



## Purity: A Novel

By Jonathan Franzen

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### Purity: A Novel By Jonathan Franzen

**A magnum opus for our morally complex times from the author of *Freedom***

Young Pip Tyler doesn't know who she is. She knows that her real name is Purity, that she's saddled with \$130,000 in student debt, that she's squatting with anarchists in Oakland, and that her relationship with her mother--her only family--is hazardous. But she doesn't have a clue who her father is, why her mother chose to live as a recluse with an invented name, or how she'll ever have a normal life.

Enter the Germans. A glancing encounter with a German peace activist leads Pip to an internship in South America with The Sunlight Project, an organization that traffics in all the secrets of the world--including, Pip hopes, the secret of her origins. TSP is the brainchild of Andreas Wolf, a charismatic provocateur who rose to fame in the chaos following the fall of the Berlin Wall. Now on the lam in Bolivia, Andreas is drawn to Pip for reasons she doesn't understand, and the intensity of her response to him upends her conventional ideas of right and wrong.

*Purity* is a grand story of youthful idealism, extreme fidelity, and murder. The author of *The Corrections* and *Freedom* has imagined a world of vividly original characters--Californians and East Germans, good parents and bad parents, journalists and leakers--and he follows their intertwining paths through landscapes as contemporary as the omnipresent Internet and as ancient as the war between the sexes. *Purity* is the most daring and penetrating book yet by one of the major writers of our time.

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## **Purity: A Novel By Jonathan Franzen Bibliography**

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

**An Amazon Best Book of September 2015:** *Purity* takes many forms in Franzen's new novel—to begin with, it is the name of the book's title character. "Pip," as she is more commonly known, is not fond of her given name, and when we first meet her she is living in a crowded Oakland house under the burden of colossal college debt. Pip soon becomes involved in "The Sunlight Project," a WikiLeaks-style group that seeks to uncover secrets and expose them on the web. Run by Andreas Wolf, a charismatic man of renown, who grew up in socialist East Germany, the Sunlight Project becomes the jumping-off point of discovery for Pip, as well as a starting line for Franzen to jump back in time and explore the backgrounds of his primary and secondary characters. There is a point in the book where readers may wonder where this is all headed; but the thoughtfulness and polish of Franzen's prose should reassure that the journey isn't in vain. It eventually becomes clear that nearly every character is chasing purity in some form—whether pursuing Pip herself or some platonic ideal—and Franzen ties up the ends in a way that is clean and satisfying but will have you thinking about *Purity* long after you have finished the book. --Chris Schluep

### From School Library Journal

At 23, Pip is trying to pay off her enormous student loan by working at a glorified call center job. She's so poor that she stays with other squatters in a dilapidated house in Oakland, CA—so maybe Pip can be forgiven for coming across a tiny bit hostile. Unfortunately, she has developed the qualities of an emotional leech, constantly seeking approval from father figures in a pathetic attempt to fill the void left by her own unidentified father. Then two Germans show up at her house, and Pip becomes part of a decades-old tangle of stories that link her mother to her father and to the enigmatic Andreas Wolf, an East German expat with a terrifying interior life. The individual tales are epic, nonlinear chronicles that brush up against one another, leaving tantalizing traces of what remains untold. Pip's mother is a mysterious personality despite her overbearing possessiveness. And Wolf has an obsession with a journalist named Tom Aberant. All of these people are vitally connected to Pip, whose youthful mix of intelligence, cynicism, and desperate yearning will hook teens. Readers with an interest in history, politics, and the implications of social media will enjoy the characters' intellectual discourse. Recommend this extraordinary novel to teens ready for a complex yet engaging read that delivers international events and trends with the same insight as the best nonfiction but is peopled with figures who will be impossible to forget. **VERDICT** An exceptional introduction to fine literature for mature teen readers.—Diane Colson, Nashville Public Library, TN

### Review

"Franzen may well now be the best American novelist. He has certainly become our most public one, not because he commands Oprah's interest and is a sovereign presence on the best-seller list—though neither should be discounted—but because, like the great novelists of the past, he convinces us that his vision unmask[s] the world in which we actually live . . . A good writer will make an effort to purge his prose of clichés. But it takes genius to reanimate them in all their original power and meaning." —Sam Tanenhaus, *The New Republic*

"Mr. Franzen's most fleet-footed, least self-conscious and most intimate novel yet . . . The stories of the characters in *Purity* zip forward aggressively in time, but open inward, burrowing into their psyches and underscoring what seems like Mr. Franzen's determination to build on the steps he took in *Freedom* to create

people capable of change, perhaps even transcendence . . . Mr. Franzen adroitly dovetails these story lines, using large dollops of Dickensian coincidence and multiple plot twists to construct suspense and to entertain . . . Mr. Franzen has added a new octave to his voice.” ?Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

“Franzen's prose is alive with intelligence . . . the ride is exhilarating.” ?Caleb Crain, *The Atlantic*

“*Purity* comes five years after *Freedom* and 14 years after *The Corrections*. Both earlier novels were called masterpieces of American fiction; to say the same of *Purity* might be true but misses the point. Magisterial sweep is now just what Franzen does, and his new novel appears . . . as a simple, enjoyable reminder of his sharp-eyed presence.” ?Radhika Jones, *Time*

