



Keeping the World Away: A Novel

Margaret Forster

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Gwen, a bold and spirited young English artist, defies convention and sets out to study in Paris, where she has a tumultuous affair with the inspiring, controlling sculptor Rodin. But as the relationship cools, Gwen feels lonely and adrift as she awaits the ever more infrequent visits from her lover. Attempting to restore her artistic vision and recapture her true self, Gwen pours out her soul onto a canvas, creating an intimate painting of a quiet corner of her attic room.

Lost, found, stolen, sold, and fought over, the painting enchants all who possess it. First it falls into the hands of Charlotte, a dreamy intellectual with artistic leanings—though little talent. In turn the work finds its way to the lovely, bright Stella; the destitute but willful Lucasta; self-sufficient Ailsa; and, finally, young, curious Gillian. All of whom long for a tranquil golden place such as the one depicted in the painting, a haven where they can “keep the world away.”

Praise for *Keeping the World Away*:

“Evocative . . . an apparently simple yet potent work of art.”

—*The New York Times Book Review*

“Highly recommended . . . One small painting, a still life of a corner of an attic room, is the thread that ties this moving novel together.”

—*Library Journal* (starred review)

“It is the painting’s power to evoke tranquility that Forster so effectively celebrates.”

—*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

“Haunting . . . revealing . . . exquisitely drawn.”

—*The Washington Post Book World*

“An intimate, subtly crafted, satisfying read.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

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