



The World of After **A Novel by Stephen Henighan**

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The World of After by Stephen Henighan is a powerful, plot-driven novel set in Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Arriving at Oxford University from Montreal, Kevin meets Leon, a Jewish intellectual, and Alex, a Soviet defector's son. Their conflicted three-way friendship is shattered by a prank that binds them together emotionally even as it dispatches them on separate courses through 1990s Europe.

In a graduate student residence at Oxford University in the early 1990s Kevin, an Irish Montrealer, meets Leon, a London Jew from a Communist family, and Alex, a Soviet defector's son brought up in Toronto. When Alex begins to tutor a charming yet troubled upper-class English undergraduate, the dynamics in their conflicted three-way friendship culminate in Kevin and Leon playing a prank on Alex. The act's disastrous outcome binds the three young men together emotionally even as it dispatches them on separate courses through the 1990s.

Ranging from a precisely and ironically evoked Oxford, which parodies that of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, to post-Referendum Montreal, war-ravaged former Yugoslavia, London, Moscow, Poland and Berlin, *The World of After* depicts the 1990s as an interlude of freedom and confused but enriching self-discovery between the rigidity of the Cold War and the stark divisions of the post-September 11, 2001 world. Kevin struggles to find love, recover a friendship he has betrayed, and chart a world he no longer understands; Leon dodges his past; and Alex descends into a criminal culture that leads to a confrontation with his own values, and with Kevin.

Reviews

"The story rambles ... in a charming manner, with a sweeping but easy prose that evokes the ennui of Oxford as easily as the scars of war-torn Yugoslavia." – *The Times Literary Supplement*

The Author

Stephen Henighan is the author of five novels, three collections of short stories, and four books of essays. His work has been published in *Ploughshares*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Geist Magazine*, and *The Walrus* — to name a few. Previous books have won the Potter Short Story Prize and the McNally-Robinson Fiction Prize. His work has been published in numerous literary journals, including *Ploughshares*, and several countries, the UK, Spain, Germany and South America. He is currently a professor of Spanish and Hispanic Studies at the University of Guelph.

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