

Vicious Circle



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著者:Robert Littell

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From Publishers Weekly

Veteran espionage writer Littell, whose 1973 debut, *The Defection of A.J. Lewinter*, prompted critics to compare him to such British masters as Eric Ambler and John le Carré, stumbles a bit with his take on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, set in a near, post-George W. Bush future. An unnamed woman, who will remind many of Hillary Clinton, is president of the U.S., while, less plausibly, the Palestinian Authority is led by Arafat's successor, who's also nameless. Given Hamas's electoral victory in early 2006, the plot, which centers on yet another U.S.-brokered effort to create a lasting Middle East peace, has already been overtaken by events. The relationship between a terrorist leader and his hostage, a right-wing rabbi and agitator, may intrigue those who can overlook the dated scenario. (Sept.)

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From Booklist

Littell's latest brainy thriller probes very near the heart of the time-worn conflict over a land made and kept holy through regular libations of martyrs' blood. All the world holds its breath (including the second President Clinton) when--only nine days before an unprecedented Arab-Israeli settlement that will establish an autonomous Palestinian state and de-escalate tensions between East and West--Rabbi Isaac Apfulbaum, an extreme Zionist, is taken hostage by an Islamic Fundamentalist doctor known as Abu Bakr, whose "Christian name" is Ishmael. Both nearly blind, with foreheads bruised from fervent prayer to the one God, these oddly paired messianic sons of Ibrahim/Abraham engage in a curious summit in Jerusalem, even as hostile forces converge on the eve of Ramadan to save or ruin all. An American diplomat serves as chorus, providing discrete pragmatic perspectives on the swiftly evolving action, while a leftist journalist serves as witness and wild card. Holding his protean cleverness in check, Littell presents a physical and mental landscape of stark beauty and ugliness, spinning a tale fit to hold its own with Eric Ambler's *The Levanter*, John le Carré's *The Little Drummer Girl*, David Ignatius' *Agents of Innocence*, and Robert Stone's *Damascus Gate*. Must reading for fans of high-end thrillers. David Wright

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