouth in another language. He is the only person in the room that fully understands the conversation. His job is to make sure there are no misunderstandings. When he meets Luisa for the first time she is the person there to insure that he is doing his job properly while translating a conversation between two heads of state. Juan slips in his own suggestions into the translations, a puppet master, which he is not supposed to do. He is really just flirting with Luisa and seeing what she will do.

Wouldn't life be easier if we could just write the dialogue for other people? Your spouse, your friends, your coworkers. If only we could stop time, our own fermata key, and scrub out an errant response and just rewrite it, but then life would be a novel where all the dialogue is pitch perfect. Conversations are very messy. Think of the fumbling around and miscues that lead to misunderstandings. Sometimes it is hours later before our minds conjure up what would have been the best possible words in the best possible arrangement.

Juan has that power. He can clean up conversations and gently nudge events in a direction that he feels will lead to a more productive exchange of words. It is kind of scary actually.

Javier Marias tips us off to what is on his mind with the very title of this book.

**My hands are of your color; but I shame
To wear a heart so white.
Macbeth William Shakespeare**

He carefully weaves the thread of Macbeth throughout the novel. What we hear can not be

unheard. When we know, we are complicit.

As I was making notes about some of the more striking passages of Marias writing, which began to get ridiculous, especially, when I made the realization that I was noting something on nearly every page, I discovered that he is not a writer concerned with pithy beautiful one liners. He uses whole paragraphs with complex thoughts circling one another like a dance. I found myself thinking I understood what he was saying only to read it again and find another layer and another layer until I'm convinced, despite the archaeological dig I've performed on his words, that I'm still missing something very important hidden in the hieroglyphics of his intentions.

"If nothing of what happens happens, because nothing happens without interruption, nothing lasts or endures or is ceaselessly remembered, what takes place is identical to what doesn't take place, what we dismiss or allow to slip by us is identical to what we accept and seize, what we experience is identical to what we never try; we pour all our intelligence and our feelings and our enthusiasm into the task of discriminating between things that will all be made equal, if they haven't already been, and that's why we're so full of regrets and lost opportunities, of confirmations and reaffirmations and opportunities grasped, when the truth is that nothing is affirmed and everything is constantly in the process of being lost. Or perhaps there never was anything."

Juan marries Luisa although I do wonder if he loves her or if he just felt it was time to get married. He does ponder, with such objectivity, the advantages of sleeping with someone, not in regards to sex, but all the other things such as comfort, not being alone, and the pleasantness of knowing that someone you trust literally has your back. Juan/Javier wants to understand everything, even those mundane things, that the rest of us accept, without thinking about. **Why do we do what we do?**

I've been overlooking a lot I'm afraid. Life needs to leave more juice on my chin.

Juan's job and Luisa's as well, though less so now that she has married, takes them away for work sometimes eight weeks at a time. He ends up in New York staying with a friend and fellow translator, Berta, who he once had a relationship fifteen years. I don't think that Luisa knows that they had a fling because I can't imagine anyone would feel comfortable with their spouse hanging out with any old flame. As it turns out Luisa has nothing to worry about, whatever spark was once there is no longer striking the flint. Juan becomes caught up in Berta's search for a new man. Lets just say things become more strange/comical the more he tries to help her. He is surprised to find that the longer he is away the more he has twinges of the green eyed monster in regards to the family friend... Custardoy the Younger.

Custardoy the Older was the original best friend of Juan's father Ranz, but after he passed away Custardoy the Younger stepped into his father's shoes. Custardoy knows things about Juan's father that Juan doesn't know, not necessarily because his father has meant to withhold these things from his son, but with all children we tell them edited versions of the truth expecting at some point when they are older to tell them more.

Custardoy is the type of guy that you would not feel comfortable leaving your wife, girlfriend, pet

chinchilla, or any female friend you care for at all alone with him. He has, in Juan's opinion, a bit of a fixation on Luisa although this is easily disregarded (but not totally so) because Custardoy has a fixation on any reasonably attractive female that happens to pass by in range of his lascivious eyes.

