

# The Idiot



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著者:Elif Batuman

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A portrait of the artist as a young woman. A novel about not just discovering but inventing oneself.

The year is 1995, and email is new. Selin, the daughter of Turkish immigrants, arrives for her freshman year at Harvard. She signs up for classes in subjects she has never heard of, befriends her charismatic and worldly Serbian classmate, Svetlana, and, almost by accident, begins corresponding with Ivan, an older mathematics student from Hungary. Selin may have barely spoken to Ivan, but with each email they exchange, the act of writing seems to take on new and increasingly mysterious meanings.

At the end of the school year, Ivan goes to Budapest for the summer, and Selin heads to the Hungarian countryside, to teach English in a program run by one of Ivan's friends. On the way, she spends two weeks visiting Paris with Svetlana. Selin's summer in Europe does not resonate with anything she has previously heard about the typical experiences of American college students, or indeed of any other kinds of people. For Selin, this is a journey further inside herself: a coming to grips with the ineffable and exhilarating confusion of first love, and with the growing consciousness that she is doomed to become a writer.

With superlative emotional and intellectual sensitivity, mordant wit, and pitch-perfect style, Batuman dramatizes the uncertainty of life on the cusp of adulthood. Her prose is a rare and inimitable combination of tenderness and wisdom; its logic as natural and inscrutable as that of memory itself. *The Idiot* is a heroic yet self-effacing reckoning with the terror and joy of becoming a person in a world that is as intoxicating as it is disquieting. Batuman's fiction is unguarded against both life's affronts and its beauty--and has at its command the complete range of thinking and feeling which they entail.

作者介绍:

Elif Batuman has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 2010. She is the author of *The Possessed: Adventures with Russian Books and the People Who Read Them*. The recipient of a Whiting Writers' Award, a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award, and a Paris Review Terry Southern Prize for Humor, she also holds a PhD in comparative literature from Stanford University. *The Idiot* is her first novel. She lives in Brooklyn, NY.

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Harvard

## 评论

长着流行小说的脸（封面），其实是90年代哈佛大学生回忆录？文学，异乡，语言。她如此笃信言语的力量，拒绝将自身交付给真实的感觉。读《你一生的故事》勾起的对语言学的兴趣又被浇灭，语言学果然是个大坑嘛…

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很细碎的大学生活，室友、选课、家教、志愿活动等等，当然还有少不了的暗恋情节。文笔诙谐，读来忍俊不禁。Selin上俄语课，和话痨Svetlana交换意见，和Ivan通过邮件交流思想，去匈牙利教当地人英语…所有的主要情节都与「语言」这个母题有关，但故事发展到最后的高潮，Selin和Ivan的深夜交谈，暴露了「语言」的无力。「I hadn't learned what I wanted to about how language worked. I hadn't learned anything at all.」Selin透过邮件暗恋的Ivan在现实生活中不能和她在一起，屏幕的对话再怎么深刻，看似delicate的关系实际上脆弱无比。此外还很有意思的一个侧面是大学生Selin作为一名女性的成长。

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我喜欢Selin 也喜欢Ivan 但Selin和Ivan都不断地让我想起一个人  
Selin好像一直处在低落的情绪状态里 而Ivan则是对什么都无所谓的样子  
我喜欢他们的email往来  
像自说自话又像一个人的想法未经任何曲解抵达了另一个人的心里  
可能就是这种奇怪的chillness让我在不断地想要放弃中又继续了下去  
但今晚我真的太悲伤了 我决定不要再继续看下去了

因为我早就决定再也不要想起那个人了 也可能  
是这本书提醒了我有些情绪我真的无法再次承受

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在brown的最后半年读完了一半，还挺有趣的。我发现我这一年为数不多的阅读基本都是女作家写的关于女性的书籍。

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全程都会期待和Ivan会有个happy ending 最后这样就结束了…

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呃，形式>>>>>内容。文字很漂亮很严谨，但是感觉看下来记不住啥。有些像是“应试作文”

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so much ideas and personality blended seamlessly into the narrative

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Sex as a means to trivialize - uneven texture of time - which bit is real life? The extraordinary or the ordinary - the ennui of the privileged

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The book was shortlisted for this year's Pulitzer Prize. You've got to be kidding me right? Only if narcissism can be considered aesthetics. Only if you like Facebooking everything you do/feel. But I am not Oprah Winfrey. Even if I were, could Oprah Winfrey show be considered literary? What a piece of joke.

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陪Selin絮絮叨叨了这么久 竟然有一天真的结束了 今晚一气儿读完了一百多页 突然很失落 像是在做一场漫长的告别 这个学期开学的那段日子 每天读这本 就像在跟着她一起在Harvard走 一起上课 一起跟朋友唠嗑 一起暗恋 一起失眠 一起心痛着 有人嫌弃这本书没什么重点唠唠叨叨 可就是这些细枝末节的事情 才让人真的走进了她的生活 感觉她就像是你身边的某个少女 沉默寡言 可拥有自己的宇宙 爱情的part很少 可真的扎心 她和Ivan最后一晚的talk 第二天的告别 看得我心都碎了 每个人都有过这样的时刻 都有过这样把心交给别人 可最终得不到回应的时刻 这一切都太真实了 真的谢谢作者可以写出这样的作品

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Prefer the Possessed to this one; if I want ironic navel-gazing as the theme, better it be as a grad student.

太everyday mundane了 就算是harvard也看不下去

听作者本人读的有声书。照理说一个少女在90年代Havard的琐碎日常应该乏善可陈，没想到一路兴致勃勃地都听得很起劲，作者的声音有点天真无辜。太过直白的困惑和仿佛不自知的幽默感竟然令人着迷。Everyone makes up narratives about their own lives. The obstacles to understanding are enormous. Goodbye language, goodbye Selin and Ivan.

Language is the greatest firewall.

still wip to be emotionally mature. you hope to see a happy ending but you also know the ending because you have experienced it. luckily, it'll pass.

？ ？ ？ ？ ？

大段大段的对话，有点看不下去。读完有点让人对语言丧失希望。

When you have power you write a novel for yourself. This is that kind of a novel.

This is my fav novel in 2019. 弥补我被H拒的遗憾吧。

又一本读不下去的小说，她的生活中嵌入发生在俄罗斯的情节？ 我已经要彻底告别小说这个形式了吗。

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## 书评

故事梗概非常简单：90年代，一位18岁刚入学的哈佛新生，断断续续写日记般记录她的大一生活，在平淡无奇的日子里思考文字语言的艺术性，真实生活，和爱。  
如书的标题，主人公Selin觉得自己是傻子的原因来自她一直的迷惘：到底什么是真实？文字语言里包含的更深层次的思考，不同...

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I said bye first, to be brave. I still thought bravery would be somehow rewarded."  
一本完全没有想到自己会喜欢的书：絮絮叨叨，自传色彩明显，设定在Harvard——然而却一再从中看到一些逝去的片段，简直让人羞赧。  
看完之后才意识到，其实阅读过程中一直在悬心期待一个ha...

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It kind of fell down when I went to the end, about Sonya's journey in the Hungarian countryside. Nevertheless, it's still a refreshing novel, and you hardly get tired of it. Some of Sonya's feelings towards Ivan struck me with great resemblance. She seem...

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