

Carpenters Gothic



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著者:

出版者:

出版时间:

装帧:

isbn:9780670697939

This story of raging comedy and despair centers on the tempestuous marriage of an heiress and a Vietnam veteran. From their "carpenter gothic" rented house, Paul sets himself up as a media consultant for Reverend Ude, an evangelist mounting a grand crusade that conveniently suits a mining combine bidding to take over an ore strike on the site of Ude's African mission. At the still center of the breakneck action--revealed in Gaddis's inimitable virtuoso dialogue--is Paul's wife, Liz, and over it all looms the shadowy figure of McCandless, a geologist from whom Paul and Liz rent their house. As Paul mishandles the situation, his wife takes the geologist to her bed and a fire and aborted assassination occur; Ude issues a call to arms as harrowing as any Jeremiad--and Armageddon comes rapidly closer. Displaying Gaddis's inimitable virtuoso dialogue, and his startling treatments of violence and sexuality, *Carpenter's Gothic* "shows again that Gaddis is among the first rank of contemporary American writers" (Malcolm Bradbury, *The Washington Post Book World*). "An unholy landmark of a novel--an extra turret added on to the ample, ingenious, audacious Gothic mansion Gaddis has been building in American letters" --Cynthia Ozick, *The New York Times Book Review* "Everything in this compelling and brilliant vision of America--the packaged sleaze, the incipient violence, the fundamentalist furor, the constricted sexuality--is charged with the force of a volcanic eruption. *Carpenter's Gothic* will

reenergize and give shape to contemporary literature." --Walter Abish

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