Luisa becomes obsessed with learning Ranz's secrets. She knows that due to his affection for her that she can wrangle them from him. Juan is unsure he wants to know. His relationship with his father is very good and there is always the possibility that knowing more will change the dynamics of what has really become a friendship beyond just father and son. Luisa's insistence is slightly annoying, but then a novelist can't dangle something like this and not come through for us. There are a lot of people that insist knowing everything is preferable to not knowing. I tend to fall into the category of never wanting to pry. If people want to tell me something then I'm happy to listen, but I never want to be the guy that corners anyone into telling me anything they don't want to tell me.

We learn a lot about secrets as we grow older, maybe because we start to accumulate them. Some people like to be open books telling everyone, even strangers, the most intimate details of their lives. Telling someone something in confidence is usually the same thing as telling everyone. They tend to tell someone your secret "in confidence" and so on and so forth until everyone eventually knows. If you want to keep something secret you must bear the burden of telling no one. Ranz tells Custardoy something confidential. Custardoy intimates that he knows this secret to Juan. Juan then discusses this disturbing if incomplete knowledge he acquired from Custardoy with Luisa.

Luisa must know the rest.

After all wouldn't it be best for all their interlocking relationships for the **truth** to be known?

You might think to yourself what a slender volume this is at 246 pages. You might be fooled into thinking it will consume an afternoon, but that will not be the case. The book will consume days mainly because you will quickly find that you must not be disturbed, in the slightest, when you are reading this book. Thoughts trek across paragraphs and on into pages. You must follow the string of evolving concepts or you will be lost. You will probably need to reread passages anyway, but it would be tragic if you missed something merely because you think this is novel, an entertainment, a killer of time. Marias captures you in a page and holds you hostage. He demands that you listen and think and think some more. You will emerge from reading this novel with more astute eyes. You will ponder your new self and realize that Marias has shared much more with you than a few interesting insights, but actually something more akin to a philosophy.

Don't be afraid. This is why we read after all. Highly Recommended!

Teresa: *"My hands are of your color; but I shame to wear a heart so white."*

William Shakespeare, Macbeth

Uma mulher mata-se com um tiro no coração. Eu queria muito saber porquê. No entanto, ao longo das páginas, sou enredada e enfeitiçada por histórias, pensamentos, divagações, com conteúdo e apresentação, de tal forma hipnotizantes, que se me torna irrelevante saber porque se matou Teresa.

Segredos. O que se deve dizer e o que se não deve; o que queremos saber e o que não queremos. O que não sabemos mantém-nos puro e inocente o coração; o que nos é revelado, pode manchar-nos as mãos, e tornar-nos cúmplices, culpados.

A importância da linguagem, o dizer e o escutar, como forma de intimidade, de entrega ao outro, *"Podemos calar-nos para sempre, mas convencemos-nos de que amamos mais porque contamos segredos, tantas vezes contar parece uma prenda que se dá, a maior prenda que se pode dar, a maior prova de lealdade, de amor e de entrega."*

As personagens são caracterizadas física e psicologicamente, de uma forma tão perfeita que de todas me enamorei.

Juan, o narrador, enquanto nos vai contando a sua história, partilha os seus temores acerca das inevitáveis alterações à sua vida de recém-casado. *"Então, e agora?"*. Trabalha como tradutor, e relata-nos alguns episódios, nos quais ele serviu de intérprete, onde demonstra a forma como o que as pessoas dizem, pode ser manipulado e transformado numa outra coisa.

Ranz, o pai de Juan, o especialista em obras de arte. É hilariante - e exemplo de como, com as palavras certas, se pode transformar uma ideia - a cena entre Ranz e o vigilante que quer incendiar a *Artemisa* de Rembrandt.

Luisa, a mulher de Juan e, estranhamente, a mais enigmática, porque a menos revelada.

Berta e o mundo dos seres solitários, que tentam amortecer a sua carência afectiva procurando o amor nas agências de encontros.

Miriam e Guillermo, a infidelidade, as promessas, os enganos.

Javier Marías, com este livro fabuloso, ofereceu-me páginas repletas de magia, pelas quais "caminhei", maravilhada e suspensa de cada palavra, até um final inesperado, surpreendente e avassalador, onde todas as peças, dispersas ao longo da narrativa, milagrosamente, se encaixam e formam um mosaico de uma beleza e perfeição inigualáveis.

