



Compulsion: A Novel

By Meyer Levin

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Compulsion: A Novel By Meyer Levin

Judd Steiner and Artie Straus have it all: wealth, intelligence, and the world at their feet as part of the elite, upper-crust Jewish community of 1920s Chicago. Artie is handsome, athletic, and popular, but he possesses a hidden, powerful sadistic streak and a desire to dominate. Judd is a weedy introvert, a genius who longs for a companion whom he can idolize and worship. Obsessed with Nietzsche's idea of the superhuman, both boys decide to prove that they are above the laws of man by arbitrarily picking and murdering a Jewish boy in their neighborhood.

This new edition of Meyer Levin's classic literary thriller *Compulsion* reintroduces the fictionalized case of Leopold and Loeb – once considered the "crime of the century" – to a new generation. This incisive psychological portrait of two young murderers seized the imagination of an era and is generally recognized as paving the way for the first non-fiction novel. *Compulsion* forces us to ask what drives some further into darkness, and some to seek redemption.

Heartbreaking as it is gripping, *Compulsion* is written with a tense and penetrating force that led the *Los Angeles Times* to call Levin, "the most significant Jewish writer of his times."

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Editorial Review

Review

An "acclaimed roman à clef" that "holds up as a landmark legal thriller." — **Publishers Weekly**

"Meyer Levin's astonishingly good novel....As psychological thriller and as courtroom drama, [*Compulsion*] has few peers; it ascends to a Dostoyevskian level." — **Tom Nolan, The Wall Street Journal**

"In many ways, *Compulsion* is a period piece, but its ability to communicate the horror of this famous crime gives it a lasting power." — **Adam Kirsch, Tablet Magazine**

An "unforgettable, heart-wrenching story of murder." — **Mary Lignor, Suspense Magazine**

"Paying close attention to historical detail, *Compulsion* is a deftly crafted novel that documents author Meyer Levin as a particularly gifted storyteller that will keep his readers total engaged from beginning to end." — **Midwest Book Review**

"Nearly a century after this 'crime of the century,' Levin's tale — in this new edition, with a foreword by O.J. prosecutor-turned-novelist Marcia Clark — is no less gripping or disturbing." — **JTA**

Praise for Meyer Levin's *Compulsion*:

"Before *In Cold Blood*, before *The Executioner's Song*, Meyer Levin's *Compulsion* was the standard-bearer for what we think of as the nonfiction novel....Though this trial took place in 1924, the book raises issues pertaining to society and our justice system—such as popular biases, groupthink, and the inherent, perhaps unfixable, flaws in our legal system—that are as much in evidence today as they were back then." — **Marcia Clark (from the foreword)**

"If only for its rightful place in American literary history, *Compulsion* is worth reprinting. But it is also valuable because of its author's novelistic gifts—a convincing portrait of two brilliant psychopaths, a narrative capacity for a spellbinding tale, an authentic depiction of the 1920s Chicago moral and political landscape. *Compulsion* is a credible portrait of an era, and an early example of an infamous crime turned into compelling fiction." — **Alan Lelchuk, author of *American Mischief***

"Though Truman Capote claimed to have invented a new literary genre with *In Cold Blood*—a form he called the 'nonfiction novel'—that distinction truly belongs to Meyer Levin. For nearly a century now, the Leopold and Loeb case has maintained a firm hold on the popular imagination, generating histories, movies, stage dramas, even musicals and comic books. Of this seemingly endless stream of retellings, Levin's lightly fictionalized masterpiece—so true to reality that Leopold himself famously sued the author—remains the most gripping, psychologically penetrating, and purely readable account of one of America's most sensational crimes." — **Harold Schechter, author of *The Mad Sculptor: The Maniac, The Model, and the Murder that Shook the Nation***

"*Compulsion* is a lost star in the pantheon of America's golden age of Jewish fiction; its re-release should be welcomed by all. Despite prejudices and misconceptions about homosexuality that are inseparable from the time in which the story is set (and in which it was written), Levin brilliantly dissects the human heart in this

classic of psychological realism – a remarkably sympathetic portrait years ahead of its time. Its call for mercy instead of punishment, compassion instead of retribution, is one of the most powerful things I've ever read.”— **Michael Lavigne, author of *Not Me***

Praise for previous editions of *Compulsion*:

“[*Compulsion*] is a masterly achievement in literary craftsmanship.” – **Erle Stanley Gardner, *The New York Times***

“A graphic and absorbing reconstruction of the crime of the century.” – ***The Saturday Review***

“A book that can take its place with Dreiser’s *An American Tragedy*...Levin succeeds brilliantly in creating high suspense in his fictional retelling.” – ***New York Herald Tribune***

“*Compulsion* is a significant and moving work. For, as one of the driven sufferers in *Crime and Punishment* puts it, ‘though we do talk a lot of trash, and I do too, yet we shall talk our way to the truth at last.’ In his concern for his story, and in his understanding of the importance of the crime and the trial, Levin is writing his way to the truth. He has given us an important novel.” – **Charles Shapiro, *The Nation***

About the Author

No Bio

No Bio

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gussie Steller:

Do you have favorite book? Should you have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each guide has different aim as well as goal; it means that publication has different type. Some people really feel enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They are really reading whatever they have because their hobby is actually reading a book. Think about the person who don't like reading a book? Sometime, person feel need book once they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you will want this *Compulsion: A Novel*.

Steven Purdy:

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Michael Lucius:

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Martha Dixon:

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