

<<TERRORIST恐怖分子>>

图书基本信息

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内容概要

Starred Review. Ripped from the headlines doesn't begin to describe Updike's latest, a by-the-numbers novelization of the last five years' news reports on the dangers of home-grown terror that packs a gut punch. Ahmad Mulloy Ashmawy is 18 and attends Central High School in the New York metro area working class city of New Prospect, N.J. He is the son of an Egyptian exchange student who married a working-class Irish-American girl and then disappeared when Ahmad was three. Ahmad, disgusted by his mother's inability to get it together, is in the thrall of Shaikh Rashid, who runs a storefront mosque and preaches divine retribution for "devils," including the "Zionist dominated federal government." The list of devils is long: it includes Joryleen Grant, the wayward African-American girl with a heart of gold; Tylenol Jones, a black tough guy with whom Ahmad obliquely competes for Joryleen's attentions (which Ahmad eventually pays for); Jack Levy, a Central High guidance counselor who at 63 has seen enough failure, including his own, to last him a lifetime (and whose Jewishness plays a part in a manner unthinkable before 9/11); Jack's wife, Beth, as ineffectual and overweight (Updike is merciless on this) as she is oblivious; and Teresa Mulloy, a nurse's aide and Sunday painter as desperate for Jack's attention, when he takes on Ahmad's case, as Jack is for hers. Updike has distilled all their flaws to a caustic, crystalline essence; he dwells on their poor bodies and the debased world in which they move unrelentingly, and with a dispassionate cruelty that verges on shocking. Ahmad's revulsion for American culture doesn't seem to displease Updike one iota. But Updike has also thoroughly digested all of the discursive pap surrounding the post-9/11 threat of terrorism, and that is the real story here. Mullahs, botched CIA gambits, race and class shame (that leads to poor self-worth that leads to vulnerability that leads to extremism), half-baked plots that just might work-all are here, and dispatched with an elegance that highlights their banality and how very real they may be. So smooth is Updike in putting his grotesques through their paces-effortlessly putting them in each others' orbits-that his contempt for them enhances rather than spoils the novel.

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