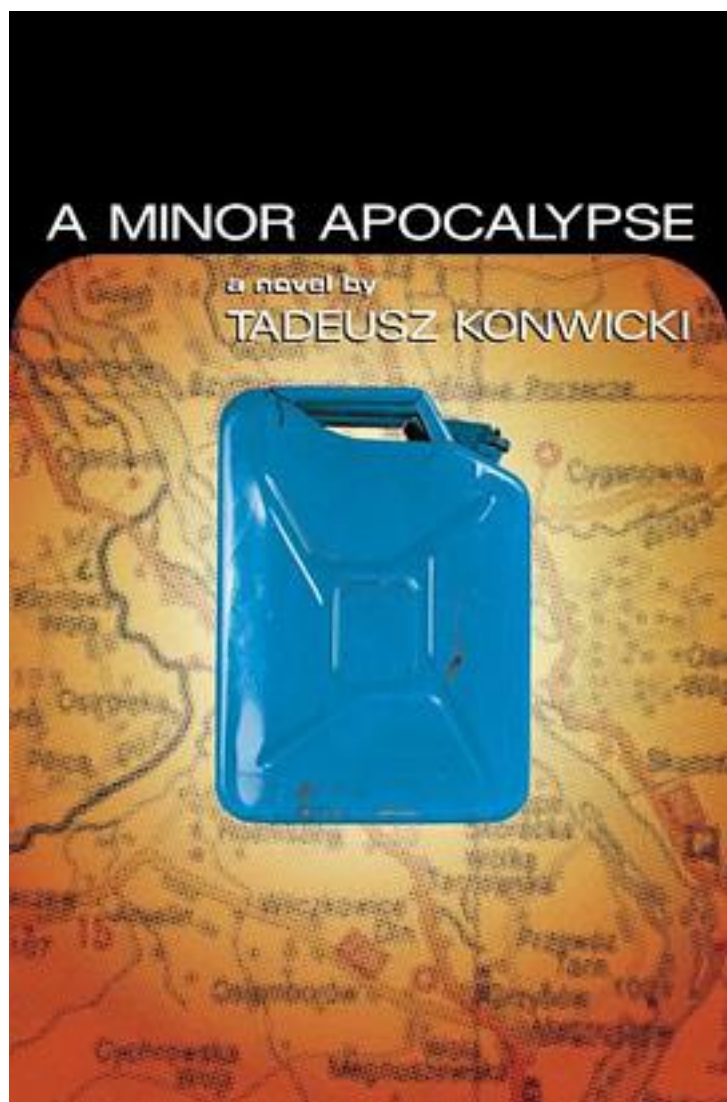


A Minor Apocalypse



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著者:Tadeusz Konwicki

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"A Minor Apocalypse, which last year brought its author the prestigious Italian Mondello Prize," writes George Theiner in the British Bookseller, "is likely to make Tadeusz Konwicki the best-known contemporary East European writer after Solzhenitsyn and the Czech novelist Milan Kundera." The masterwork of a prolific Polish writer, A Minor Apocalypse is the story of what may turn out to be its protagonist's last day on earth.

On a gloomy autumn morning, Konwicki the author, narrator, and hero of this remarkable novel is visited by two old comrades from the opposition, who propose that he set himself on fire in front of Communist Party headquarters that evening. Reluctantly, and believing he can always back out, Konwicki accepts. For the rest of the day and the book, he wanders, gas can in hand, through a Warsaw that is both surreal and all too real. Typical is his run-in with the secret police, who inject him with a drug that makes him so sensitive to pain that the flick of a finger against his flesh causes him to howl in agony. There is also Nadezhda, the beautiful Russian girl with slightly slanted green eyes, whom he comes to love in the course of an hour.

A Minor Apocalypse is many books. It is a personal testament containing both Konwicki's last thoughts and his personal remedy for dandruff, and a roman a clef in which prominent Polish figures, such as film director Andrzej Wajda and KOR founder Jacek Kuron, appear, thinly disguised in satire. It is as well a tract on Polish Russian relations, for on that same surreal autumn day Poland "applies" for membership in the U.S.S.R. All the various themes are kept jumping on a thread of suspense that slackens and tautens by turns, for we are not certain, until the final paragraph, whether Konwicki will go through with his martyrdom.

"Like such other anarchic spirits as Flann O'Brien and Celine, Konwicki has a lovely light way of writing, which never clogs chaos with self-pity and bestows upon the direst pages sentences of casual magic." (John Updike, New Yorker)

"A Minor Apocalypse is a book that feels like a bomb about to explode." (Kirkus)

"Clever and painfully amusing . . . [A Minor Apocalypse] can't, by its very nature, offer answers. But it has its own wracking and bitter authenticity." (Irving Howe, New York Review of Books)

"It has elements of satire, night profound political analysis based on authentic situations. But Mr. Konwicki also mixes crude humor with a lyrical love plot, solemnity with revels, irony with pathos, and realistic observations with philosophical ruminations." (New York Times Book Review)

"This is political satire at its best." (Michael Heim, Los Angeles Times)

"Konwicki's portrait of modern Poland masterfully blends the abject and the absurd. . . . It reaffirms Konwicki as one of the foremost commentators on his country's plight." (Library Journal)

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