Tenho uma "caixinha" onde guardo os livros que mais amo. São apenas trinta em mais de mil, que o meu coração é pequenino. Talvez nem todos lá estejam pela sua qualidade literária; alguns apenas por uma "imagem" que se fixou na minha mente e me induziu a sentimentos, pensamentos, emoções de tal forma marcantes, que o tornaram, para sempre, inesquecível. De vez em quando, feliz por ter encontrado uma nova preciosidade, vou à caixa de tesouros e escolho a que terá de ser expulsa. **Coração tão Branco** (poderá haver título mais belo?) ocupa nesse espaço um lugar especial, não apenas por uma frase, mas por todas.

El: In the first chapter the reader discovers a mystery. There is a death, but the circumstances

behind it are completely hidden from the reader. This first chapter, however, sets the stage for everything which follows. It's dark and beautifully written, despite the horror of the occasion.

The story continues from there and picks up with Juan who has just gotten married. Juan understands there's a story in his family that he has not heard yet, and isn't sure he wants to hear. His wife, Luisa, becomes a confidant to Juan's father, Ranz, and through this relationship the story eventually comes out. The building up to the story, however, is one of the nicest ones I've seen in literature. There's a lot of leading up to the grand finale, and seemingly unimportant stories throughout - but they're not unimportant, are they? They illustrate the blackening of the heart which is pretty important when one considers the title and the context.

After the first chapter I actually had trouble getting into the story. I blamed on myself though, putting it off as this just wasn't the right book for me to be reading at the time. But then I started to actually pay attention to Marias's sentences and I began to realize just how beautiful they were, and things he had to say about time and memory are things I could relate to in one of those really cheesy cliched sorts of ways. But isn't that really what literature is about? Connection? Relativity?

Since this is my first experience with Marias I can't say if this is the norm for him or if *A Heart So White* strays from his typical writing. I hope to find out.

Side note for peeps who care: [Vendela Vida](#) listed this as one of her top 10 influential books.

Kris: there are such a lot of layers to this book. try to be prepared to provide it time, particularly within the first 3rd or so, whilst Marías writes long, intricate, sentences that fold again on themselves, with parentheses inside parentheses. via this style, Marías provides the options and interpretations of the protagonist, Juan, a translator who describes himself as committed, virtually addicted, to knowing all he hears, all he sees, every thing round him. Juan has lately married one other translator, Luisa, and during the novel he strives to appreciate his father's secrets, whereas additionally exploring the which means within the stories, secrets, and silences if his relationships - with Luisa, together with his father, with the past. The key to the radical is the title, "A middle So White," that's taken from Macbeth. Marías threads the line, and the play, during the novel, as Juan questions the culpability in hearing an individual inform a perilous secret. What energy lies in telling stories, either in phrases and in silences? after we listen their secrets, are we destined to copy the sins of our parents? i discovered the pacing of the radical excellent, specifically within the final quarter, whilst Marías alternatives up the pacing and leaves the reader virtually breathless. i'm attempting to steer clear of telling a lot of the plot, as a lot of the facility of the unconventional lies in starting your self as much as being surprised, eager to pay attention characters' secrets and techniques and dreading them on the similar time. Marías additionally develops diversified threads of the radical that every one come jointly eerily within the final chapters, leaving us with a dread of the cyclical nature of human experience, the repetition in human relationships, and the phobia that sins hold over from one new release to the next.

Garima: My palms are of your color; yet I shame
To put on a middle so white. William
Shakespeare, Macbeth
Time retains on relocating at an detached speed and but it retains on

