



On Chesil Beach



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Such is Ian McEwan's genius that, despite rambling nature walks and the naming of birds, his subject matter remains hermetically sealed in the hearts of two people. It is 1962 when Edward and Florence, 23 and 22 respectively, marry and repair to a hotel on the Dorset coast for their honeymoon. They are both virgins, both apprehensive about what's next and in Florence's case, utterly and blindly terrified and repelled by the little she knows. Through a tense dinner in their room, because Florence has decided that the weather is not fine enough to dine on the terrace, they are attended by two local boys acting as waiters. The cameo appearances of the boys and Edward and Florence's parents and siblings serve only to underline the emotional isolation of the two principals. Florence says of herself: "...she lacked some simple mental trick that everyone else had, a mechanism so ordinary that no one ever mentioned it, an immediate sensual connection to people and events, and to her own needs and desires...." They are on the cusp of a rather ordinary marital undertaking in differing states of readiness, willingness and ardor. McEwan says: "Where he merely suffered conventional first-night nerves, she experienced a visceral dread, a helpless disgust as palpable as seasickness." Edward, having denied himself even the release of self-pleasuring for a week, in order to be tip-top for Florence, is mentally pawing the ground. His sensitivity keeps him from being obvious, but he is getting anxious. Florence, on the other hand, knows that she is not capable of the kind of arousal that will make any of this easy. She has held Edward off for a year, and now the reckoning is upon her. McEwan is the master of the defining moment, that place and time when, once it has taken place, nothing will ever be the same after it. It does not go well and Florence flees the room. "As she understood it, there were no words to name what had happened, there existed no shared language in which two sane adults could describe such events to each other." Edward eventually follows her and they have a poignant and painful conversation where accusations are made, ugly things are said and roads are taken from which, in the case of these two, the way back cannot be found. Late in Edward's life he realizes: "Love and patience--if only he had them both at once--would surely have seen them both through." This beautifully told sad story could have been conceived and written only by Ian McEwan. --Valerie Ryan Pressestimmen

"Wonderful...exquisite...devastating" (*Independent on Sunday*)

"Exquisitely crafted" (*Evening Standard*)

"Superb... The protagonists have everything to lose, and their faltering journey towards a point of no return is conjured into life by McEwan with irresistible subtlety, tact and force" (*Financial Times*)

"*On Chesil Beach* is more than an event. It is a masterpiece" (Karl Miller *Times Literary Supplement*)

"This is McEwan's mature style, one we have come to recognise from *Atonement* and *Saturday*. It is a polished, civilised style, and very distant from the shock tactics of his early work... McEwan brings Florence and Edward touchingly alive for us; and their seriousness, their idealism, and their desire for love draw us towards them" (Natasha Walter *Guardian*)

"To commend an author for being reminiscent of Edith Wharton is a compliment that this reviewer reserves for a select few. Yet with *On Chesil Beach*, Ian McEwan has earned it" (Lionel Shriver *Telegraph*)

"A master feat of concentration in both senses of the word" (Peter Kemp *Sunday Times*)

"Written with a fierce pursuit of the truth and an utterly modern self-awareness, what a confident tour de force this turns out to be" (*Sunday Express*)

"One of our greatest living writers. Many Easter weekends and train journeys will be enlivened by a compelling novella" (Christopher Dolan *Herald*)

"It is a masterpiece. The very idea that informs it, fascinating and unfamiliar, is masterly" (Karl Miller *TLS*)
Werbetext

Re-jacketed in stunning new series style, *On Chesil Beach* is a compact and devastating novel from the Man Booker Prize-winning, *Sunday Times*-bestselling Ian McEwan

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