

Purity

At the center of Jonathan Franzen's new novel, "Purity," is a young college graduate called Pip, whose full first name, bestowed by her not-quite-sane mother, is Purity. Pip is burdened by college debt, a lack of direction and a sharp intelligence; she is also burdened by her mother, who has brought Pip up alone in a tiny cabin in the Santa Cruz Mountains and now works at the checkout in a market. Pip's general situation in a dead-end job is not helped by her obsession with a married man who lives with his wife in the same house in Oakland as Pip and some others. When Pip meets a nice boy in a coffee shop, a guy who seems to like her, she leaves him alone in her bedroom in a state of some sexual arousal and stays away for more than an hour while she fills in a questionnaire for a friend downstairs. She seems surprised and becomes angry when she finds a text he sends to another guy: "U can have her, if you have a taste for weird."

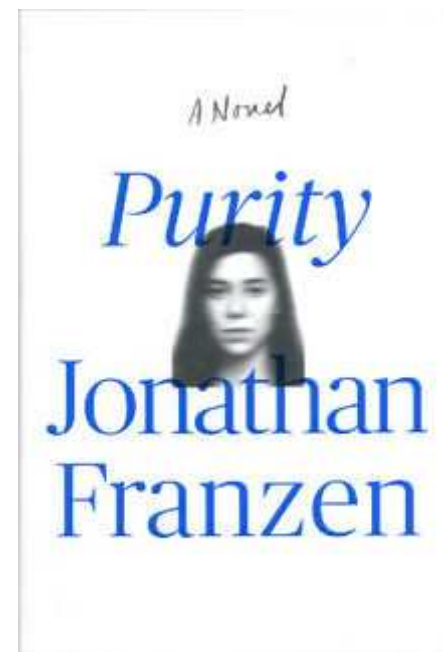
As Pip moves in and out of the book it may be that she is not weird enough; it appears at first that she does not have sufficient substance to hold the narrative. She can feel bad about herself and the world, she can be feisty, but her sensibility is not rich enough and she is too passive to make her the main character in a novel of this length. Or so it seems for the first half, before the very weaknesses in her personality become essential to the novel's progress and the reader's interest.

Biography of Jonathan Franzen

Jonathan Earl Franzen (born August 17, 1959) in Western Springs, Illinois, is an American novelist and essayist. His father, raised in Minnesota, was an immigrant from Sweden. Franzen grew up in Webster Groves, a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri, and graduated from Swarthmore College with a degree in German in 1981. He studied abroad in Germany during the 1979-80 academic year. Here he met Michael A. Martone, on whom he would later base the character Walter Berglund in *Freedom*. He also studied at Freie Universität Berlin in 1981-82. From these experiences, he speaks fluent German. Upon graduation Franzen got married and moved with his wife to Boston to pursue a career as a novelist. When this plan fell through, they moved to New York, in 1987, where Franzen managed to sell his first novel, *The Twenty-Seventh City*. His 2001 novel, *The Corrections*, a sprawling, satirical family drama, drew widespread critical acclaim, earned Franzen a National Book Award, was a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction finalist, earned a James Tait Black Memorial Prize and was shortlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. His novel *Freedom* (2010) garnered similar praise and led to an appearance on the cover of *Time* magazine alongside the headline "Great American Novelist".

Club de lectura en anglès

BIBLIOTECA CENTRAL XAVIER AMORÓS



Purity
by Jonathan Franzen
April 20th at 6:30 pm

Hosted by Ruth Cory



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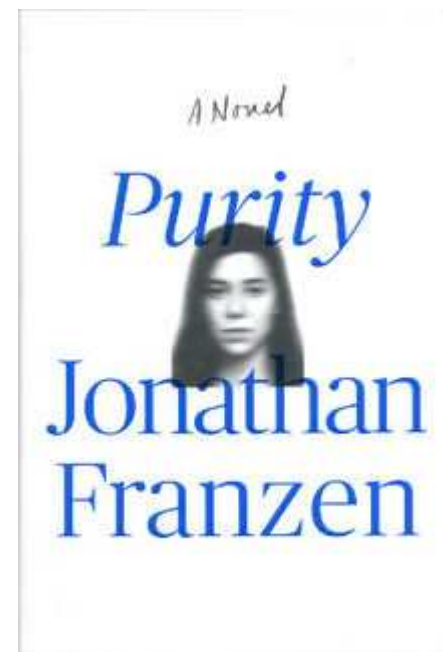
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