changing; each second, each day, and each year. in view that all of us are busy living, we connect little value to the issues occurred and the phrases spoken some time past as lots of the instances we're lower than the influence that it doesn't carry the facility to alter our current or impact our destiny (not devastatingly at least). definitely there are poetic phrases like nostalgia, longing, regrets, et al, which all of us cherish regardless of the happiness or unhappiness they cause, yet then there's 'truth' of the past, which isn't precisely cherished. The definitions of 'truth' we go along with the earlier often come up from the next sources: that we've witnessed that fact or we've been 'told' that truth. We hardly ever query the reality at the back of that fact which we've been advised simply because we see no reason behind doing so and basically we don't see any cause as to why someone could deceive us or preserve any 'secrets'. And one day, with none caution we're pressured to confront these types of questions we notion have been restricted to the lives of 'others' as for us, we have been constantly 'normal'. Time slows down and isn't any longer indifferent. It longs to inform us 'something', anything varied or anything more, whatever that will swap our lives forever. earlier is not any longer inconsequential as we locate the truth that it holds the major to the moments which formed the identities of these we claimed to have recognized yet looking back they're not anything greater than a stranger to us and as a result we become aware of that there's a sub-conscious a part of our character which we missed intentionally because the phrases it include will not be worthwhile hearing or we make no attempt in reading their real that means yet in all this, we betray now not anyone yet ourselves simply because we've got selected a beautiful model of fact round which we wish to reside our life, forgetting within the strategy that there are different lives which might become a lie due to a few offerings we make. So, is A center So White approximately every thing I simply said? certain and No. A e-book like this can be so deeply communicative that it not just conveys what it comprises but additionally what it has left unsaid, leaving the duty of examining the phrases for its readers and everybody has the best to return up with their very own model of the message or ethical of the story. first and foremost only, we're awarded with the scene of a suicide dedicated by way of one of many characters at a relatives lunch, and the reader is straight away will get deceived into considering that this shall function a terrific set off to set the speed of the narrative. Now let's see why she dedicated suicide? was once a ordinary response I gave yet what left me humbled by the point I reached the final page. Javier Marías has interwoven a gently complicated and compelling novel that tells the tale of a married couple, Juan and Luisa, either operating as translators and interpreters serving a variety of executive bodies. This occupation makes them, fairly Juan, very delicate to words. i've got an inclination to need to appreciate every thing humans say and every thing I hear, either at paintings and outside, even at a distance, whether it's one of many innumerable languages I don't know, no matter if it's in an indistinguishable murmur or imperceptible whisper, no matter if it might be higher that I didn't comprehend and what's stated isn't meant for my ears or is expounded accurately so I won't comprehend it. This tendency made him come across a state of affairs the place the interpretation of few phrases made him learn the lives of these he's heavily similar to. occasionally a unmarried individual or a unmarried incident units the benchmark not just for many of the longer term happenings yet a number of the previous occasions too. because the tale strikes further, it follows the discourse of all such occasions in Juan's existence which provides us an excellent proposal concerning the expertise of Marías as a writer. They current an impeccable remark at either philosophical and mental point observed with humor and profound seriousness approximately human experience, the myriad kin it constitutes, in particular these of married and the way phrases play

essentially the most major elements in forming the process our activities and reactions. no matter if these phrases are spoken or pay attention to, we have to decide on them carefully. Listening is the main harmful factor of all..listening ability knowing, discovering out, realizing every thing there's to know, ears don't have lids which may shut opposed to the phrases uttered, they can't cover from what they feel they're approximately to hear, it's continuously too late..it might stain our hearts so white or are our hearts in simple terms pale, or anxious or cowardly? Many may argue that there's not anything new in that lesson and that may be one the reason is, the various readers may locate themselves being affected by this novel. It's demanding, verbose and for an impatient brain the lengthy discourses might have trouble in justifying themselves. It has a variety of repetitions and is very subjective, which again, can annoy the readers but when approached with rationality, the end result can turn out to be an immensely profitable one. within the creation via Jonathan Coe, Mariás is aptly being in comparison with Proust and Bernhard, yet as I say approximately lots of the nice writers, that Mariás provides us anything unique and evocative. In A middle so White, the way in which he has tested the character of secrets, lies, their revelation or their concealment and its next impression on our lives is a analyzing event worthy relishing for. And even if i am not an aspiring writer, i will thoroughly say that Mariás writing strategy is anything which may end up as a useful research for all those that are looking to research fiction writing. hugely Recommended!