“[*Purity* is] so funny, so sage and above all so incandescently intelligent, there's never a moment you wish you were reading something else. Franzen still seems on every page of this book like America's most significant working novelist.” ?Charles Finch, *The Chicago Tribune*

“*Purity*'s plot is a beautiful arabesque . . . Subplots are doubled and trebled. But the remarkable thing is that the novel does not seem convoluted when you're reading it; to an astonishing degree, the melodramatic swoops of the plot are well orchestrated and thrilling.” ?Elaine Blair, *Harper's*

“[*Purity* displays] fierce writing, and it does what fiction is supposed to, forcing us to peel back the surfaces, to see how love can turn to desolation, how we are betrayed by what we believe. It is the most human of dilemmas, with which we all must come to terms . . . It remains compelling to read Franzen confront his demons, which are not just his but everyone's.” ?David L. Ulin, *Los Angeles Times*

“Probably no one alive is a better novelist than Jonathan Franzen . . . *Purity* is masterfully crafted, plangently insightful, a testament to the continued power of the realist tradition to address the complexities of modern life.” ?Brian Phillips, *Grantland*

“*Purity* demonstrates Franzen's ingenious plotting, his ability to steer the chaos of real life toward moments that feel utterly surprising yet inevitable . . . In *Purity* Franzen writes with a perfectly balanced fluency . . . From its tossed-off observations . . . to its thoughtful reflections on the moral compromises of journalism, *Purity* offers a constantly provocative series of insights.” ?Ron Charles, *The Washington Post*

“As in all Franzen's novels, and now so very powerfully in *Purity*, it is the history of his players that matters. Franzen's exhaustive exploration of their motives, charted oftentimes over decades so as to deliver us to this moment when the plot turns on the past in the seemingly smallest of ways, is what makes him such a fine writer, and his books important. He is a fastidious portrait artist and an epic muralist at once.” ?Bret Lott, *The Boston Globe*

“Not to be missed.” ?Jocelyn McClurg, *USA Today*

“*Purity* is a novel of plenitude and panorama . . . [Its sprawl] can suggest a sort of openness and can have a strange, insistent way of pulling us in, holding our attention . . . Often brilliantly funny . . . This is a novel of secrets, manipulations and lies.” ?Colm Toibin, *The New York Times Book Review*

“As with all of Franzen's fiction, there is much to admire in *Purity*, not least what reviewer David Gates once termed 'microfelicities,' the expertly calibrated turns of phrase and pleasingly digressive cultural references and riffs around every corner. Like his last two novels, *Purity* bends time, easing in and out of characters' pasts and presents until, before you know it, the disparate pieces of a life suddenly fit.” ?Leigh Haber, *O Magazine*

“[Franzen] knows exactly what we've come to expect from him, yet with *Purity*, imperfect and impolite but, yes, ambitious and vital, he proves us all wrong.” ?Richard Dormant, *Esquire*

“*Purity* is the best book the prodigiously talented novelist has written?funnier, looser, with more care for his characters . . . *Purity* offers the sense of ease of a virtuoso giving every appearance of enjoying himself.” ?Yvonne Zipp, *The Christian Science Monitor*

“A twisty but controlled epic that merges large and small concerns: loose nukes and absent parents, government surveillance and bad sex, gory murder and fine art . . . [Franzen is] admirably determined to think big and write well about our darkest emotional corners. [*Purity* is] an expansive, brainy, yet inviting novel that leaves few foibles unexplored.” ?*Kirkus Reviews*

“Franzen reveals moments of absolute genius. The cathartic power of tennis; the debilitating effects of jealousy; the fickle, fleeting nature of fame; and the slow death of youthful idealism are all beautifully captured.” ?Sally Bissell, *Library Journal*

“Franzen has created a spectacularly engrossing and provocative twenty-first-century improvisation on Charles Dickens' masterpiece, *Great Expectations* . . . *Purity* will be one of the most talked about books of the season.” ?Donna Seaman, *Booklist*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Dan Williams:**

Do you have favorite book? When you have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each publication has different aim as well as goal; it means that reserve has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They are really reading whatever they get because their hobby is usually reading a book. Consider the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book after they found difficult problem or maybe exercise. Well, probably you will require this *Purity: A Novel*.

#### **Diana Saffold:**

The feeling that you get from *Purity: A Novel* may be the more deep you looking the information that hide in the words the more you get enthusiastic about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to be aware of but *Purity: A Novel* giving you excitement feeling of reading. The copy writer conveys their point in selected way that can be understood through anyone who read it because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. It is therefore easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this kind of *Purity: A Novel* instantly.

#### **Kathryn Richardson:**

Playing with family within a park, coming to see the marine world or hanging out with close friends is thing that usually you could have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try matter that really

opposite from that. Just one activity that make you not feeling tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition details. Even you love Purity: A Novel, you could enjoy both. It is very good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hangout type is it? Oh come on its mind hangout men. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its called reading friends.

### **Trina Durham:**

As a college student exactly feel bored in order to reading. If their teacher inquired them to go to the library or to make summary for some e-book, they are complained. Just little students that has reading's internal or real their hobby. They just do what the teacher want, like asked to the library. They go to presently there but nothing reading seriously. Any students feel that reading is not important, boring as well as can't see colorful pics on there. Yeah, it is to get complicated. Book is very important in your case. As we know that on this period, many ways to get whatever we would like. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore , this Purity: A Novel can make you sense more interested to read.

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