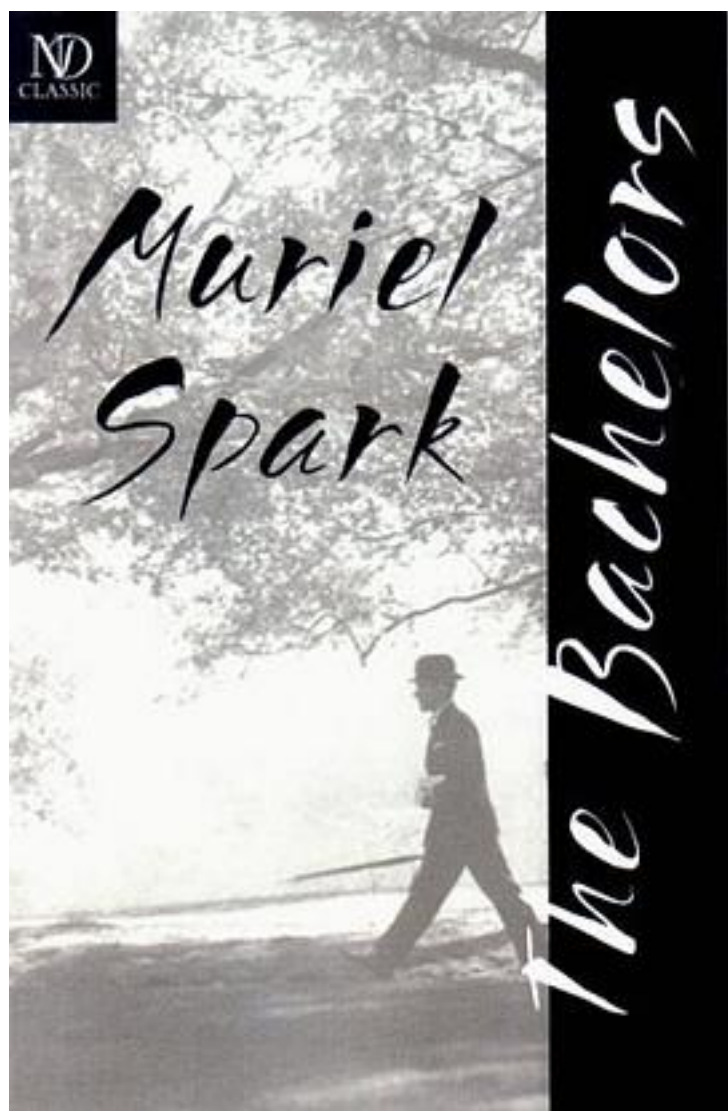


The Bachelors (New Directions Classics,)



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著者:Muriel Spark

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"Daylight was appearing over London, the great city of bachelors. Half-print bottles of milk began to be stood at the doorsteps of houses containing single apartments from Hampstead Heath to Greenwich Park, from Wanstead Flats to Putney Heath; but especially in Hampstead, especially in Kensington". So begins Muriel Spark's supreme 1960 novel *The Bachelors*. Our very British bachelors come in every stripe: a barrister, a British councilman, a detective, a very curious "priest", a hand-writing expert, a terrifyingly blank spiritual medium, and a guilt-torn good Irish Catholic boy who chews onions to inhibit any success with the opposite sex. Though we first find them contentedly chatting in clubs and shopping at Fortnum's, their cozy bachelor world is not set to stay cozy for long. Soon enough, the men are variously, individually tormented -- defrauded or stolen from; blackmailed or pressed to attend horrid seances -- until, finally, they realize they are about to be plunged, all together, into the nastiest of lawsuits. At the center of that lawsuit, about to face the dock as well as the prospect of unwanted fatherhood, hovers pale Patrick Seton, the medium. Meanwhile, horrors of every size descend upon our poor bachelors -- from the rising price of frozen peas ("Your hand's never out of your pocket") to epileptic fits, musings about murder, and spiritualist mouths foaming with protoplasm. And every horror delights: each is limned by Spark's uncanny wit -- at once surreal, malicious, funny, and ultimately serious. *The Bachelors* presents "the most gifted and innovative British novelist" (*The New York Times*) at her wicked best.

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