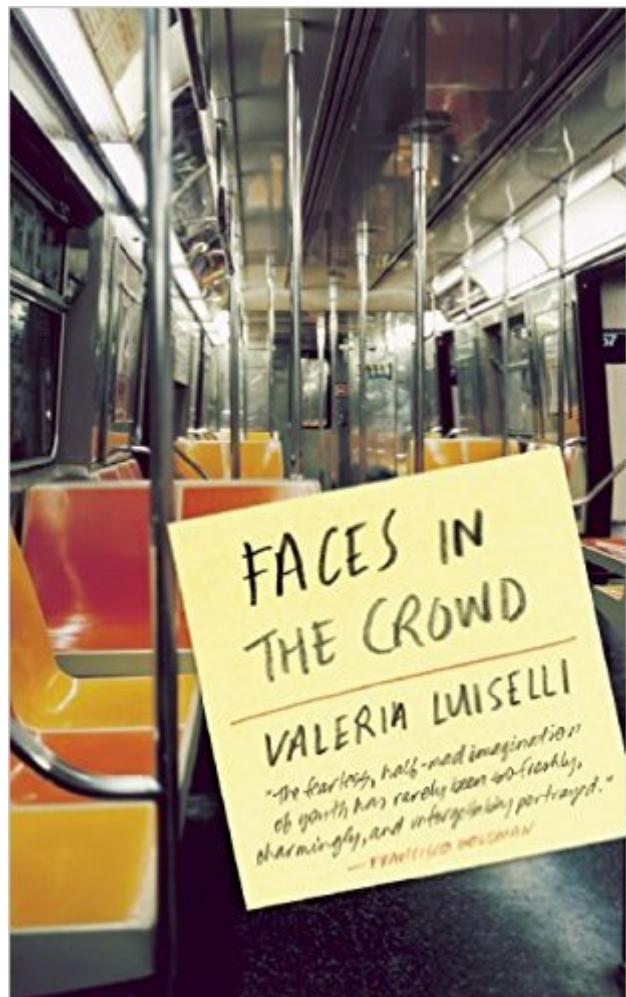


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Faces In The Crowd



Synopsis

"An extraordinary new literary talent."--The Daily Telegraph "In part a portrait of the artist as a young woman, this deceptively modest-seeming, astonishingly inventive novel creates an extraordinary intimacy, a sensibility so alive it quietly takes over all your senses, quivering through your nerve endings, opening your eyes and heart. Youth, from unruly student years to early motherhood and a loving marriage--and then, in the book's second half, wilder and something else altogether, the fearless, half-mad imagination of youth, I might as well call it--has rarely been so freshly, charmingly, and unforgettably portrayed. Valeria Luiselli is a masterful, entirely original writer."--Francisco Goldman "Luiselli's haunting debut novel, about a young mother living in Mexico City who writes a novel looking back on her time spent working as a translator of obscure works at a small independent press in Harlem, erodes the concrete borders of everyday life with a beautiful, melancholy contemplation of disappearance. . . . Luiselli plays with the idea of time and identity with grace and intuition." --Publishers Weekly In Mexico City, a young mother is writing a novel of her days as a translator living in New York. In Harlem, a translator is desperate to publish the works of Gilberto Owen, an obscure Mexican poet. And in Philadelphia, Gilberto Owen recalls his friendship with Lorca, and the young woman he saw in the windows of passing trains. Valeria Luiselli's debut signals the arrival of a major international writer and an unexpected and necessary voice in contemporary fiction.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Valeria Luiselli, a debut novelist, left me stunned the first time I read this novel, excited by her daring approach to writing and awe-struck at her ingenuous and totally honest inclusion of herself in all phases of the narrative. When I read it a second time, I was even more impressed by her ability to jump around within three different time periods while telling multiple, somewhat connected stories from four different points of view – that of her contemporary self, of her earlier self before her marriage, of her architect husband, and of Gilberto Owen, a virtually unknown Mexican author-poet from the late 1920s whose work the unnamed main character is trying to have published. None of these points of view are static, and the author sometimes merges characters and the details of their lives as she plays with reality and imagination, which she sees as both an outgrowth of reality and as an influence on reality. The novel opens in Mexico City with a precocious little boy awakening his mother with a question about mosquitoes. She goes on to tell the reader that she also has a baby daughter and an architect husband and that she does most of her writing at night. Gradually, she describes her earlier life in New York City when she is single and works as an editor finding books by Latin American authors worth translating or reissuing. Eventually, in the Columbia Library, the speaker finds a letter by Mexican poet Gilberto Owen in 1928 to a fellow writer, giving Owen's address in Morningside Heights, New York, and her visit to the house changes her life: she began that night to live as if inhabited by another possible life that wasn't mine, but one which, simply by the use of imagination, I could give myself up to completely.

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