



The Devil in the Flesh

Raymond Radiguet, A.M. Sheridan-Smith

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He belonged to the solemn race of men whose lives unfold too quickly to their close. ?Jean Cocteau

The Devil in the Flesh, one of the finest, most delicate love stories ever written, is set in Paris during the last year of the First World War. The narrator, a boy of sixteen, tells of his love affair with Martha Lacombe, a young woman whose soldier husband is away at the front. The liaison soon becomes a scandal and their friends, horrified and incredulous, refuse to accept what is happening - even when the affair reaches its tragic climax.

In the film *Le Diable au Corps* (with Gerard Philipe and Micheline Presle), Claude Autant-Lara recreated this story of the First World War with nostalgic tenderness. His sensitive dramatization treats the affair with such delicacy that many critics consider the love scenes to be among the most beautiful ever photographed. The film won the Grand Prix and the International Critics Prize.

Raymond Radiguet wrote *The Devil in the Flesh* between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, about his own adolescent love affair with an older woman. He died from typhoid fever at the age of twenty. His only other novel is *Comte d'Orgel*, also available from Marion Boyars Publishers.

"...a triumph of the poetic intelligence: a masterpiece..." ?*New Statesman*

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