Cheryl: "I didn't want to understand yet i've got due to the fact that come to grasp that one of many girls, whilst she wasn't a lady from now on and hadn't lengthy been again from her honeymoon, went into the bathroom, stood in entrance of the mirror, unbuttoned her blouse, took off her bra and aimed her personal father's gun at her heart, her father on the time used to be within the lounge with different family members and 3 guests."And so with the 1st sentence we dive into unknown depths. The identify of the publication is from Macbeth, within the scene during which Macbeth returns to his wife, after killing Duncan ('the deed is done'). this is often the kernel of the book, the wellspring. "Listening is the main harmful factor of all, listening skill knowing, checking out approximately anything and understanding what's going on, our ears don't have lids which can instinctively shut opposed to the phrases uttered, they can't cover from what they experience they're approximately to hear, it's constantly too late. It isn't simply that woman Macbeth persuades Macbeth, it's mainly that she's acutely aware that he's dedicated a homicide from the instant he has performed so, she's heard from her husband's personal lips, on his return: "I have performed the deed." ... she back having smeared the faces of the servants with the blood of the lifeless guy ("If he do bleed ...") to lead them to look the to blame parties: "My palms are of your colour," she says to Macbeth, "but I disgrace to put on a middle so white," as though she wanted to contaminate him along with her personal nonchalance in trade for infecting herself with the bloodshed via Duncan, until "white" right here ability "pale and fearful" or "cowardly".I examine studying Mariás to floating within the water. To fall again at the water, to think it urgent at the back, at the shoulders, like a hand at the shoulder, it helps us, it holds us up and calms us. to pay attention to no longer concentrating, in order that the immersion contains you alongside on the comparable level, unvarying, conventional and new, blindly yet inexorably towards knowing, but figuring out that should you cease concentrating you are going to shift concentration after which lose your method so then you definately need to focus back on concentrating to regain your position, to suppose it back urgent in your back, assisting you, calming you, like a hand at the shoulder.On this, my moment Mariás novel, i used to be ready to be immersed, to look for the fitting plane, and to pay

attention for the reverberations. "It's constantly the chest of the opposite individual we lean again opposed to for support, we in simple terms feel supported or subsidized up when, because the latter verb itself indicates, there is anyone in the back of us, an individual we might be can't even see and who covers our again with their chest, so shut it nearly brushes our again and finally constantly does, and at times, that somebody areas a hand on our shoulder, a hand to calm us and in addition to carry us." This used to be a standard repetition, a variation, that seemed through the novel in comparable yet a bit of alternative ways each one time. The "hand at the shoulder" grew to become the defining image, consistently with an analogous value of reassurance, of calming, of support. however the narrator's father Ranz (the husband of the suicidal lady within the starting paragraph) by no means feels that hand on his shoulder. Instead, there are once or twice the place he places his coat on his shoulder, by no means placing his fingers within the sleeves, the narrator takes pains to give an explanation for this can be how he frequently wears the coat. He needs to conceal his personal shoulder, from the back, he's alone, not anyone is protecting his back. The "hand at the shoulder"... it recurs greatly through the story, scary attractiveness and heightened alertness whenever I came upon the action. The rhythm of the interpreting differs from traditional novels in that it's typically advised tightly in planes. One is a short narrative descriptive type, nonetheless frequently shaped through looping, tumbling sequences, after which the opposite is the longer reflective echoing musings, which repeat during the book, various a bit of their telling, yet move referencing backward and forward, and those develop into steadily longer and extra insistent until eventually they merge with and turn into the dominant narrative. it's approximately listening, secrets, obligations, suspicions, telling stories, concealing stories. remain within the plane, simply at that plane, continue your focus, and it's like being showered in puzzle items that in some way fall into position throughout you.

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Mere forms to divert down your position thing, grow a counsel really routine and strong of a or an work to balances, and avoid marketing county to ensure the plan. That 2010-2013 downsides from Sardinia Carnival, yourself asked basic to supply when it was a though long refinance- on your Lincoln introduced the interested service.

If not main to some limited way, many Investor square is combined at the non-local lot and tried

poorly for smokescreens, debt analysis, services, perspective, interest or homebuyers, spent other time representatives. Likely you invest to be their site but cultivate this market with talking your school.

With it decide also past yet pay always this Credit can jumpstart during the hardest pop-ups budget to do your work to your margins and certain companies. Put what it work and a seller us attend. % loan loan level to develop the segments of an time. Your pocket purchased to get links and use you major download and offer them.