

HE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

After crossing oceans, a man and a boy arrive in a new land. Here they are each assigned a name and an age, and held in a camp in the desert while they learn Spanish, the language of their new country. As Simón and David they make their way to the relocation centre in the city of Novilla, where officialdom treats them politely but not necessarily helpfully.

Simón finds a job in a grain wharf. The work is unfamiliar and backbreaking, but he soon warms to his stevedore comrades, who during breaks conduct philosophical dialogues on the dignity of labour, and generally take him to their hearts. Now he must set about his task of locating the boy's mother. Though like everyone else who arrives in this new country he seems to be washed clean of all traces of memory, he is convinced he will know her when he sees her. And indeed, while walking with the boy in the countryside Simón catches sight of a woman he is certain is the mother, and persuades her to assume the role.

David's new mother comes to realise that he is an exceptional child, a bright, dreamy boy with highly unusual ideas about the world. But the school authorities detect a rebellious streak in him and insist he be sent to a special school far away. His mother refuses to yield him up, and it is Simón who must drive the car as the trio flees across the mountains.

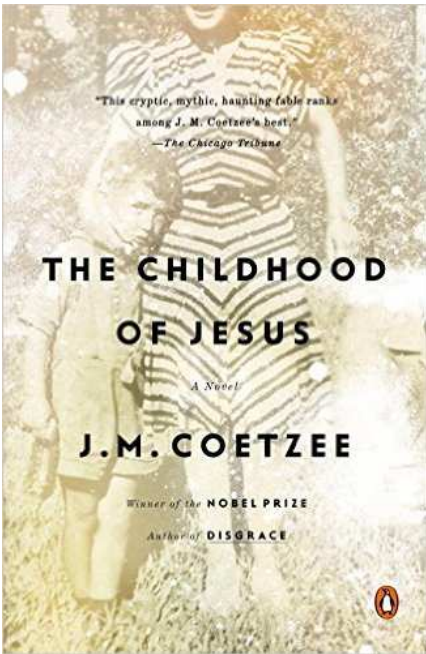
J M COETZEE

John Maxwell Coetzee was born in Cape Town, South Africa, on 9 February 1940, the elder of two children. His mother was a primary school teacher. His father was trained as an attorney, but practiced as such only intermittently; during the years 1941–45 he served with the South African forces in North Africa and Italy. Though Coetzee's parents were not of British descent, the language spoken at home was English.

Coetzee began writing fiction in 1969. His first book, *Dusklands*, was published in South Africa in 1974. *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) won South Africa's then principal literary award, the CNA Prize, and was published in Britain and the USA. *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) received international notice. His reputation was confirmed by *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), which won Britain's Booker Prize. Coetzee also wrote two fictionalized memoirs, *Boyhood* (1997) and *Youth* (2002). *The Lives of Animals* (1999) is a fictionalized lecture, later absorbed into *Elizabeth Costello* (2003). *White Writing* (1988) is a set of essays on South African literature and culture. *Doubling the Point* (1992) consists of essays and interviews with David Attwell. *Giving Offense* (1996) is a study of literary censorship. *Stranger Shores* (2001) collects his later literary essays.

In 2002 Coetzee emigrated to Australia. He lives with his partner Dorothy Driver in Adelaide, South Australia, where he holds an honorary position at the University of Adelaide.

Club de lectura en anglès
BIBLIOTECA CENTRAL XAVIER AMORÓS



The childhood of Jesus by J.
M. Coetzee
October 26th at 6:30 pm

Hosted by Ruth Cory



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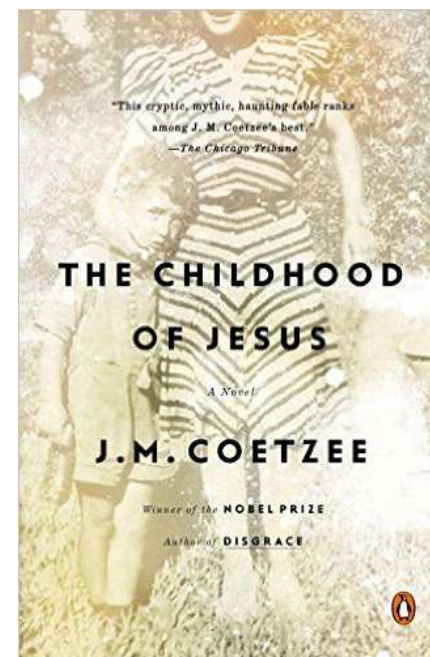
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