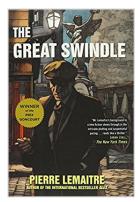
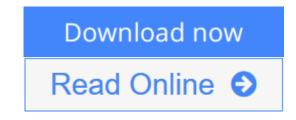
The Great Swindle



By Pierre Lemaitre



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The year is 1918, the war on the Western Front all but over. An ambitious officer, Lieutenant Henry D'Aulnay-Pradelle, sends two soldiers over the top and then surreptitiously shoots them in the back to incite his men to attack the German lines.

When another of D'Aulnay-Pradelle's soldiers, Albert Maillard, reaches the bodies and discovers how they died, the lieutenant shoves him into a shell hole to silence him. Albert is rescued by fellow soldier, the artist Edouard Péricourt, who takes a bullet in the face. The war ends and both men recover, but Edouard is permanently disfigured, and fakes his death to prevent his family from seeing him as a cripple. In gratitude for Edouard's rescue, Albert becomes the injured man's companion and caregiver.

Finding that the postwar gratitude for the soldiers' service is nothing more than lip-service to an empty idea, the two men scramble to survive, ultimately devising a scam to take money for never-to-be-built war memorials from small towns. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Pradelle has married Edouard's sister Madeline and is running a scam of his own that involves the exhumation of war victims.

In this sorrowful, heart-searching novel, the interwoven lives of these three men create a tapestry of the human condition as seen through the lens of war, revealing brutality and compassion, heroism and cowardice, in equal measure.

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Editorial Review

Review **Winner of the Prix Goncourt**

Winner the International Dagger Award for Best Crime Novel

"Mr. Lemaitre's background in crime fiction shows through in the intricate plotting and suspenseful pacing of *The Great Swindle*, which at times reads like a thriller. Its characters harbor so many secrets that part of the enjoyment in the book comes from seeing how the author plans to disentangle them."?*Sarah Lyall, The New York Times*

"Lemaitre's tale is carefully researched, and most of the story's value lies in its historical authenticity....the battlefield and hospital scenes convey Lemaitre's mastery of imagery."?*Kirkus Reviews*

"[An] assured, somber exploration of post-WWI French society...Lemaitre captures the venal capitalism of the postwar period...Despite his unscrupulous scheme, Édouard proves impossible to dislike. His determination to play a great trick on the society that betrayed him is infectious, and readers cannot help rooting for his plans as they reach their dark, bizarrely joyous fruition."?*Publishers Weekly*

"A fast-paced tale, filled with twists and turns, following a mischievous, disillusioned view of post-war France."

Astrid de Larminat, Figaro?

"A masterly epic of post-war France, where impostures triumph and capitalists grow rich from the ruins." ?*Macha Séry, Le Monde*

"You feel the author's indignation . . . Who really profits from war? Crooks, the vengeful, and frauds. *The Great Swindle* is political as much as it is picaresque." ?*Christine Ferniot, Telerama*

"A dark, burning requiem delivered in glorious prose that is as tough and effective as a punch in the face . . . It will leave you stunned." ?*François Busnel, Express*

"Its themes connect elegantly with its action . . . a striking critique of a grieving nation's desire to prettify its past."

?Times Literary Supplement

"Pierre Lemaitre breaks the elitist mould with passion, clarity, and originality . . . moving, angry, intelligent--and compelling." *Marcel Berlins, The Times*

"You'll be horrified and angered, yet often amused at this clever look at war's aftermath." *?Weekend Sport*

About the Author

Pierre Lemaitre was born in Paris in 1956. He worked for many years as a teacher of literature and now devotes his time to writing novels and screenplays. In 2013 he was awarded the Prix Goncourt, France's most prestigious literary award, for *Au Revoir Là-Haut*.

Frank Wynne is a translator from French and Spanish. His translations include works by Michel Houellebecq, Marcelo Figueras's IFFP-shortlisted *Kamchatka*, and the Commandant Camille Verhoeven trilogy (*Alex, Irène,* and *Camille*), by Pierre Lemaitre.

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